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# The Quest for the Empirical Hobbit:

A Comparative Study of J.R.R. Tolkien's  
*The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*

To the future Mrs Leif Jacobsen,  
whomever that might be,  
as a precaution, but also (hopefully),  
because I love you.

*Let me not to the marriage of true minds  
Admit impediments; love is not love  
Which alters when it alteration finds,  
Or bends with the remover to remove.  
Oh no, it is an ever-fixèd mark,  
that looks on tempests, and is never shaken.*  
**(William Shakespeare)**

*I sit beside the fire and think  
of people long ago,  
and people who will see a world  
that I shall never know.*

*But all the while I sit and think  
of times there were before,  
I listen for returning feet  
and voices at the door.*  
**(J.R.R. Tolkien)**

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## Introduction

"The wheels of the world are often turned not by the Lords and Governors, even gods, but by the seemingly unknown and weak" (*Letters* 149). The speaker of this axiom, J.R.R. Tolkien, was referring to the character of world history, in his Middle-Earth as well as in our own world. The plans and strategies of civilisations are set by an elite, "Lords and Governors, even gods", but they are carried out by ordinary people of ordinary life — the "unknown and weak". It is not the generals that fight out in the fields, but the common soldier who has no choice in reality. This is very much the theme of Tolkien's own two novels, *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*. Two young hobbits are drawn into perilous adventures without really having anything to say about it. They become tools of a higher authority, and are just parts of a greater master scheme. Gandalf and the dwarves, more or less against the hobbit's own will employ Bilbo Baggins, in *The Hobbit*, as a burglar. He has no intention of involving himself in any adventures, an abomination in itself to hobbit life, when he addresses the dwarves at Bag End: "I don't pretend to understand what you are talking about, or your reference to burglars...and I am quite sure you have come to the wrong house" (H 17-18). He makes a clear statement that he is not interested in joining them in their quest for the Lonely Mountain. In the end, he still finds himself leaving his beloved hobbit hole in a such a hurry that he forgets things he normally does not forget: "I have come without my hat, and I have left my pocket-handkerchief behind" (H 28). Bilbo himself blames the rebellious ancestry in his family, "the Took side" (H 3), but it is of course the manipulative manoeuvres of Gandalf that decide Bilbo's future destiny.

Bilbo's second cousin and adoptive son, Frodo, is exposed to a similar situation. He has inherited "the small plain ring" from Bilbo. When the ring is revealed as being Sauron's tool, "the Masterring, the One Ring to rule them all" (LR 64), Frodo is forced to take a stand, to make a choice, which, at least on the surface, seems to be a choice. He cannot keep the Ring in the Shire because the Black Riders are searching for it, and that would mean the doom for all the hobbits and their freedom. On the other hand, he cannot give it away because the Ring has a will of its own. It has got a hold on Frodo, which makes it impossible for him to part with it, and hand it over to somebody else.

In the end, the only "choice" left for Frodo is to bring the Ring out of the Shire, and take it, via Rivendell, to Mount Doom and throw it into the fire where it was once forged long ago.

The little man must carry out the tasks of the Great, on the same terms, and with the same chances of success, or as Elrond puts it: "This quest may be attempted by the weak with as much hope as the strong" (LR 287). This is a notion that C.S. Lewis has paid attention to in his essay "The Dethronement of Power". He recognises this theme, and emphasises that it is "a structural invention of the highest order: it adds immensely to the pathos, irony, and the grandeur of the tale" (13).

Reading the two novels you receive a picture that is somewhat deceptive. Bilbo's adventures seem to be of a more light-hearted and jocund nature, while Frodo's are filled with horrors indescribable, which affect him in a very negative way. At the end of the two quests, Bilbo seems to be a happier and more fulfilled hobbit. Frodo, on the other hand, is physically and mentally wounded, mutilated, and he seems to have lost the light in his eyes: "he is...a hobbit broken by a burden of fear and horror...and in the end made into something quite different" (*Letters* 186).

Why is it then that Bilbo is more or less unharmed by his experiences, and that Frodo's existence is almost shattered? One answer to this is the way the two fairy tales are written, i.e. their intended audience. The demand for a sequel to *The Hobbit* made Tolkien start something much grander than its predecessor. Bilbo's story is clearly written as a children's story, while *The Lord of the Rings* "[is] forgetting children" and "becoming more terrifying than the Hobbit" (*Letters* 41). While the first story only alludes to his vast mythology, *The Lord of the Rings* takes a firm position in the middle of it, and explains the enigmas presented in *The Hobbit*.

This difference between the character of the two fairy tales can then be explained by the different techniques and styles the author used — the children's story and the epic. But these differences are concerned with our own world, the primary world. To be able to understand the differences in *character* of the two hobbits, we need to go beneath the surface of the primary world and dive into the complex order of the secondary world, i.e. Middle-Earth. Thus we are able to trace the true experiences and developments of Bilbo and Frodo.

As touched upon in my first essay on Tolkien<sup>1</sup>, again I feel obliged to emphasise Tolkien's own attitude towards allegory. I need only to mention that he disliked intentional allegory and that there were no such intentions in his mythological works. Instead, we must see Middle-Earth as a fully functioning world of its own. Frodo and Bilbo are characters of a real world, and as such, they live and develop according to its standards and rules, but are

using the primary world's moral values. In other words, it is a reflection of our own world, not a part of it. Lewis answered the question "why...must [we talk] about a phantasmagoric never-never-land of [our] own", by saying that "the real life of men is of that mythical and heroic quality", and that "we do not retreat from reality: we rediscover it". He suggested that "if you are tired of the real landscape, look at it in a mirror" (15-16).

So, placing myself in Middle-Earth, I intend to study and compare the journeys of Bilbo and Frodo. By doing so, I will show that the two quests are quite similar to each other in structure and development. I believe that Bilbo's experiences are of the same cruel character as those of Frodo's, and even though Bilbo has had the Ring for a much longer period of time, he seems less affected by it than Frodo. By following their journeys step by step, I will be able to trace the gradual deterioration of Frodo's character, and the personal growth of Bilbo's. In the end, I will also be able to see if these changes in characters are caused by the Ring *only*, or if other experiences throughout their quests are to be blamed as well. A helpful tool in such an analysis will be the psychoanalytic ideas of our primary world, which I will apply to the secondary world to show how difficult it is to ignore the primary world's moral values, and the unconscious use of symbolism in language.

## On Hobbits and Quests

To get a true picture of the change in character of Bilbo, we need to turn our attention to the introductory chapters of *The Lord of the Rings*. As pointed out earlier, *The Hobbit* is written as a children's story, and consequently it is difficult to find any deeper psychological features in his character. The prologue and first chapters of *The Lord of the Rings* deal with the adventures of Bilbo in a new light, and, on a higher level, with the significant part these adventures now play in the dark and threatening matters that are evolving. *The Lord of the Rings* solves many of the mysteries alluded to in *The Hobbit*:

There were already some references to the older matter...as well as glimpses that had arisen unbidden of things higher or deeper or darker than its surface...The discovery of the significance of these glimpses and of their relation to the ancient histories revealed the Third Age and its culmination in the War of the Ring. (LR 9)<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "The Undefinable Shadowland: A Study of the Complex Question of Dualism in J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*."

<sup>2</sup> Author's foreword.

But before we delve deeper into these changes of Bilbo it is only appropriate to say something about the nature of hobbits, around whom the story, and this essay, centres. The purpose of this is to contrast their isolated existence to the order of the big world outside the Shire, and thus to show what a huge step it is for the two hobbits, when they join the quests. I will also say something about the quest theme, a true characteristic, not only of Tolkien's novels, but also of the romance novel in general.

The hobbits are often referred to as halflings because they seldom reach heights above that of half the length of "the Big Folk", i.e. men. They wear bright colours, smoke a pipe of weed (tobacco that is) now and then, and try to eat as often as they possibly can, which is notable in their stout composure. They live a very modest and obscure rural life, which is manifested in their reluctance to use machinery and their wish to "never [have] any adventures or [do] anything unexpected" (H 1). These characteristics indicate an epicurist lifestyle, and to a certain degree, gullible innocence. Furthermore, they possess no magical powers more than that they are very good at disappearing quietly and quickly. This is a quality that makes Gandalf think that Bilbo is suited to be that particular burglar he and the dwarves are looking for, together with Bilbo's "Tookish" ancestry. It is also one of the reasons that they are, more or less, unknown to the rest of the inhabitants of Middle-Earth.

It is of course a very airy-fairy description of a people, unreal one might say. The Shire is an Utopia — an oasis separated from the hardships of the rest of the world. This was Tolkien's own way of complaining about the intrusion of industrialism and modern technology on the English and their countryside, and a regret at the loss of the old order of the world. In Humphrey Carpenter's biography of Tolkien, he gives us a thorough description of Tolkien's love for the English Midlands and the sad sense of loss with urban life's invasion on the rural landscape:

I am in fact a hobbit in all but size. I like gardens, trees, and unmechanized farmlands; I smoke a pipe, and like good plain food...and even dare to wear in these dull days, ornamental waistcoats... The Hobbits are just rustic English people, made small in size because it reflects the generally small reach of their imagination — not the small reach of their courage or latent power (179-180).

The hobbits are more than anything, a reflection of life as we would want it to be, without the worries and stress that we are surrounded by today.

Roger Sale recognises this English type inherent in hobbits but cannot see them as an entirely human species. He compares them to the animal characters in Kenneth Grahame's

*The Wind in the Willows*, or to A.A. Milne's stories of Winnie the Pooh, who also possess these characteristically English features, by saying that "the hobbits are not strictly human" (249). Here I think Sale draws the wrong conclusion. The fact that he sees the hobbits as English types as in Grahame and Milne does not yield the conclusion that they are not "strictly human". On the contrary, it would mean that it is the animals of Grahame and Milne that are humanlike, possessing these typically English *human* features.

In his essay "A Struggle for Life", Hugh T. Keenan also draws the parallel to animals, but on a deeper level. He sees the hobbits as a combination of rabbits and children. The rabbit stands as a symbol of fertility with their earthly existence, and the child is the life-preserver with its playfulness and joy, but also a symbol of generation. It is this combination that makes the hobbits "suitable heroes in the struggle of life against death" (66-67). Keenan uses the rabbit as a symbol to show us that the hobbits are the counterpart to the sterility of Evil, and that these features are necessary to be able to resist the temptations of Sauron. In this sense I think the rabbit theory is appropriate, and convincing.

The rabbit discussion (in its literal sense), and as such, an unimportant discussion, has been given too much room in hobbit criticism, and perhaps it was Tolkien's own unintentional fault that these allusions have become so popular. The word hobbit itself bears the resemblance of rabbit in that they rhyme, and maybe it is only natural, lacking any other references, to associate it with the word closest at hand, namely rabbit. But to make it all worse, in many passages in *The Hobbit*, and this was probably something Tolkien regretted later on, comparisons are made to rabbits, as when Bilbo is called a "nasty little rabbit" by the trolls (H 34; *Letters* 30, 35; Shippey 52-54). These comments seem to have got stuck in people's minds, not as funny symbolic comparisons, but as actual physical truths, and as we to some extent have to form our own opinions of what hobbits look like, rabbits seem to have become an unconscious influence to some. A discussion like this is of course a very shallow one, unless it is given a deeper and more symbolic meaning, as discussed by Keenan.

Keenan's other part of the parallel — children — is also a bit ambiguous and can be interpreted in the wrong way, as with rabbits. Keenan compares the hobbits to children because they live to enjoy themselves, and that they are a symbol of life and how life is meant to be preserved. Keenan makes a good point here, but I think it is important that we do not see the hobbits *as* children, because they are not. Even though they are childlike in size, and perhaps in innocence, it is important to know that they live in a society, which consists of



children, teenagers, and adults. Grown-up hobbits function as adults, just as young hobbits function as children.

Michael Moorcock is of a different opinion. In his *Wizardry and Wild Romance* he sees very few adult heroes in "sword-and sorcery stories". They are either "permanent adolescents", "actual children", "youths" or "quasi-children like the hobbits". They often perform noble and self-sacrificing actions, just as children do, by holding on to the truth and standing up against the tides evil (118). I fail to see why these attributes should be particularly childlike. To be noble and self-sacrificing and to believe in truth and goodness might be naive in our own time, but in the realm of the romance and fantasy world, these should be seen as adult characteristics, as they indeed were some six to eight hundred years ago in our own world.

Tolkien himself never meant his dear hobbits to be children, no more than he meant them to be rabbits. But by placing them in the utopian Shire, he has made them naive and ignorant when it comes to the concerns of the rest of the world. He has made a paradise that he did not really intend to create: "hobbits are not an Utopian vision.... They...are an historical accident...and an impermanent one in the long view" (*Letters* 197). Tolkien wanted the hobbits, as well as everything else in his mythology, to be a part of history, but in many ways he has failed to convey this message to his readers. The Shire has become an Utopia.

What is a quest then? If we look it up in a dictionary it is explained with the words "searching" and "seeking". This is of course a very simple and unsatisfactory explanation, at least when it comes to describing the quest theme of *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*. The myth critic Northrop Frye has developed the concept of the quest in a more analytical way. He talks about "a sequence of minor adventures leading up to a major or climacteric adventure, usually announced from the beginning" (*Theory of Myths* 186-187). It is the major adventure that is the quest, the purpose of the hero. In Bilbo's case, the purpose is to function as a burglar for the dwarves, in their *quest* for The Lonely Mountain and their lost home and treasure. The *quest* of Frodo can be divided into two stages. First, he is to take the One Ring and its inherent evil out of his beloved Shire, to Rivendell. Once there, his quest is extended, and from there on he is to take it to the land of Mordor and "the Cracks of Doom in the depths of Orodruin, the Fire-mountain, and cast the Ring in there" (LR 74). First he is only to save the hobbits of the Shire, later he is to save the whole world. On these perilous adventures we are met by "minor adventures" which all become unforeseen parts *of* the quest, but are in fact not *the* quest.

Frye goes on to dividing the quest hero into two distinctions: the myth hero with his divine and sometimes magical qualities; the romance hero with his human and down-to-earth characteristics (188). In ancient Greek myth, the demi-god Hercules is certainly a divine hero, being the son of Zeus, and possessing inhuman strength. Bilbo and Frodo in the same way are human heroes, with their simple existence and way of reasoning. In "The Quest Hero", W.H. Auden makes the same division of heroes into two, and points out that the success of the human hero is not due to his own powers, but due to "the fairies, magicians, and animals that help him", and this because "he is humble enough to take advice" (46).

In *Tolkien's World*, Randel Helms apply the psychoanalytic theories of Freud to the adventures of Bilbo, and to some extent, to Frodo's as well. Helms is tracing the tools Tolkien used in order to bring back myth into contemporary literature, something he thought had been lost: "he was distressed that the English had so few myths of their own and had to live on foreign borrowings, 'so I thought I'd make one myself '". Like myself, Helms emphasises the importance of seeing Middle-Earth as an independent world abiding by its own rules, and that it has "a strange relevance to our own world" (8). One such "strange relevance" is the language Tolkien uses, with its inherent unconscious symbolism.

When it comes to the actions and contents of the quest, there seems to be a certain pattern that it follows. Different critics have in one way or another, tried to map these patterns into basic schemes that apply, in various degrees, to all stories with a quest motif. The Russian Formalist Vladimir Propp, in his studies of the Russian folk tale, developed a scheme of thirty-one elements or functions that appear in the folk tale. Even though all thirty-one functions may not be included in the story, they always appear in the same order. Some examples of these functions are:

25. A difficult task is proposed to the hero.
26. The task is resolved.
27. The hero is recognized.

These elements do not only apply to the Russian folk tale but can also be seen "in comedies, myths, epics, romances and indeed stories in general" (Selden-Widdowson-Brooker 72-73).

Frye divides the quest, or romance, into three main stages: the *agon* or conflict, where we are taken through the dangerous journey of the hero and his minor adventures; the *pathos* or death-struggle, where the final battle, struggle, or achievement is carried out; and the final celebration of the hero - the *anagnorisis* or recognition. He emphasises the importance of this

"threefold structure" that is often found in the romance, e.g. "the successful hero is a third son, or the third to undertake the quest, or successful on his third attempt" (187).

Auden also sees this "imposition of a numerical pattern", i.e. the use of a certain number which keeps appearing throughout the story, but says that it can be a different number depending on the structure of the quest story. What Auden does not agree to is the set order of the story. It has only two "fixed points" — the beginning and the final accomplishment. Everything else that appears within these "fixed points" is arbitrary (48). All in all, this still seems to agree with Frye's ideas, though definitely not with Propp's.

The dictionary's definition is of course an inadequate one. Searching and seeking is a part of the quest story, but is so much more than that. It ought to mention development and fulfilment along with characterisation and personal achievement. As I now turn to the specific adventures and experiences of Bilbo and Frodo, I will use Propp's specific functions as far as possible in tracing the quests, and I also think it is appropriate and helpful to keep Auden's, Helms', and Frye's ideas in mind. By following their general and rather vague stages we are able to keep an open mind about what really constitutes a quest, and to form our own particular quest scheme of Tolkien's two novels.

## **Agon - the Conflict**

### ***Part I: The Fellowship***

"In a hole in the ground there lived a hobbit" (H 1). The opening line of *The Hobbit* gives away much of the style in the book. Even though many adult readers love the book, it directs its narration to children, using the language of children, and very often talking directly to the child as in: "Now you know quite enough to go on with" or "as we shall see in the end". One of the reasons why adults enjoy it is because of the multitude of allusions it makes to something much grander, i.e. names and places that are explained or revealed later in *The Lord of the Rings*, or mythological aspects related to the complex "bible" *Silmarillion*. But as a whole, it is a story for children and consequently may seem difficult to find any deeper changes in the character of Bilbo, as seen in *The Hobbit*. One major change that we *do* find is related to the Ring. After finding it, Bilbo gradually becomes more self-confident and tough. T.A. Shippey makes a note of this: "Before he had it he was essentially a package to be

carried, his name as a 'burglar' nothing but an embarrassment even to himself. With the ring he can take an active part" (*The Road to Middle-Earth* 60).

To find more damaging effects on him, we need to turn our attention to *The Lord of the Rings*. At the beginning of the story we are met by a Bilbo who is sixty years older than in *The Hobbit*. He is of course not the young and vigorous hobbit he once was, but he is neither the old and typical hobbit of the Shire that he is expected to be:

He's often away from home. And look at the outlandish folk that visit him: dwarves coming at night, and that old wandering conjurer Gandalf, and all...Bag End's a queer place, and its folk are queerer. (LR 36)

He is considered strange and unhobbitlike and has been so since the day he left Bag End for his adventurous journey. Hobbits are not supposed to act like that, even if they *do* have some Took in them.

It is not only Bilbo's strange behaviour that his fellow hobbits dislike. Bilbo does not seem to age, and that is definitely not natural. As the years pass and others grow old, Bilbo does not: "At ninety he was much the same as fifty. At ninety-nine they began to call him *well-preserved*; but *unchanged* would have been nearer the mark." Not only is he rich but he also possesses "perpetual youth" (LR 33). But things are not what they appear to be, and this is where we find a negative effect on him, or rather the Ring's negative effect on him.

In *The Hobbit* the Ring is just a funny magical ring that makes the bearer invisible. In the sequel, its evil and corruptness is suddenly laid bare. Here we find that it has a will of its own, and that it can control the mind and actions of its bearer. It also stops the ageing of its owner, but only on the outside. While the appearance stays the same year after year, the inside goes through a dramatic change. Bilbo might be fifty to the world, but on the inside he is ageing in an unnatural way. He tells Gandalf that he is tired and in need of a holiday (LR 37). By holiday he means a permanent one. For one thing, he does not feel connected to the Shire and its hobbits anymore. He has seen a world outside the Shire and feels an urge to go join that world again, the same urge that Frodo feels later on: "Both have lost something of their substance and have moved off their own position in the scale of being toward a more elvish nature. It is significant that neither can live among hobbits" (Zimbardo 106).

The other reason for his holiday is the direct effect of the Ring:

I felt so queer. And yet it would be a relief in a way not to be bothered with [the Ring] any more. It has been so growing on my mind lately. Sometimes I have felt it was like an eye looking at me. (LR 47)

He feels drained and worn out, "thin and stretched" (LR 60), and the Ring is searching for his soul, never giving him any rest. He cannot get it off his mind, always wondering where it is if he has not put it on, and then always feeling that he has to put it on. It is a completely different picture of the Ring than that we see in *The Hobbit*. There it was only a positive thing helping him develop his character.

When it comes to Frodo, he also has a background that separates him from the ordinary hobbit. He is an orphan, both his parents having drowned in a boating accident on the Brandywine River. He is a Baggins, which is a very respectable hobbit family, but he also has Took and Brandybuck in his blood. The Took, as we already know, are famous for their adventurous legacy, which is apparent in Frodo. He begins "to feel restless, and the old paths [seem] too well-trodden. He look[s] at maps, and wonder[s] what [lies] beyond their edges" (LR 56). The Brandybucks are also looked at with scepticism. Their land, the Buckland, does not lie within the borders of the Shire, and they are very fond of boating on the river, which plain good hobbits are not.

The fact that Frodo is an orphan must have a psychological effect on him, as it has on all young people who lose their parents at an early stage. Tolkien himself was left an orphan in early childhood and that must play a significant part here, and just as Frodo is adopted by an eccentric and peculiar character, so was Tolkien and his brother Hilary taken into the community of the catholic priest Father Francis Morgan, a man who was religiously strict and correct but "had an immense fund of kindness and humour and flamboyance" (Carpenter 34). In other words, Frodo is as much shaped by his early experiences as he is shaped by his ancestry. What we know of Bilbo is that it is only his ancestry that is responsible for the outset of his journey, but both of them are probably the best suited hobbit at the time.

It is Gandalf that picks Bilbo for the quest of the Lonely Mountain, and we must trust Gandalf's judgement because he symbolises a higher consciousness in the two novels. Even if it is not Gandalf directly that picks Frodo for the quest of the Fire Mountain (it is in fact the Ring that makes that choice, given to him by Bilbo), he is certainly involved in the matter. He knows that Frodo probably is the one best suited for the quest, not only because the Ring has found its way to him, but because he has what it takes to perform such a deed, and Frodo is also aware of this fact: "[He] knows he 'is not made for perilous quests', and yet he can see that no one else is better suited" (Sale 253). This stage of the quest corresponds to Propp's ninth function: the connective moment. It brings the hero into play and his departure from home. It is a decision that the hero makes on his own, without giving the true reason for his

departure (33-34). As discussed above, Frodo makes this decision more or less on his own, while Bilbo is not given the chance to make his.

At the outset of the two quests we are immediately confronted with a difference in the attitudes of the two hobbits. Even if Bilbo does not have much time for consideration, he is not totally against the idea of leaving his cosy home, and "[begins] to feel that adventures [are] not so bad after all" (H 29). Although he from time to time wishes to be back in his good old hobbit-hole, it is still with a rising expectation that he accepts his new role as a burglar. He has been hired for his qualities, "the small size and ability for unobtrusive movement of the hobbit is deemed valuable for reconnaissance" (Fuller 19), even though he is a little bit insecure about these abilities himself. As mentioned, he has no time for preparations. He leaves his home in disorder because he is almost certain to be back very soon.

Frodo, on the other hand, leaves Bag End under totally different circumstances. Gandalf has informed him of the evil that now sweeps across Middle-Earth. Sauron, referred to as the Necromancer in *The Hobbit*, has finally revealed himself, and is looking for the one weapon that will help him conquer the world - the Ring. Frodo is confronted with the frightening and devastating news that the one person in the world that Evil incarnated is looking for, is him - Frodo Baggins:

Alas! Through [Gollum] the Enemy has learned that the One has been found again....He knows where Gollum found his ring. He knows it is a Great Ring, for it gave long life.... He knows that it is the One. And he has at last heard, I think, of *hobbits* and the *Shire*.... I fear that he may even think that the long-unnoticed name of *Baggins* has become important. (LR 72)

Doom is hanging over him, and he knows that he must leave the Shire and, however unlikely, take it to the house of Elrond. He has no expectations of success, in fact he is quite convinced that he is never coming back. This is evident in his effort to say goodbye to all and everything that is dear to him: "he had suddenly realised that flying from the Shire would mean more painful partings to merely saying farewell to the familiar comforts of Bag End" (LR 77), and most obvious in him in selling his beloved Bag End, and that to the hobbits he most detest - the Sackville-Bagginses.

Randel Helms applies the psychoanalytic theories of Freud to the events that take place in *The Hobbit*. He follows the theme of children but unlike Moorcock, who believed that the hobbits stayed "quasi-children" throughout their adventures, Helms finds that *The Hobbit* is about growing up. The comfortable Bag End with its round door stands as the womb and

vagina from which Bilbo is delivered. Leaving Bag End for the quest, he is "symbolically 'born' with all the helpless nakedness of the infant" (50). Frye also remarks on the personal development of character so familiar in this genre. Desire controls the goal of self-achievement: "the quest-romance is the search of the libido...for a fulfilment that will deliver it from the anxieties of reality" and in the end "the quest-romance is the victory of fertility over the waste land". The womb image is a part of the first phase of the hero's life, the birth (193, 198), and even if it is not a birth in a literal way, in Frodo's and Bilbo's case, it is a birth as a hero, i.e. leaving the womb.

As the journeys continue, Bilbo encounters "his first experience outside the womb" (Helms 50). Out in the wilderness, Bilbo and his companions are confronted with their first obstacle. Cold and wet as the rain is pouring down, Bilbo is sent forward to do his job as burglar, in the scene with the three trolls. This is a very witty and funny passage in the novel, including stupid rustic trolls, talking purses, and a cunning wizard. But if we look at Bilbo's perception of the situation behind the words and lines, it is evident that the experience is frightening. As it is, Bilbo is already among strangers. He has not known the dwarves very long, and they do not have much faith in him. Gandalf, although already known to him as a legend, is also a new acquaintance, even though Gandalf is trying to be supportive as opposed to the dwarves. He feels lonely as it is, and as if this was not enough, he is sent forward on his own to do a job he knows nothing about in the presence of three hideous beasts. It takes a considerable amount of courage on Bilbo's part to pick the pocket of the troll.

It is of course going to an extreme trying to convert a fairy tale into hard-core realism, but I am trying to prove a point here. Bilbo's first adventure is just as frightening as Frodo's, as we shall see, yet Bilbo's confidence and strength only improves as he goes on, as does the novel's language: "the tone and style change with the Hobbit's development, passing from fairy-tale to the noble and high and relapsing with the return" (*Letters* 159). Frodo on the other hand, deteriorates as he presses on. One aspect that we must consider here is that Bilbo is not affected by the Ring as he has not yet acquired it, while Frodo brings it with him from the start of his journey. This, in turn, leads us to the conclusion that it is not *only* the Ring that brings forth the courage in the elder hobbit. The underestimation of Bilbo's experiences is even seen in his greatest admirer - Frodo. Faced with the fact that he must leave the Shire, he confesses to Gandalf: "I have sometimes thought of going away, but I imagined that as a kind of holiday, a series of adventures like Bilbo's or better" (LR 76).

After Bilbo has successfully dealt with his first "job", he earns "the first symbol of his heroic 'manhood'" (Helms 51) in finding the sword Sting. Frodo acquires his "manhood" in a similar way, in the episode where the four hobbits find themselves in trouble, on that eerie and foggy day on the Barrow Downs. Here we see an almost identical situation to the one including Bilbo and the trolls. Sam, Pippin, and Merry have been taken by a beast just as the dwarves were taken by the trolls. Frodo is alone and feeling rather helpless and "dared not move, but lay as he found himself" (LR 155), just as Bilbo felt "not daring to move for fear they should hear him" (H 37). They are both cast into a hellish situation, and get involved in something that seems to be taken out of their own legends and fairy tales. In the end they are all rescued by a divine saviour - Tom Bombadil and Gandalf respectively, and from the treasures of the mound of the conquered wight they equip themselves with a dagger each - the "manhood" - as a token of their first victory.

After having faced danger upon danger for so long, both heroes and readers need a respite and some rest, an element that both Frye and Propp seem to have overlooked in their schemes. Before we can continue our two journeys we need to reload the batteries. One such sanctuary is the house of Elrond. Rivendell does not play any significant part in Bilbo's plot more than that the characters are able to get some valuable help from a higher authority. As readers, we feel secure and relieved that characters like Elrond, or Gandalf, are able to direct the two parties in the right direction, from time to time.

Gandalf is the member with supernatural powers in both novels, something that corresponds to Propp's fourteenth function "receipt of a magical agent" where "various characters place themselves at the disposal of the hero" (40-41), even though he does not appear in that set order Propp had in mind. In *The Hobbit* he is with the company from the start, leaving them from time to time and later appearing again to help, or to rescue Bilbo and the dwarves. In *The Lord of the Rings* he is with Frodo before the outset, but becomes a member of the fellowship quite late in the story, and then only for a brief period. Frodo has to do without an agent possessing magical powers, for the major part of the quest.

Frye talks about "the wise old man" as seen in Prospero or Merlin (195), but he does not develop this concept further. The divinity and wisdom of the wise old man is important, as it gives comfort to those involved, i.e. heroes as well as readers. Auden, on the other hand, talks of Gandalf as "the natural vocation of talent". He is strategically important as it is he who is the organiser and commander of the good side, because he is "a very wise man" (55). Gandalf is there to tell us what to do in times of need. You could say he is a kind of father figure.



When it comes to Frodo's adventures, Rivendell functions a little differently. It is not only a place for rest and reloading batteries, it is also a rescue and an asylum. Frodo has been exposed to both physical and mental attacks, Propp's sixteenth function: "the hero and villain join in direct combat" (47), where he has not been safe even in his own body, as the Ring is the link between the Black Riders and Frodo's mind. He has been on the brink of death, and at Rivendell, he is able to heal and recover from the dangers of this first part of the journey. It is also here that he is prepared and morally supported for the next stage of the quest.

The time at Rivendell is very soothing for Frodo and his companions. They are able to forget their worries for a short time, and Frodo also gets to see his beloved Bilbo. After leaving the Shire and travelling about in Middle-Earth, Bilbo has finally settled down in that particular place where he felt he could stay "for ever and ever" (H 47). The Bilbo we meet here is an old and tired hobbit. He has finally been given the chance to age and enjoy his days of retirement. The Ring has lost its control over him more and more since the day he gave it to Frodo: "He felt better at once....I don't think you need worry about Bilbo. . . for he gave it up in the end of his own accord: an important point" (LR 62). He has let it go but he has not forgotten it completely.

The relationship between the two hobbits is not what it once was. The Ring has become a wall separating the two friends. With the Ring in his immediate presence, Bilbo again feels a desire for it. When Frodo shows it to him, for a brief moment Frodo is filled with disgust and "he [finds] himself eyeing a little wrinkled creature with a hungry face and bony grasping hands. He [feels] a desire to strike him" (LR 248). Here we see a Bilbo filled with resignation and guilt, and he feels that he has laid a burden on a friend, a burden from which he cannot relieve him: "Put it away! I am sorry. . . sorry about everything. Don't adventures ever have an end?" (LR 248).

At the Council of Elrond much of the Ring's history and characteristics are laid bare. The big issue at this meeting is to decide what shall be done with it and who is to do it. The two hobbits again perform actions that seem similar to each other but are in fact very different. They both offer themselves to take the Ring to the Cracks of Mount Doom. To Bilbo this is the last desperate chance to once again lay his hands on the Ring. He cannot get rid of this urge now that he knows that it is again within his grasp. The offer is of course turned down, partly because the intentions of Bilbo are quite obvious, but also because he "cannot take this thing back. It has passed on" (LR 287). He has played his part in this affair, and now it is for others to finish.

Frodo's offer, or should we say sacrifice, is of a totally different nature even though, theoretically, it would be almost impossible for him to hand the Ring over to somebody else. The wound that he received on Weathertop has healed physically but mentally it will never really heal. The scars on his mind and soul are too grave to be overcome. In spite of this he still speaks up at the council: "I will take the Ring...though I do not know the way". Again he feels that he is the chosen one, but this time he must take it to the end of the road. This feeling is confirmed by Elrond when he says: "I think that this task is appointed for you, Frodo; and that if you do not find a way, no one will" (LR 288). In the midst of his deterioration he stands up and makes this brave and admirable offer, and after that he has never any intentions to deviate from this task: "Once he has chosen, Frodo is absolutely committed" (Auden 55). He must sacrifice himself so that the rest of the world can go on living, a theme that is not entirely unfamiliar to us.

The question of the Christ-symbol has often been discussed when it comes to *The Lord of the Rings*. Often it has been ascribed to Gandalf who in his fight with the balrog in Moria dies and then is resurrected. He sacrifices himself in order for the others to escape, and that means the Ring as well. Thus he saves the world. Frodo in a similar way gives up his life for the sake of others, and even though he does not literally die on the mountain when the Ring is destroyed, he later finds himself in a state where he cannot enjoy life and feel happiness, not even in the Shire. He is too marked by his experiences, and in the end he has to give up his life and go into the West. Edmund Fuller talks of Frodo as the "Cross-bearer" but with the big difference that Frodo all along wishes for someone to relieve him of the cross, and since no one does, he goes on bearing it. This is quite contrary to Christ who knows that no one can relieve him from his appointed task, and thus does not hope for it either.

Fuller makes one important point with which I totally agree. One should not make "a too-eager search for supposed Christ-figures in literature" (35). It is all right to draw parallels and find patterns, but to look too ardently for a Christ in Frodo or Gandalf, can be misleading. After all, the concept of the human sacrifice to save others is an old and omnipresent theme to be found in many religions as well as myths, and old myths have been the main source of inspiration to Tolkien. Keenan has widened this aspect and instead talks, from a psychological point of view, about the more universal "eternal child who must be sacrificed so that man may live" (67).

As both parties, Bilbo's and Frodo's, set out from Rivendell the first obstacle they must climb, or rather go under, is the Misty Mountains. These episodes are both of significant

importance. Frodo and his companions are here faced with a disaster and loss that no one had imagined. Bilbo is for the first time left entirely on his own and must now make his own decisions, and trust his own feelings. These incidents are similar in many ways but a big difference is the individuality versus the spirit of community matters. Bilbo is all alone while the fellowship works and functions as a group.

Under the Misty Mountains, Bilbo gets separated from the rest of the company. He loses consciousness and when he wakes up he is all on his own. Gandalf and the dwarves have lost Bilbo without even noticing it: "everybody ought to have followed. We thought everybody had" (H 86). The notion of not being missed is not something that helps in building up one's already fragile self-confidence. There is an attitude of unconcern from the dwarves part, and even Gandalf, who seems to be the only one who cares for Bilbo, is negligent in their chaotic flight.

Frodo's fellowship is also attacked by orcs in the mines of Moria, but they function as a group and never leaves a member behind. They retreat step by step not even leaving the dead:

Aragorn picked up Frodo where he lay by the wall and made for the stair, pushing Merry and Pippin in front of him. The others followed; but Gimli had to be dragged away by Legolas...'I am all right,' gasped Frodo. 'I can walk. Put me down!' Aragorn nearly dropped him in amazement. 'I thought you were dead!' he cried. (LR 344)

The only member they *do* leave behind is Gandalf who is caught by the balrog's whip "and [slides] into the abyss" (LR 349), and thus is beyond salvation. Here we see that there is much more care and concern for each other in Frodo's party than in Bilbo's, and to be left alone deep down in the mountains, in complete darkness, and not knowing where to go next, "just imagine the fright" (H 63), ought to be a harrowing experience. However, we will find that it is another step in Bilbo's growth as a character.

Helms talks about the growth of Sam and Frodo after their preliminary adventures, "they take their initial steps forward in preparation for the major quest" (91-96), and this very much applies to Bilbo as well. He does not despair, instead he adapts to the circumstances and is determined to find a way out: "*His* style of courage shows up when he is in the dark and alone" (Shippey 61). But the horror is not over yet. He is confronted with Gollum, and again he deals with a most distressing situation in an admirable way. In the end, of course, Bilbo wins the riddle contest because he is able, along with a little bit of luck, to keep his head clear in spite of the dangerous position he is in.

This scene, though it is insignificant for the rest of the plot in *The Hobbit*, is very important in the history of Middle-Earth. It is of course the One Ring of Sauron's that he has found, and which has become Gollum's "precious". To Bilbo, the Ring becomes a tool in building up his self-confidence. This has already improved quite a bit as it is, but with the Ring he is able to put a finger on this change within him, which I am sure he must have noticed himself. The Ring also functions as a hiding place for Bilbo. When this heroic growth becomes too overwhelming, he can put on the Ring and disappear for a while and retire to a safe place. The Ring becomes a womb substitute. Helms also see this growth of character due to the Ring, and that it is important that he goes through the ring-finding episode before he can move on to the real quest. He calls this the "first symbol of the 'treasure hard to attain' ". He has got to go through this stage to be able to continue his quest: "he must find the ring before he can use it" (56-57).

The fact that Bilbo is not as harmed by the Ring, as Gollum is, raises the delicate question "why". Gollum started his possession of the Ring with murder, mischief, and lies. He murdered his best friend Déagol and then used it for thievery and deception. Bilbo, on the other hand, started his possession with an act of pity. He did not kill Gollum though he had the chance: "it was pity that stayed his hand. Pity and Mercy: not to strike without need" (LR 73). It is the same pity that Frodo shows when he is confronted with Gollum. He recalls his conversation with Gandalf about Bilbo's show of pity and mercy, and where he wished that Bilbo had killed Gollum. Now he is struck by the same feeling and declares: "I will not touch the creature. For now that I see him, I do pity him" (LR 640). Sale suggest that this sympathy, which Sam definitely does not share, is because there is a bond between Gollum and Frodo, caused by their distant kinship of beings, combined with the fact that they are both Ringbearers (272)<sup>3</sup>.

There is however a small discrepancy in this argument when it comes to Bilbo's part. After coming home from his adventures, he never tells the true story about how he actually found the Ring, as opposed to winning it. This raises two important questions about the matter: why would he tell such an unimportant lie; and why did this lie, that concerned the Ring, not do more damage to Bilbo, as it had to Gollum?

The first question is easy to answer. Bilbo later told the true story to Gandalf and Frodo. Frodo thought the second version to be the true version, but cannot understand why Bilbo changed it. Gandalf though, has his suspicions. When he discovers the true nature of the Ring,

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<sup>3</sup> For further discussion on Gollum, "The Undefinable Shadowland... ", pp 20-25.

he knows also why Bilbo had lied: "he had been trying to put his claim to the ring beyond doubt. Much like Gollum with his 'birthday present'. The lies were too much alike for my comfort" (LR 61). To justify his murder, Gollum kept calling the Ring his "birthday present" because he thought that Déagol ought to have given it to him as it was his birthday. In the same way, Bilbo wants to justify his ownership of the Ring by claiming it is a gift. Even if he found it, he is afraid that someone will accuse him of theft and try to take the Ring away from him.

The second question is of a more difficult nature. Why is Bilbo not harmed by his lies as Gollum is? "Clearly the ring ha[s] an unwholesome power that set[s] to work on its keeper at once" (LR 61). One reason could be that it is only a little lie, and as such it has not any permanent effect on him. He is of a good-hearted nature and he is strong-willed. He is after all able to give up the Ring of his own free will in the end, even if Gandalf helps him to do so. This seems however to be an easy way out. No matter how small the lie is, it still concerns the Ring, and as the Ring is of a corrupt and evil nature, it ought to have taken control of Bilbo's mind, just as it did over Gollum's. Tolkien was aware of this problem but left it as it was. He had to change the original manuscript of *The Hobbit* to fit in with the new more complicated story:

I don't feel worried by the discovery that the ring was more serious than appeared; that is just the way of all easy ways out. Nor is it Bilbo's actions, I think, that need explanation.

The weakness is Gollum, and his action in offering the ring as a present. (*Letters* 121)

It would have taken too much time and effort in a matter that seemed not to be of any great importance. He left it as it was, and we just have to believe that it is Bilbo's strong will that makes him endure the evil powers of the Ring.

While the adventures of Bilbo under the mountains are rough and frightening, they are still just another step in his development of character. For each horrible experience he seems to grow as a person, which makes him the independent and self-thinking hobbit that we meet at the end of the story. Frodo on the other hand, is getting more and more dependant on his companions to help him through the quest. After the mountain episodes, again we are taken to a sanctuary in both novels. Bilbo, Gandalf, and the dwarves receive the kind hospitality of Beorn, while Frodo and his companions are able to rest and recover in Lothlórien, before setting out again.

When the company departs from Lothlórien, and travels down the Anduin, the hobbits again perform something out of the ordinary. Water is an unnatural element to hobbits in

general. Merry is very much used to this being a Bucklander, and used to the Brandywine River. Even Pippin and Frodo might have had some experience of this beforehand being well acquainted with Buckland, but Sam, with the exception of the short ride on the Bucklebury ferry, has never made such an "unnatural journey". Yet he shows an amazing amount of courage on this journey, and also later on at Parth Galen when he jumps into the water, without knowing how to swim, in order to follow his master.

What Sam exhibits is a pure act of love, and this shows how Sam and Frodo complement each other. While Frodo is more and more weighed down by the burden of the Ring, Sam grows in order to be able to help his master. Zimbardo describes the hobbits' acts of selflessness not as coming out of heroism, but from love: "The hobbits are the common man, who does not seek out the opportunity for great deeds....Sam is moved to deeds of heroic exploit out of love for Frodo" and that "it is love that binds them" (102). It is the same love that makes Sam give up the Ring of his own free will later on in the Tower of Cirith Ungol (107-108).

In a larger context, Charles Williams, a member of the Oxford literary circle called the Inklings along with members such as Tolkien and C.S. Lewis, also saw this theme: "[LR's] *centre* is not in strife and war and heroism...but in freedom, peace, ordinary life and good liking" (*Letters* 105). So when Bilbo in a similar way has to throw himself into the cold threatening water of a river, after having saved the dwarves from the Elvenking's dungeons, he demonstrates this sensible act of the common man. It is not an act of love because Bilbo has no reason to love the dwarves. They have not treated him with the respect he deserves. Aware of this as he is, he does not know to what extent the dwarves disrespect him; they do in fact despise him. In *Sagor från Midgård*, Gandalf reveals this hitherto unknown fact when he explains how simple-minded and conceited the dwarves really found Bilbo (428). What he performs here is a combined act of duty, respect, and his "ordinary life and good liking".

At Parth Galen, with the breaking of the fellowship, Frodo makes two crucial choices in which one is a display of weakness, and the other a show of strength. In a crazed moment, Boromir<sup>4</sup> tries to take the Ring from Frodo, which ends in Frodo putting on the Ring and he exposes himself to Sauron and the Nazgul: "He felt the eye. There was an eye in the Dark Tower that did not sleep. He knew that it had become aware of his gaze" (LR 421). He succumbs to the temptation of the Ring and exposes himself to the enemy. At this moment

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<sup>4</sup> For further discussion on Boromir see "The Undefinable Shadowland..." pp 8-11.

Frodo's deterioration is almost complete, giving into the one temptation he must not give in to, just as he did on Weathertop.

Here Frodo is filled with two conflicting voices. One urging him to keep the Ring on, the other screaming at him to take it off. It is the common hobbit sense that calls out to him again, saving him at the last moment. He takes the Ring off and decides to complete the quest on his own. He brings up the courage he seemed to have lost, and rises from the abyss he has sunk into:

I will do now what I must....This at least is plain: the evil of the Ring is already at work even in the Company, and the Ring must leave them before it does more harm. I will go alone. (LR 422)

Unwisely he does something that contradicts the reasoning he has just made with himself - he puts on the Ring in order to escape his friends.

It is remarkable that he is able to resist the power of the Ring a second time, considering what happened in the previous scene. There are some possible explanations to this. Either it is Frodo's sudden determination that saves him, as he has come to an insight what he must do from now on. It can also simply be another "easy way out" from Tolkien's part, in order to get Frodo away from his friends unnoticed. There is also the possibility that it is just a slip of mind. As we already know, Sam reads his master's mind, jumps into the river, gets pulled ashore, halfdrowned, and consequently, Sam becomes Propp's agent, but instead of a magical agent, he becomes a moral one, i.e. a complement to Frodo. Again, Auden's reflection of the importance of being humble enough to take advice, is confirmed when Frodo accepts Sam as companion.

Helms draws attention to the fact that the two books constituting *The Fellowship of the Ring* ends in the same way, i.e. with "a separation at a river" (97). Just as the first book ended at the Ford of Rivendell, where he was challenged by the Black Riders, so does the second end with the challenge of Boromir. This has a significant symbolic meaning that goes far back in the history of literature. "Entering or crossing a river" means a transition into a new stage of the quest, or a "final initiation or last irreversible step", and this in turn is proof of Frodo's determination to fulfil and complete his appointed task. As pointed out earlier, this is a temporary rise from his bad mental condition.

It is gradually getting evident that it is the Ring that is the cause of Frodo's bad condition. Even though he has been physically wounded, these wounds are all caused by the Ring, as are his mental wounds. Directly or indirectly, the Ring is to be blamed. Shippey compares the

Ring with our modern drug problems. It is "addictive" and its bearer is desperate for "a fix" even though he knows the consequences can be disastrous (106). Therefore he must resist with all will-power available not to have a relapse. Boromir is exposed to a kind of temporary addiction even though he has never owned or touched it, which shows us that as a drug, the Ring is very effective in that it can affect even people who do not use it. Let us be glad that there does not exist a drug like that in our world. Finally, Spacks makes an important observation when she says that Frodo's defence against Boromir is in the knowledge that the burden of the Ring is his, and he cannot give that burden away (88).

## ***Part II: On our own***

Having decided to take on the quest alone, Sam and Frodo cross the Anduin and start their first journey through a wasteland - in Frye's terms, fertility's struggle against sterility (193). Here they meet up with the wretched creature Gollum for the first time. The love/hate relationship with Gollum is very interesting and complex, and Tolkien saw parallels in the relationship Sam/Gollum to the relationship Ariel/Caliban in Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. Sam's distrustful treatment of Gollum equals that of Ariel's towards Caliban (*Letters* 77; *The Tempest* 80). Gollum's destiny is closely connected to Frodo and the Ring, as Gandalf points out: "he is bound up with the fate of the Ring. My heart tells me that he has some part to play yet" (LR 73), and the fact is that without Gollum the two hobbits would never have been able to find their way through the Dead Marshes, or to enter the land of Mordor, or most important, been able to destroy the Ring. He has many different sides and is "certainly the most complex, and interesting character in Middle-Earth" (Jacobsen 20).

After the journey in the wilderness, the hobbits get their last chance to rest before the Fiery Mountain. They meet with Boromir's brother, Faramir, who is a totally different person altogether than his brother. The meeting plays an important role more than just giving them the rest they so badly need. As Helms points out, Gandalf is able to get the information of the whereabouts of the hobbits through Faramir, and thus "there is hope in continuing to distract Sauron's attention from his own land" (106), in which lies the only hope of their futile mission. In *The Hobbit*, Bilbo is also able to reach a sanctuary after his escapade with the Elvenking, and the succeeding trip down the river, when he and the dwarves reach the town of Esgaroth. From here on they travel through *their* wasteland - the Desolation of Smaug - in order to reach their final destination - the Lonely Mountain.



In both novels we have now reached a stage with great symbolic meaning. The journey through the tunnel, or the "vagina" (Helms 49), and maybe it is here that we see the true value of Bilbo's courage. As Frodo and Sam enters the tunnel at Cirith Ungol, they are both unaware of what awaits them at the end of it. The only one who knows anything about it is Shelob's fellow conspirator, Gollum. Bilbo on the other hand, is fully aware of what awaits him. He enters the tunnel with the knowledge that he must face the most hideous creature that inhabits Middle-Earth, a dragon, and he goes in of his own free will. "It is time for him to perform the service for which he was included in [the] Company....and going from there was the bravest thing he ever did" (H 194, 197). "No one can fight a dragon, but everyone can fight fear" (Shippey 61).

In Freudian terms, this episode is filled with unconscious sexual symbolism. The mountain with its two outstretching slopes and the tunnel in the middle of it, is the woman's spread legs awaiting Bilbo to enter her vagina; just like the vagina he left at Bag End (Helms 57-58). It is of course not safety he is going back to, but total insecurity and therefore it can not be the pudenda of the mother, but must be that of reality and the life of adulthood. To Bilbo this task is carried out with success, and he is able to steal the two-handled cup. The cup is in itself a romance symbol of female sexuality, the woman being the food-provider, just as the bleeding lance is the male counterpart. The cup symbol goes back to Beowulf, and earlier than that, to The Holy Grail of Christ (Frye 194).

The heroism is now flowing through Bilbo, and foolishly he enters the dragon's lair a second time. This time he underestimates Smaug, who has discovered the theft. As he barely escapes alive, he has learnt another important lesson. Just as the first encounter with the dragon has revealed a hidden hero in him, the second encounter teaches him the importance of being humble and to show respect. Again we are given evidence of the two different directions in which the hobbits' characters are heading. Bilbo is getting more and more independent and self-reliant, while Frodo depends on the help of others, first the guidance of Gollum, and when he finally betrays Frodo, on the help of his trusted servant and right arm, Sam.

At the pass of Cirith Ungol, when Frodo is attacked by Shelob from behind, "with one swift stroke [she] had stung him in the neck" (LR 757), Sam is himself attacked by Gollum. He has no chance of saving his master as he has to fight for his own life. Here we see the role of the hero slowly shifting from Frodo to Sam. He is filled with rage and does not even consider the odds of a hobbit defeating a monster like Shelob. Out of genuine love for his

master he performs an act of bravery that equals those of Bilbo's. From this moment and onwards, he is the one who must function as hero and take the Ring to its final destination. Frodo is dead, or so he believes, and so he takes the Ring from him and prepares to set out for the Mountain on his own. He does not even contemplate failure, or giving up. Even though he is a more down-to-earth hobbit, and dependant on others to tell him what to do, he brings up the courage that we earlier only have seen in Bilbo and Frodo. For the first time, Sam is able to make decisions on his own, and that only *because* he is on his own.

The giant spider has by many critics been seen as a flaw of Tolkien's, also used in the chapter "Flies and Spiders" in *The Hobbit*, and in *Silmarillion* with the demi-god Ungoliant, but if seen from a symbolic perspective, Shelob becomes "the feminine counterpart to Sauron". While he is the symbol of anti-life, i.e. Death, Shelob "represents destruction and physical corruption, the opposites of generation and birth" (Keenan 72, 75). In other words, she is the antithesis of Keenan's Child symbol, as discussed above. But as we know Tolkien's attitude towards symbolism, the criticism is well-founded when it comes to our standards of realism, a spider like Shelob may seem pathetic and unrealistic. But she is a part of the reality and world order of Middle-Earth, and as such, a natural, though rare, creature.

As my tutor for this essay, Lennart Nyberg, has pointed out, it is difficult to overlook the concept of allegorical interpretations when it comes to the works of Tolkien. He was himself opposed to intentional allegory, but not to allegorical tendencies and language (Jacobsen 2). The difficult question is how to define allegory. When does symbolism become allegory? Or is it that symbolism is the same as allegory? The line is very vague, and that which separates the two concepts could be whether or not the symbolism is intentional. After all, Tolkien's world is fraught with allegorical devices, as is the language he uses.

When he discovers that his master is alive, Sam cannot, of course, leave Frodo in the hands of the orcs: "he no longer had any doubt about his duty: he must rescue his master or perish in the attempt" (LR 931). So he performs yet another act of selflessness and goes to beard the lion in his den. The hobbits never cease to amaze the rest of the world with their down-to-earth heroism. "The simple 'rustic' love of Sam...is *absolutely essential* to the study of his (the chief hero's) character" (*Letters* 161). Here we see how right Zimbardo is in her statement that the real trait of the hobbits is love. With a combination of courage and the orcs' tendency to fight each other, luckily Sam is able to rescue Frodo.

Sam is only Ringbearer for a short period of time, and thus never harmed by the evil powers of the Ring. In the tower, he gives it back to Frodo of his own free will, an altogether

remarkable performance. In this scene we witness one of the Ring's truly dark sides: the ability to transform people. Realising that the Ring has been taken away from him, even though from the best of intentions, Frodo turns aggressive and is transformed, if only for a moment, into Gollum: "Give it to me!...Give it me at once! You can't have it!...you thief!" (LR 946). This transformation is likewise seen in the character of Bilbo when he is to hand the Ring over to Frodo via Gandalf: "It is mine, I tell you. My own. My precious. Yes, my precious" (LR 46). The power of the Ring is treacherous and unreliable as it is able to transform people "according to the stature of its user" (Fuller 25), and we can see how devastating it would have been if it was to come into the hands of the powerful, say Aragorn, Saruman, Galadriel, or Sauron.

In his discussion on one typical form of the romance, the dragon-killing, Frye recalls some often occurring elements of this type of quest. Some of these we see in Bilbo's adventure such as the old helpless ruler (the Master of Esgaroth), the wasteland laid bare by the dragon (the Desolation of Smaug), and the succession of a new king (Bard the Bowman). Other elements are missing such as the sacrifice of children to appease the dragon, or the marriage of the King's daughter to the hero (189). This shows us that Tolkien has not only drawn his tale upon ancient mythical themes, but also added a few of his own. There is the division of the role of the hero into two, with Bilbo as the anti-hero, and the more modest role of the dragonslayer, Bard. The lack of a love-story between man and woman is also evident, and there is really no room for an elaborate love-story. Bilbo has to go through his own personal development before he can engage himself in a relationship that is, perhaps, even more complex than the one he has with the dwarves, or with the quest as a whole, for that matter.

One of the more complex aspects of Tolkien's works is his division of the role of the hero, something the critics of the quest theme that I have studied, have not paid any attention to. As we have seen, in *The Hobbit*, we have two heroes, Bilbo and Bard. In *The Lord of the Rings*, there is an even greater division of the hero, as there are several parallel plots running throughout the novel. Gandalf and Aragorn could be seen as divine heroes, with their noble ancestry as background, and their roles as leaders of the armies of the West. Sam and Frodo are the obvious heroes to us as they are the ones that carry out the most important task of them all. Merry is, in his own right, a true hero as he helps Eowyn kill the Witch-king of Angmar. Even Gollum has a heroic part, or should we say anti-heroic, as he is the one that destroys the Ring. It feels like I could go on like this with almost all the main characters, as

they all seem to perform some heroic deed, in one way or another. It is here that we see Tolkien's strength as a storyteller as he is able to keep the tale going on so many different places, and levels.

A concept of Frye's that is very much appropriate in a discussion of Tolkien's works, is the character type he calls *Golux*. Helms uses this term in his discussion of Tom Bombadil (94), and even though his arguments are quite convincing, I think he has overlooked one character who also fits this description, namely Sam Gamgee. Frye talks of "the children of nature. . . who serve the hero", and even though Sam does not possess supernatural powers, he is very close to nature. He is the gardener, and cares very much for all living things, especially those who grow out of the earth. When he later returns home, he runs "up and down the Shire" in order to restore the scourging of the land, caused by Saruman and his gang (LR 1061). Frye is also looking for a connection between the *Golux* of the romance, and the *Agroikos* of the comedy, i.e. "the refuser of festivity or rustic clown". Again, this is applicable to Sam. He is the one who never appreciates a joke, "the refuser of festivity", and yet he is the comic gardener, "the rustic clown", that gives us quite a few laughs throughout the story without himself being aware of it.

Finally, before we go into the second phase of Frye's "complete form of the romance", there needs to be said a few words about yet another quality discovered in Bilbo: his sense of justice, as discussed by Paul H. Kocher (29-30). After the death of Smaug, there arises a conflict over the treasure between the dwarves on the one side, and the Men of Esgaroth on the other side. Who are the rightful owners? How shall the treasure be divided? Bilbo tries to work as a mediator in the conflict, but due to the stubbornness on both sides, there is a stalemate. He sees that the people of Esgaroth is in desperate need of help, as their town has been wiped out by Smaug, and therefore he gives them his "own fourteenth share" (H 253) of the recovered treasure.

When Bilbo takes the Arkenstone as his share, it is another step forward in his development towards complete independence. He now sees himself as a full-grown member of the Company, and is able to make a decision without consulting the dwarves, just as Sam was able to make his. This scene corresponds to Propp's nineteenth function concerning lack-liquidation, where "the object of a search is abducted by means of force or cleverness". Propp mentions that the hero often uses the same means as the villains do (48), and in our case, Bilbo is actually stealing the jewel from Thorin. His act of justice, as I mentioned before, shows when he so unreservedly gives the Arkenstone to the people in need, an altogether

astonishing exhibition of compassion and unselfishness - "his virtue of moral courage" (Shippey 66). Who would have guessed that this is the same hobbit who refused to go out on any adventures at all, at the beginning of the story?

## Pathos - the Death-struggle

As we now go into the second phase of Frye's scheme, the final battle, we find a slight difference in the two novels. In *The Hobbit* there is one final death-struggle where the forces of good and evil clash together, "the completion of which rounds off the story" (Frye 187). It is a classic ending with one great showdown where the end of the story is determined. In *The Lord of the Rings* we see a much more complex climax. We have the final battle with the forces of good and evil on each of the two sides, but it is not the outcome of this battle that determines the final victory. The real death-struggle is taking place in the land of Mordor with Sam and Frodo's effort to throw the Ring into the Fire, and consequently, the ultimate defeat of Sauron.

All the petty grievances concerning the treasure in *The Hobbit* are forgotten with the imminent attack of the goblins. They unite their forces against the true common enemy in the Battle of Five Armies<sup>5</sup>, with the realisation that they are all on the same side - the good side. The battle is expressive of Tolkien's own war experiences. He participated as a signalling officer in the British offensives in France in 1916, during the Great War - "the war to end all wars". As to all young soldiers, this was a terrible experience for Tolkien. Not only did he lose many of his closest friends, but was himself injured after the Battle of Somme, diagnosed with shellshock, or "trench fever". He was sent home to England, where he later recovered (Carpenter 89-94), but the terrible images of war never left him and is reflected in many ways in his works. The Battle of Five Armies is characterised by fluctuating offensive waves, a charge from the one side, and when that dies down, another charge from the other side. This is

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<sup>5</sup> In my opinion, it should in fact be called the Battle of Seven Armies, as the eagles appear later in the fight, and after that, Beorn the Shape-changer, who "violently hated orcs" and "in [this] battle killed Bolg, the leader of the Orkish forces (Foster 42). Beorn is alone, but as he is the difference between victory and defeat, he should be counted as a seventh army.

a true picture of the meaningless trench warfare of the Great War. There is no individual heroic efforts as seen in the War of the Ring.

Another passage, the journey through the Dead Marshes in *The Lord of the Rings*, pictures an additional side of his war experiences: "They walked slowly, stooping, keeping close in line" and "it grew more and more difficult to find the firmer places where feet could tread without sinking into gurgling mud" (LR 652). In his biography, Carpenter tells us about some of the conditions during the war:

The long march at night-time from the billets down to the trenches, the stumble of a mile or more through the communication alleys that led to the front line itself, and the hours of confusion and exasperation until the hand-over from the previous company had been completed. (91)

Again, we find ourselves very close to the concept of allegory, but we have to ask ourselves if it is an intentional projection of his own war experiences he makes here. Does he really intend to draw parallels to the Great War, or is this just Tolkien's way of relating to wars, as it is the only war experience he has had. He has first-hand knowledge of war, and what it means to those involved. What we see in these excerpts above is only the tactics of the Great War, but the sufferings and consequences are timeless and not only significant to World War One. As he has been in one war, he is able to describe another realistically. Even if Tolkien would not admit that this is allegory, I think this is a moment where he is unable to keep it out of his mythology, and his only defence would probably be that it was not intentional.

Bilbo's part in this war is not of great importance, but he finds himself in the middle of it, and it is "the most dreadful of all Bilbo's experiences, and the one which at the time he hated most" (H 259). There are great losses of dwarves, men, and elves, not to speak of the other side. His friends Fili and Kili are dead, and he is brought to the death bed of Thorin. Just as Tolkien himself had to part with many friends during the war, so does Bilbo.

But all is well that ends well, and Bilbo and Thorin are reconciled: "Farewell, good thief...I wish to part in friendship with you, and I would take back my words and deeds at the Gate", to which Bilbo responds: "Farewell, King under the Mountain...This is a better [sic.: read bitter] adventure, if it must end so" (H 264). Bilbo is at last acknowledged as a valuable member of their company, and he is finally accepted and shown the respect he had not received before. In the end, the treasure is equally divided among the victors, and the quest has finally come to an end.

Frodo and Sam has come to the last stage of their journey. They must enter a second struggle against sterility, the Plains of Gorgoroth. Frodo is getting weaker by the minute, and this part of the journey is really Sam's. He must in any way try to help and encourage his master, and when this fails, he feels frustrated and helpless: "So that was the job I felt I had to do when I started...to help Mr. Frodo to the last step and then die with him" (LR 969). Eventually they reach Mount Doom, and ascends it, but in the Chambers of Fire, the Sammath Naur, things go wrong. Frodo does something quite unexpected: "I have come....But I do not choose now to do what I came to do. I will not do this deed. The Ring is mine" (LR 981). He decides to keep the Ring, and puts it on his finger, and finally gives in to the ultimate temptation, and to folly.

Why does Frodo then choose to keep the Ring? Keenan asks the same question, and tries to answer it: "Exactly what the ring promises Frodo...we do not learn. But we may be assured that this includes the power to rule and to dominate in achieving the desire". In Freudian terms, this aggressive act corresponds to his denial of "the existence of death" (68-69). By putting it on his finger he is able to delay his own death: to become immortal. Furthermore, the Ring's destruction will also mean the death of the beauty that the three good elvenrings, never touched by Sauron, have created, and their beauty will vanish and their powers be broken (LR 384). It is a difficult dilemma. If the Ring is not destroyed, death will follow; if it is destroyed, death will also follow. But Frodo's decision to keep the Ring is not of that noble character. We can rest assured that his decision is made wholly out of selfish reasons, as it is the corruption of the Ring that controls his mind and decision in Sammath Naur.

The other, subordinate, death-struggle, the battle between the forces of Minas Tirith and the hosts of Sauron, plays an equally important role. As discussed earlier, the outcome of this struggle will not determine the outcome of the conflict as a whole. If the army of Sauron demolishes the armies of the West, there is still a small hope in the futile mission of Frodo. Likewise, if the good side wins over evil, it is not over as long as the Ring exists, and can therefore only be a temporary triumph, and indeed the Battle of Pelennor Fields is won by the good side, but it is an important victory. As long as they keep on resisting, they buy time in order for Frodo to fulfil his task, and Sauron's attention to his own land is diverted. Here we see the importance of Faramir's knowledge of the whereabouts of Frodo and Sam. He is able to convey to Gandalf that hope lives on.

On the top of Mount Doom, help arrives from an unexpected source. Even though Frodo is invisible, Gollum is able to locate him and attack him, biting the Ring, with finger and all,

off the hand of Frodo. In his joy over finally owning his "precious" again, he performs a sing-and-dance on the edge of the abyss, topples over, and disappears into the fire, destroying himself and the Ring. Here we see the truth in Gandalf's words that Gollum "has some part to play yet", and function twenty-six is fulfilled: "a task is accomplished" (Propp 55).

Frye brings up the act of mutilation as a common ingredient in the quest-romance: "it is often the price of unusual wisdom and power" (193). When it comes to Frodo, he has to pay the price of mutilation to regain the wisdom, lost by his temporary insanity. In his case, wisdom does not mean to be wise and learned, instead it stands for the common sense he otherwise possesses. As to power, the matter is a bit more ambiguous. He has to get rid of the power - the Ring - in order to regain another kind of power - the power over himself. We also have his power to save the world, and even if it is not Frodo personally that throws in the Ring, the merit is his, as he has brought it there.

Keenan talks about the mutilation as a "symbolic castration". Frodo has lost his sexuality, and this "represent the death of the body", and this is a further step towards his androgyny, (69-70). Keenan seems to contradict himself when it comes to the symbolism of death. By putting on the Ring Frodo denies death, but when he discusses the sexual castration later on, he sees the invisible Frodo as symbolically dead. He puts on the Ring to escape death, but the second he does that he is dead anyway. That does not make sense, at least not to me.

Frodo and Sam are rescued in the end, and are taken back to the land of the living, to be celebrated as the heroes they truly are. The quest is fulfilled, and incidentally or not, it ends in the same way as in *The Hobbit*, with the arrival of the Eagles (H 262; LR 927). The hobbits, Bilbo, Frodo, and Sam, have all gone through some traumatic and heartbreaking episodes, and have lived to see the result of their success. What remains now is the celebration, function number twenty-seven (Propp 56), and then the journey home to their beloved Shire. In the last stage of the quest-romance, we shall see what the effects of their adventures ultimately are when it comes to their persona.

## **Anagnorisis - the Recognition**

To Bilbo, the Battle of Five Armies is very much the end of his adventures. There is not much celebration to talk about, and indeed not much to celebrate. There has been many losses and much damage, and now starts a period of healing. Bilbo and Gandalf are very soon on their



way home, which is uneventful and quite pleasant. They take their time, and stay to enjoy the hospitality of Beorn, and Elrond. " 'So come snow after fire, and even dragons have their ending!' said Bilbo, and he turned his back on the adventure" (H 270). He feels weary, and he is longing for the quietness and the warmth of Bag End: "the Tookish part was getting very tired".

The result of Sam and Frodo's efforts is much greater. Sauron has been defeated and banished from the confines of the world. On the fields of Cormallen, the heroes are recognised, and there are many happy meetings of old friends. Later we also see the restoration of the King, something Frye attributes to the particular dragon-killing theme (189), as seen in Bilbo, but that concept seems to be applicable to the romance in general. We even have the marriage so typical of the Shakespearean comedy, e.g. in *Much Ado About Nothing*, which Propp has as his thirty-first and last function. Aragorn marries his queen, Arwen, and later Sam gets his Rose Cotton. The festivities are extensive, and goes on for a long time before our heroes at last can turn their feet to the journey back home.

In both novels, the return to the Shire is not what is to be expected. They come back to a state of chaos and bewilderment. Bilbo finds that he is considered dead, and that his Bag End is up for auction. Frodo and his company return to a much more complex situation. Saruman has in his last efforts to do mischief, taken control over the Shire and its hobbits. He has made himself dictator, and has started a meticulous destruction of the country, symbolised by modern technology and its pollution. With the return of the heroes, there is also a return of courage and determination. The four hobbits have outgrown their fellow countrymen in more than one aspect, and they are able to infuse new life in them. The revolt is started which, in the end, results in the overthrowing of Saruman and his gang.

This adventure is not Frodo's, or even Sam's, but Merry's and Pippin's. Even though the achievements of Frodo and Sam are much greater, Merry and Pippin become the true heroes of the Shire. The matter of the Ring is not of great importance in the Shire, in fact many hobbits have not even been aware of the goings on of the world and the danger they have all been in. To them, what counts are the affairs of the Shire, and consequently it is Merry and Pippin who are the saviours of the world. To a more ambitious hobbit, this ignorant reception would be offensive and insulting, but fortunately, this does not bother Sam or Frodo, who are quite happy to continue their lives in silence and obscurity.

Here the story could end in happiness and harmony, as it did in *The Hobbit*, but it does not. The experiences of Frodo have been too rough for him to forget, and thus be able to go on

with his old life: "he bears forever the three wounds: knife-wound of Weathertop, for folly; the sting of Shelob, for over-confidence; and the finger torn away with the Ring, for pride" (Zimmer-Bradley 124). His burden has been taken away with the destruction of the Ring, but the wounds he carries inside never heal. He is constantly reminded of them, both physically and mentally. He is trying to cope with life for Sam's sake, but in the end he has to give up that fight. He sees the inner turmoil of Sam, who is split between the love for Frodo, and the love for his new family, which he had hoped Frodo also would be a part of: "You cannot always be torn in two. You will have to be one and whole, for many years. You have so much to enjoy and to be, and to do" (LR 1067). This is where we see one of the positive effects of Frodo's experiences. He has achieved a new insight and compassion for the things and people surrounding him, and in that respect he has become a fulfilled hobbit. Zimmer-Bradley (124) sees this compassion in his treatment of the defeated Saruman. Even though Saruman tries to kill him, he will not retaliate: "Do not kill him even now. For he has not hurt me" (LR 1057).

In the end, Frodo leaves the Shire, and joins up with many of his old friends on their journey to the Grey Havens. This is a theme that goes through the work, and we should be well prepared for this kind of ending. This new age arisen is the age of Men, and the era of the Elves is come to an end:

For the Third Age was over, and the Days of the Rings were passed, and an end was come of the story and song of those times. With them went many Elves of the High Kindred who would no longer stay in Middle-earth; and among them, filled with a sadness that was yet blessed and without bitterness, rode Sam, and Frodo, and Bilbo, and the Elves delighted to honour them. (LR 1067)

With the destruction of the Ring, Frodo becomes himself again, and this proves that the Ring is to be blamed for the change in his character (Sale 282-283), and as we have seen he "is no more for this world....he has transcended hobbitry" (Ready 56).

It is a bitter-sweet ending, but in the end it all makes sense to us, and this is the way it must be. The Fourth Age has begun, and there is no room for elves, wizards, and damaged hobbits. As Galadriel, Elrond, Gandalf, Frodo, and Bilbo set sail for the West and leave Middle-Earth in the Arthurian spirit, we see that the happy ending in *The Hobbit* is just temporary. Bilbo is not unhurt by his adventures, even if he at the time stood tall and faced his events with an admirable degree of courage. As Sam comes home after seeing his friends off, he can start his new life as a father, and Rose has finally got a whole husband: "Well, I'm back" (LR 1069).

## Conclusion

As we now have been taken through the two quests of Bilbo and Frodo, I have tried to use the theories and ideas of several critics. Propp's systematic and precise structure is specifically developed with the Russian folktale as backbone, and the folktale is very often constructed as a quest. This does however not mean that his thirty-one functions fit all quest tales. There are certainly many elements in his scheme that are useful to my study, but there are likewise many elements missing, and also others that do not fit at all. One main purpose of Propp's study according to Selden-Widdowson-Brooker, was to show that even if not all the functions were included in the tale, "the functions always remain in sequence" (72). As we have seen when applied to Tolkien's works, Propp's functions have not followed this established sequence. Another difference is that Propp seems to build his structure on one particular hero and therefore applies all the heroic qualities to that one person. Tolkien has divided the heroic efforts of his tales upon several individuals who all contribute to the final victory, i.e. the killing of Smaug, and the overthrowing of Sauron. This is the strength of the two novels, and especially of *The Lord of the Rings*, as the intricacies makes the reader so dependant on all the characters of the work so that he can never be sure of which direction the plot is heading, or the complex turn events might take, as seen on Mount Doom.

Frye's notions have been more useful. He has not the strict division and order of Propp which makes it more applicable to Tolkien. Again, there are elements missing and others not fitting, but Frye talks of the quest in a more general way, and he also delves deeper into the psychological effects of symbolism, seen in the devices, the characters, and the language of the quest theme. Together with Helms' and Keenan's psychoanalytic notions, Frye have shown us that no matter how much an author tries to distance himself from the primary world, he cannot ignore its moral values and aspects, or even its language. Even though the secondary world has its own mythology, rules, and laws, and is not a part of the primary world, it must be a reflection of it. Frye has in his study sought to find the common universal elements that can be seen in the romance, and not got stuck on details which almost always divides more than they unite.

I have also touched lightly upon the subject of allegory, as it is impossible to ignore in any discussion on Tolkien, whether he disliked it or not. A full development of this concept

would not have been possible, considering the size of this essay, but I have been able to show how vague the borders between allegory, symbolism, and personal experiences really are. I have discussed all these three categories, notable in my discussions on the picture of England, the matter of orphanage, the Christ symbol, and Tolkien's own war experiences, and I must say that Tolkien makes use of all three of them in his works, intentionally or not.

There is a dramatic change in the character of the two hobbits, but as we have seen the changes are very different, and in both cases the Ring is to be blamed for it. Bilbo's development in *The Hobbit* is entirely positive. It is in fact because of the Ring that he becomes the brave and sensible hobbit we meet at the end of the story. He has gone through a considerable metamorphosis as we see an increase of self-confidence, a step towards full independence, and a fully developed sense of compassion and justice. We do not see the effects of the Ring on him until we read the opening chapters of *The Lord of the Rings*, and even then they are not as damaging to him as they are to his nephew. He has lied while possessing the Ring, which is supposed to be disastrous, and he has got away with it. Even in his last hour of possessing the Ring, he is able to perform a heroic act when he gives the Ring away of his own free will.

Frodo's development goes in the opposite direction. From the moment he is informed that the ring is *the Ring*, the deterioration of his character starts. He cannot, like Bilbo, function as an individual, but has to rely on his trustworthy companions, or in the case of Gollum, his untrustworthy companion. There are some moments when he rises from this deterioration, e.g. at the Council of Elrond, in Moria, or at Parth Galen, but in the end we see a hobbit-wreck that has lost the happiness and liveliness of his former self. He has suffered too much to be able to go on living in this world. Maybe the difference is in the knowledge of what the Ring really is. Bilbo knows nothing of its maker, and therefore the Ring allows Bilbo the possession without damaging him. Frodo's purpose, on the other hand, is to destroy it, something the Ring is aware of, and therefore it tries to break down the hobbit. In this discussion, it is important to see the Ring, not as an object, but as an extension of Sauron's mind and power.

As touched upon, *The Hobbit's* intended audience is children and therefore it is easy to give that as the reason for the different developments, but there are two reasons that speak against this. First, we have the Bilbo we meet in the sequel, but also *The Hobbit* itself. As Kocher points out, on the surface it seems to be a children's story, but there are so many situations in the novel that requires the reasoning of an adult. The plot works on two different

levels of maturity, and even if a child understands and enjoys the book, there are situations that a child cannot possibly grasp, e.g. the moral dilemma of the treasure after the death of Smaug, or the mercy and pity that Bilbo feels for Gollum (29-31). It is this ambiguity that makes it possible to trace Bilbo's development, as he adapts to the situations and conflicts he is involved in throughout the story.

In the end, I think most of the quest stories have their own little scheme, and it is very difficult to create a scheme that covers all instances of the romance. I am not saying that Tolkien is unique in his way of picturing the quest, even though I am sure he has added a few elements of his own, but he has been inspired from many different sources, so many in fact that there does not exist a scheme that covers the whole of his quests. To find such a scheme you have to create one of your own, one that applies to Tolkien in particular, and where you locate the different elements he uses in myth, religion, literature, criticism, and so forth, "but that quest may be for others" (LR 79).

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## **Acknowledgements**

I am *academically* indebted to Lennart Nyberg, Lars-Håkan Svensson and Christian Stenevi.

I am *personally* indebted to Stefan Gudmundsson, Ingela Hansson and the girls, Glenn Håkansson, and Anders Wikander, for fantastic help and support while writing this essay.

I am *philosophically* indebted to Jimmy Nail, Kiss, the Simpsons, Jamie and Paul Buchman, the Cape, the Dubliners, Sorgenfri Boys and the inhabitants at Melrose Place, for helping me through the day.

As always, I owe my existence to mum, dad, friends, and the rest of my family.

A very special thanks to Åke Ohlmarks who has shown me how disastrous, and poor, a translation really can be, and that, in turn, has guided me in my choice of education, and future profession.

*Elen sila lúmenn' omentielvo!*