

Loss in Fairy Tales: The Ethic of Struggle of Tolkien's Middle - Earth Narratives

Minhao Yu^{1*}

¹School of International Studies, Hangzhou Normal University, Hangzhou 311121, China

*nighthaven96@outlook.com

Abstract: *This article examines J. R. R. Tolkien's attitudes to ethics in his Middle-earth narratives, mainly The Lord of the Rings. This paper departs from previous studies on loss in Tolkien's writings by reconsidering Tolkien's fiction in the light of Lacan's theory on loss (with additional support from Tolkien's letters and academic writings), so as to compare the moral choices of different fictional characters who undergo a loss of some sort. The discussion demonstrated how a constant struggle can be an ethical choice for Tolkien against the subject's loss and how this ethic is incorporated into his narrative. While studies on Tolkien's loss is no longer a new topic, this one tries to give loss a new ethical dimension with a psychoanalytic insight while still holding a dialogue with the past scholarly endeavours.*

Keywords: J. R. R. Tolkien; The Lord of the Rings; loss; ethic; Lacan.

1. INTRODUCTION

When answering what inspired his writing of Downfall of Númenor in a radio interview in 1965, Tolkien mentioned a permanent dream he had, "...the ineluctable wave has been one of my nightmares, sometimes coming in over the open country. It always ends by one surrendering oneself and wakes up" [1].

Whether these words are true or not, the description is interesting enough. An uncontrollable force holds the subject tightly, under which the subject recognizes its own desire from the perspective of an other. By declaring the first-person "myself" as the third-person "oneself", the fate of the subject emerges from the gap as an other. We may never know what this wave represents under the "grammar" of his dream, but Tolkien has spoken an unconscious truth behind this dream image which runs through his Middle-Earth narrative: the split of the subject. Lacan says, "The one that is introduced by the experience of the unconscious is the one of the split, of the stroke, of rupture" [2]. For him, the oneness of the subject is a misrecognition. "At the limit of the Unbewusste is the Unbegriff - not the non-concept, but the concept of lack" [2].

Verlin Flieger points out "The Lord of the Rings has been called an epic, a romance, a fairy tale, a fantasy, a war novel... But in all of them the overriding theme is loss" [3]. While we often say loss is a matter for the subject, it is fact "the loss of the object" [4]. This object is what propels one's desire, the object a of Lacan. Roughly speaking, the object a is an "object as cause of desire, of that which is lacking" [4]. Žižek explains further, "object a [is] the lack, the leftover of the Real, setting in motion the symbolic movement of interpretation, a void in the centre of the symbolic order, a pure semblance of the 'mystery' to be explained, interpreted" [5]. In the following parts, we will first briefly summarize previous research on Tolkien and loss, then focus on the background of loss described in Tolkien's Middle-earth narrative informed by Lacan's loss, and finally attempt to explore Tolkien's ethics on the subject of loss through textual analysis.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW: HOW LOSS CAN BE A CONTENT THEME FOR TOLKIEN

Many studies have explored the theme of loss in Tolkien's text. Susanne Jacobs believes that Tolkien is an author who is good at writing gaps, and the connection between gaps and loss can be reflected in the lack of textual interpretation. "Emulating the sense of nostalgia for the past and the awareness of the inevitable loss involved in the passage of time are evoked by missing information in real medieval texts" [6]. For example, Tom Bombadil, a mysterious character in The Lord of the Rings, is barely provided with any detail. We only know that the ring has no effect on him, that he lives in harmony with the environment, and that he always sings a cheerful tune every time he appears. "When the Barrow-wight captures the hobbits and tries to create in them the same sense of despair felt by the warriors originally buried in the barrow, the hobbits summon Tom through a song, and he saves them from that despair" [6]. It is as if his singing contained a kind of magic that could escape from this lost past.

Rosegrant investigated the relationship between enchantment and loss via the Freudian analysis in Totem and Taboo on the pre-modern, enchanted worldview as being typified by animism and projection. He believes that "the loss undoes the enchantment, while at the same time the enchantment undoes the loss" [7]. Rosegrant cited many other examples to illustrate the importance of loss in Tolkien's text, such as the disappearance of elven magic in the three rings, Elve's departure, or a character's death. "Tolkien wants readers to feel the loss, to grieve, when important characters die" [7].

Therefore, it can be seen that Tolkien not only presents loss in his writing method but is equally important in the content. In Tolkien's own literary theory *On Fairy-Stories*, he mentions, "Fairy-stories are means of recovery, or prophylactic against loss" [8]. In Tolkien's view, the "healing" effect of fairy tales on loss comes from "escape", but he was not talking about escape in the sense of scorn or pity. He says, "Escape is evidently as a rule very practical, and may even be heroic" [8]. He believed that critics often confuse two types of escapes: the "escape of the prisoner" and the "flight of the deserter". There is nothing wrong with a person wanting to break free from his chain. Tolkien points out "In the same way these critics, to make confusion worse, and so to bring into contempt their opponents, stick their label of scorn not only on to Desertion, but on to real Escape, and what are often its companions, Disgust, Anger, Condemnation, and Revolt." [8] Tolkien, therefore, was not using escape in a negative sense, his real escape was always accompanied by struggle and heroism. In the struggle against loss, Groom, Shipperry, Carpenter and Rosegrant have all mentioned the influence of World War I on Tolkien's narrative. Carpenter mentioned Tolkien in his biography "horror of the trenches", which is described by Tolkien himself as a kind of "animal horror" [9], Nick Groom added "the industrialisation of war and killing, and the obsession with mass surveillance and internal security" all these are related to the theme of war in his works. But he disagrees with Shipperry's opinion that "the insistent theme of war in *The Lord of the Rings* draws into sharp relief" [10]. Groom believes that Tolkien's theme of war is not simply a means of escaping trauma. He says, "Rather than classify Tolkien as a 'traumatized author' or some sort of Romantic Modernist, we should let the books and the films address these points". War is never a main theme in Tolkien's works. On the contrary, "waging the war is a slideshow" [10]. His wars are not to prove how brave the protagonist is, they always serve a clear purpose: to fight against Sauron, the lack of one's desire.

Although the lack of interpretation in Tolkien's text can make readers feel loss, when talking about the issue of loss and struggle, however, paying attention to the text can be a desirable methodology. When studying how Tolkien introduced his ethic from "loss", we will also focus on Tolkien's text. Because only from the text can we analyse Tolkien's attitude towards it more objectively in his story.

3. THE EXILE: BACKDROP AND DETAIL OF LOSS IN TOLKIEN'S MIDDLE-EARTH HISTORY

Gallant said in his study on the relationship between Tolkien's literature and history, that "the history of the Elves is both a fictional historiography and a Volksgeschichte or Origo Gentis" [11]. If the Middle-earth narrative can be called a "history", then we have reason to believe that "loss" is related to this history as well. Because, as Lacan mentions, "the process of the philosophical meditation throws the subject towards the transforming historical action, and, around this point, orders the configured modes of active self-consciousness through its metamorphoses in history" [2]. When it comes to the issue of history and the loss of the subject of desire, I am not referring to the so-called socio-psychoanalysis, but hoping to point out the value that Tolkien tried to convey to readers through narrative, "I wanted people simply to get inside this story and take it in a sense of actual history" [1]. Here, this sense of history is what closer to the subject's self-identity in the history as a whole than a group's collective awareness of history. Therefore, in this respect, readers can achieve similar effects in reading fictional history as in reading real history.

When Noldor committed kin slaying and seized the ship for coming back to Middle-earth in Alqualondë, Mandos spoke with solemnity, "Tears unnumbered ye shall shed; and Valar will fence Valinor against you, and shut you out, so that not even echo of your lamentation shall pass over the mountains" [12]. By a power they cannot match, the forbidden was laid, and Noldor have to pass three sorrowful ages in Middle-earth.

"Exile" is the word that Tolkien chose to describe this event frequently, "The High Elves met in this book (*The Silmarillion*) are Exiles" [13]. "The Exiles" is the self-identity of Noldor in Middle Earth. In *The Lord of the Rings*, Tolkien designed this introduction when Hobbits are meeting the elves for the first time, Gildor, the leader of Noldorin company, says to Frodo and Sam, "We are Exiles, and most of our kindred have long ago departed and we too are now only tarrying here a while, ere we return over the Great Sea" [14].

In this aspect, lives in Middle-earth constructs the self-identity of Noldor throughout the first three ages of Middle-earth history. But this self-consciousness is by no means a result of violence or any misfortune that falls upon them. Instead, it is the loss of object a. Noldor's identity is acknowledged only when it is desirable. Richard Gallant describes this banishment as a "dual exile" [15]. The event that splits Noldor from the carefree life of Valinor into Middle-earth history, is Morgoth's stealing of the three Silmarils from them, murdering their king Finwë and destroying Telperion and Laurelin, the two trees of Valinor. For vengeance and to retrieve their lost treasures, they spontaneously left the protection of Valar to Middle-earth despite Valar's warning. Therefore, Noldor are exiled with loss of many forms, the loss of the kindred, their homeland, the protection of Valar, and their own treasures. Lacan has a very interesting analogy on the issue of the loss of the subject. When a bandit says to you, "Your money or your life," this is not really a choice, because "If I choose the money, I lose both. If I choose life, I have life without the money, namely, a life deprived of something" [2]. In this example, the robber is Morgoth, He stole Silmarils from Noldor, and it is after this deprivation that the Noldor decide to enter the history of Middle-earth to retrieve what they have lost.

But what is more essential is the loss that Tolkien wanted the readers to experience. Tolkien took pains to depict events and sites of Valinor in *The Silmarillion* but, on the other hand, hardly shows any detail on this in *The Lord of the Rings*. The only description is ambiguous: "white shores and beyond them a far green country under a swift sunrise" [14]. In *The Silmarillion*, Tolkien analogized how the object is lost and one is pulled in history as a subject; while in *The Lord of the Rings*, the subject is the one who at constant peril of the loss. Rosegrant argues, "In the frequent longing allusions in *The Lord of the Rings* to ancient days ... and in the mournful scenes describing elves passing over the sea never to return, the reader is confronted with enchantment and its loss" [7].

Tolkien's life is also at peril of many losses, He lost his mother at age 12, which has dealt much influence to him, he says. "My own dear mother was a martyr indeed, and it is not to everybody that God grants so easy a way to his great gifts as he did to Hilary and myself, giving us a mother who killed herself with labour and trouble to ensure us keeping the faith" [8]. Then in 1945 he lost his friend Charles Williams. He believes that the war is never over and the struggle is constant, "Wars are always lost, and The War always goes on; and it is no good growing faint" [13]. The loss of Tolkien is not by any means special. Loss of relatives or friends alike can be common for everyone. Tolkien was using his artificial historiography to teach this lesson. In *Lament for Boromir*, for example, this loss can touch the reader strikingly.

Through Rohan over fen and field where the long grass grows
The West Wind comes walking, and about the walls it goes.
"What news from the West, O wandering wind, do you bring to me tonight?
Have you seen Boromir the Tall by moon or by starlight?"
"I saw him ride over seven streams, over waters wide and grey;
I saw him walk in empty lands, until he passed away
Into the shadows of the North. I saw him then no more.
The North Wind may have heard the horn of the son of Denethor."
"O Boromir! From the high walls westward I looked afar,
But you came not from the empty lands where no men are. [14]

This is only the first stanza, but the rest of the lines is similar in terms of the feature we are interested in. The wind here can bear the tidings concerning the passing of Boromir, it brought a memory of him. The wind brings the memory of readers back to the previous chapters, lamenting his loss. With the vocative case at the beginning of the second final line "O Boromir!", this object is forever lost and can only be captured in the symbolic via the signifier of lamentation. As what Lacan mentioned in the Freudian *fort-da* game, "It is rather that here, right from the beginning, we have a first manifestation of language. In this phonematic opposition, the child transcends, brings on to the symbolic plane, the phenomenon of presence and absence" [17]. Calling the name of Boromir repeatedly can only manipulate the absence or presence of this departed object via signifiers but never truly bringing it back. If Noldor are exiled from Valinor, then readers are genuinely exiled from the passing of Boromir, who, by the narrative in the chronological order, are stunned by a sudden strike, realising that one is a subject of loss as well.

4. STRUGGLE WITH LOSS: FROM STORY TO THE ETHIC OF TOLKIEN

4.1 An Object Retrieved?: Obsession in Tolkien's narrative of Middle-earth

Therefore, in Tolkien's view, one is struggling with loss throughout life. For the subject, "the truth of my history is written elsewhere... In traditions, and even in the legends which, in a heroicized form, convey my history" [18]. In Tolkien's work, this statement is less a mere implication than a reference imbued in his purposeful design. In the gift of Illúvatar, men's death is described as a "gift of freedom" [12]. Death means the end of their struggle, and as long as Elves are immortal, they always live with it. Tolkien says, "Few lessons are taught more clearly in them than the burden of that kind of immortality, or rather endless serial living, to which the 'fugitive' would fly. For the fairy-story is especially apt to teach such things, of old and still today" [8].

For the subject in history, this struggle with loss is always ongoing. However, the real object of loss in Tolkien's narrative is never clear. Characters can be struggling with many forms of losses at a time. For Noldor, this object is the Silmaril; for the Hobbits in adventure, it can be their cozy home; in *The Lord of the Rings*, the common object is the Ring. Tolkien says, "It was in fairy stories that I first divined the potency of the words, and the wonder of the things, such as stone, and wood, and iron; tree and grass; house and fire; bread and wine" [8]. The object could just come from their surroundings. But these object, as what we have mentioned in Introduction, are semblance of one's loss in the symbolic, not the loss that the subject is searching for continuously.

But what is significant is the way a subject can do with it. Tolkien emphasized, "For the story-maker who allows himself to be 'free with' Nature can be her lover not her slave" [8]. Lacan says, "The slave has a great deal to expect from the master's death. Beyond the death of the master, he really will be obliged to confront death" [17]. A slave is obsessed with his master's desire, taking the desire of the master, which is the master's own death [17] to be the object *a*. Therefore, only from his master's death, the slave can be freed from his desire. This point can perhaps explain why Tolkien said one should not be the slave of nature, because a slave is already convinced that his *jouissance*, which is the retrieval of the object *a*, is available only in what one is obsessed with. Such a subject gives in its constant struggle against the loss and believes it will be found somewhere behind a symbolic representation, therefore they can no longer shoulder their responsibility as a subject. Gollum's lust for the Ring can be identified with no particular reason. He just wants it and believes that it is his precious. He is moving far away with all folks and devotes everything to this symbolic representation. Taking another instance, Nazgûl were obsessed with Sauron's magical rings. In their time "they obtained glory and great wealth, yet it turned to their undoing" [12]. They were tortured by this obsession, only to find the *jouissance* is not behind the ring. Instead, these men become "the shadow of the past", whose real death which is supposed to free themselves from their desire has now been postponed. "They had, as it seemed, unending life, yet life became unendurable to them" [12]. Nazgûl will not die until their master Sauron dies. Similarly, instead of serving his master Frodo wholeheartedly, what drives Gollum's behaviour is always the Ring his master wears, so he often seeks to kill Frodo if there is any chance. Between his two schizophrenic sides, the "evil" one who is seeking the chance to kill his master and seize the Ring is always under the disguise of the "good" one who seems to serve willingly. "His wretched heart between the pressure of the Eye, and the lust of the Ring that was so near, and his grovelling promise made half in the fear of cold iron" [14].

4.2 Struggle under Gaze: The Undo of Loss

In explaining his theory of gaze, Lacan contrasted this concept with eyes. He says, "In our relation to things, in so far as this relation is constituted by the way of vision, and ordered in the figures of representation, something slips, passes, is transmitted, from stage to stage, and is always to some degree eluded in it—that is what we call the gaze" [2]. The gaze is the gap or void behind the object *a* since it is beyond the representations and is what elides the eyes of the subject. In Tolkien's writings, this is what is in the Ring that is always luring the characters, that which some may call its great power. The relation between the gaze and what one wishes to see involves a lure. The subject is presented as something other than he is, and what one shows him is not what he wishes to see [2].

As Rosegrant notes, "the sense of meaning derives from a sense of connectedness to an Other" [7]. Tolkien's characters are all in some degree being put under the test of the Ring. Almost everyone under its temptation has his or her own reason. Boromir and Faramir believe the Ring will help Gondor to win the siege; Galadriel wants it because she eagers for power; Saruman longs to satisfy his own ambition to take Sauron's place instead; Gollum (when he was Sméagol) took it as a birthday gift. Each character has a context connecting with his or her Other. When this Other is asking for something, for instance, winning a war, or asking for a birthday gift, the subject desires it in order to satisfy this master, and those who cannot withstand the temptation of the Ring can legitimately fabricate thousands of excuses. They are obsessed with it, taking it as the only antidote of the loss, as the object *a*. As a consequence, those who are tempted by the Ring will be devoured by its gaze, since the Ring's intention is beyond their eyes, "The Ring was trying to get back to its master (Sauron)" [14]. Therefore, it is not so difficult to understand why Tolkien often used gaze to describe Sauron, since for heroes in the story, he is the power in the

void behind the Ring, and the latter of which is the object a which is identified by many characters as the object to fill in their lack. It alludes that all attempts to shun their struggle against the loss and submit themselves to the obsession of representation will turn into undoing, even if this representation is the Ring which is allegedly the most promising object to undo the loss.

On the contrary, the ethic in Tolkien's novel, as Gallant investigated in Eldarin ethic, is often "the northern courage of the Germanic warrior, 'ethic of endurance and resistance'..." [11]. Galadriel overcomes her temptation to the Ring, so she can say, "I pass the test...I will diminish, and go into the West and remain Galadriel" [14]. By turning back to Sauron's gaze in her mirror and rejecting the Ring, she frees herself from its lure, and takes responsibility for this struggle against loss, thereby passing the "test of desire", so that she can find herself as Galadriel at last. Whereas Gollum is overwhelmed by the seduction of the Ring, therefore the gap of his desire is being torn apart even wider, from which the fire of lust surges out, devouring him together with the Ring in the river of the flame.

In Tolkien's letter to Michael, his second son, concerning the enjoyment and sexual relation, he expressed his view of the way to make things best, "The essence of a fallen world is that the best cannot be attained by free enjoyment, or what is called 'self-realization' (usually a nice name for self-indulgence), but by denial, by suffering" [13]. To make things best, for Tolkien, a struggle must persist to wrestle against this indulgence. The Ring perhaps can be helpful to defeat Sauron on Galadriel's finger but the consequence is merely changing a person to sit on the evil throne. Thus, the subject is doomed to struggle against the gaze with no shortcut, even if the struggle proves to be a futile one. In his novel, "Tolkien often represents the importance of fighting to the death even in a hopeless cause" [7].

Considering this part in the Chapter "The Last Debate" of The Lord of the Rings:

As Aragorn has begun... We must push Sauron to his last throw. We must call out his hidden strength, so that he shall empty his land. We must march out to meet him at once. We must make ourselves the bait... We must walk open-eyed into that trap, with courage, but small hope. [14]

Facing this upcoming threat, Aragorn's choice is to expose themselves under the gaze. But instead of surrendering entirely to the gaze (like Denethor hearing Sauron's voice in Palantir), Tolkien designed a war between whom the strength is in great disparity. Tolkien was not using war to escape trauma since war in his narrative is never waged for its own sake. His war has a definable purpose, that is, to struggle against the loss. Tolkien says through the words of Aragorn, "We cannot achieve victory by arms, but by arms we can give the Ring-bearer his only chance, frail though it be" [14]. In claiming a fight, Groom emphasizes, "there is a clearly identifiable goal – to annihilate Sauron – effectively accomplished by assassination (destroying the One Ring)[10].

By walking straight into the gaze, Aragorn's army offers themselves as bait to lure Sauron out for a fight. In doing so, the gaze returns at the instant, turning the seer into the one to be seen. Sauron, this figure sees from everywhere, is now trapped by the light of another gaze and revealed as vulnerable everywhere, since Sauron's eye has been fixed, "blind almost to all else that is moving" [14]. Rather than just falling into the trap, Aragorn offers himself as the void in the place of the object a to expose the lack of Sauron.

Here, the key to fighting loss is refusing to compromise one's desire, as Lacan proposed in The Ethic of Psychoanalysis, "the only thing of which one can be guilty is of having given ground relative to one's desire" [19]. Galadriel rejecting the Ring means that she did not fall into the trap of the object of her desire, because she realized that behind the object of her desire, there is a gaze of the void, like the hole in the middle of the Ring, which is not her loss, but a semblance of the object a in the symbolic. We can know from Galadriel's words "All shall love me and despair" [14]. when she was tempted by the Ring, that even if she got the ring, her desire still cannot be satisfied. All she can get is recognition from others, whether it comes from love or fear. Lacan says, "Doing things in the name of the good, and even more in the name of the good of the other, is something that is far from protecting us not only from guilt but also from all kinds of inner catastrophes" [19]. Just like what Galadriel says herself "In place of the Dark Lord you will set up a Queen" [14], even if she obtained the ring and destroyed Sauron, the gaze will still not disappear. On the contrary, there is only a replacement of Sauron and a new abyss of desire and fear which continue to shroud the Middle-earth in the desire of obsessive-compulsive disorder. Similarly, Aragorn's council to march under Sauron's gaze challenges the emptiness of his desire since he identifies with Sauron as a master, not a lover. By returning his gaze, Aragorn's army, who arguably represents the alliance of the Ring, was able to confront the other side of their desire, demarcating the object a with their loss. In this sense, Aragorn can so speak a conclusion of wisdom, "with courage, but small hope", "with courage", because there marks the gap

between one's loss and the object a which is a mere semblance of representation; "but small hope" in that this gap is also the responsibility of the subject against which one is bound to struggle.

So, at last, we can reach the "crucial break that psychoanalysis must accomplish", that is "to induce him to realize how he is himself this other for whom he is enacting a role - how his being-for-the-other is his being-for-himself, because he is himself already symbolically identified with the gaze for which he is playing his role" [5]. On the one hand, realizing that the other is not the object of one's loss is a decisive break which allows the subject to be free from the seduction of other's gaze. On the other hand, returning the gaze exposes one's own lack and demonstrates a determination to struggle against one's loss. Instead of compromising with it, in returning of the gaze, eyes are fixed on each other and seeing each other's own lack. For Aragon's army, this can be the loss of a good time; while for Sauron, this could be the loss of the Ring. Thus, in this very moment, Aragon's army becomes a "lover" in the struggle with Sauron in terms that both have seen their desire in each other. However, Sauron is lost because he is so afraid of someone seizing the Ring to take his place that he cannot move his eyes away from his challenger. He believes the object of his loss is in this army, which only turns out to be the object a, and which the void of its gaze will never satisfy Sauron, but enlarges his lack, turning the Middle-earth darker and darker. While Aragon and his army win the struggle because they recognize that Sauron cannot offer them what they have lost, instead, they choose to face this abyss to distract Sauron, so that Frodo will have a chance to assassinate him from other directions.

Tolkien's joy, therefore, will not be available without a struggle. In our discussion, this struggle is particularly a struggle against the loss. "This joy, which is one of the things which fairy stories can produce supremely well, is not essentially 'escapist' nor 'fugitive'... In its fairy-tale – or otherworld – setting, it is a sudden and miraculous grace" [8]. The struggle is an escape, but it is not some escapism as a deserter might hold. On the contrary, Tolkien's escape is a struggle, like a prisoner who escapes the cage, which never fails to remind us of what Walter Benjamin said in his essay *The Storyteller*, "The fairy tale tells us of the earliest arrangements that mankind made to shake off the nightmare which myth had placed upon its chest [20].

5. CONCLUSION

The relationship between the loss and the struggle is a central theme incorporated in Tolkien's narrative of Middle-earth. In this study, we have departed from previous academic research concerning Tolkien and loss but instilled this topic in a new dimension of ethics. By comparing the choices and descriptions of different subjects under the background of their loss, the study has examined Tolkien's attitude on what is an ethical subject in facing loss and how to struggle against it.

From our discussion above, we can conclude that Tolkien has demonstrated his ethic of "escaping", that is, to escape from the prison of one's desire via the constant struggle and not to give ground relative to one's desire.

A subject is apt to desire because the loss has split the object a from the subject, or rather, it is the loss that renders the object as the object a. Tolkien described this plight of the subject in his fairy tale since it is also the plight for every subject. This description ranges from the background of his story as in the exile of Noldor, to the details such as Lament of Boromir. In his narrative of the loss, Tolkien demonstrated his attitude towards the loss: a constant struggle. Gollum and Nazgûl are obsessive, and they believe that the object a lies right beyond the representation, either this representation is the One Ring or the lesser ring of men. By this obsession they become the slave of their desire and plunge into the emptiness. On the contrary, Galadriel sees that the Ring is not the antidote to her desire. Therefore, she has successfully resisted the Ring's temptation and becomes "Galadriel", a subject represented by name, who is at permanent struggle with loss. While Aragorn and his army understand the emptiness behind Sauron's gaze, they take advantage of their position of a subject and trap Sauron's gaze by offering the gaze back, thereby exposing Sauron's weakness under his invincible power so as to vanquish him.

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