LUND UNIVERSITY
oint Faculties of Humanities and Theology

Centre for Languages and Literature
English Studies

# The Jungian Hobbit: Bilbo's Individuation Process in the Archetypal Hero Story *The Hobbit*

Pontus Brandt
ENGK01
Degree project in English Literature
Spring term 2018
Centre for Languages and Literature
Lund University
Supervisor: Ellen Turner

# Abstract

Carl Jung, the Swiss psychologist, is best known for his theories of the archetypes, which are universal and archaic images that are nestled deep inside the part of the psyche that Jung coined the 'collective unconscious.' These can be found in art, such as literature, and be extracted and analyzed. The hero's journey, which is a story that has been told since the birth of literature, revolves around a hero who undergoes transformation during an adventure. This essay examines Bilbo, the protagonist of J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Hobbit*, who, develops through trials and tribulations and comes out at the other end of his adventure as a different man. This essay investigates how Bilbo's maturation can be understood in terms of Jung's individuation process, concluding that for Bilbo to become the hero he is meant to be, he needs to be courageous, take responsibility and be able to sacrifice himself for the greater good. By integrating his own shadow and by confronting the dragon, he eventually reaches psychological integration and wholeness, as he releases his 'Tookish' side – his anima – from captivity and thereby gains the "the treasure hard to attain" – representing the archetype of the self.

# Table of contents

# Introduction

In 1969, Carl Jung, the Swiss psychologist, wrote *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*. In this book he explores the idea of a collective unconscious, a place in the psyche that contains archetypes, which manifest themselves in all humans. This was his most developed theory but also his most controversial. Certain critics, such as Maurice Freedman and R. C. Zaehner, branded him as a modern gnostic because they believed that he placed too much focus on the unconscious as the only source of knowledge. Ministers and theologians called him a skeptic and an agnostic as they believed that he was explaining god in terms of the psychological theory of the archetypes (Coward 490). Regardless of the criticism raised against Jung, his theory of universal archetypes remains and it can be applied in the art world even today. This is where *The Hobbit*, as a hero story, comes in. It contains elements of the typical dragon slayer-story – such as the hero, the dragon and the treasure – yet it deviates in the sense that the hero is not the actual dragon-slayer. If the archetypes are universal, as Jung claims, then they should be visible in a hero story like *The Hobbit*.

Jung contributed to modern psychology in his formulation of a constructive theory of the human psyche, and his own empirical research increased the understanding of psychopathology and its treatment (Valett 23). He was an influence on many scholars, such as Joseph Campbell, who applied Jung's theories in his own vast body of work. In 1949, when *The Hero With a Thousand Faces* came out, he conceptualized the hero's journey with the monomyth, a universal cycle that could be applied to any hero story. The basic idea was that any hero adventure starts in the ordinary world, the place in which the hero resides. But as that world offers no trials and challenges – and therefore no personal growth – the hero must take a leap out into the unknown so that he, ultimately, can slay the dragon and win the treasure. Campbell in his turn was an inspiration to many in the art world, and filmmaker George Lucas admitted that he had been influenced by Campbell's theories when he wrote and produced Star Wars. *The Hobbit*, as a hero story, offers the perfect link between myth and the archetypes.

Some researchers have interpreted Tolkien's *The Hobbit* as a Bildungsroman, as the story can be seen as a journey of finding one's own identity through trials and tribulations (Arslan 136). Similarly, Dorothy Matthews, drawing on Jung's theories, asserted that Bilbo's journey was an inner journey towards self-development (30). In short, *The Hobbit* is the tale about the adventures of Bilbo Baggins, a hobbit with little wisdom and physical prowess,

who lives at Bag End near the village of Hobbiton. His reluctant acceptance to take part in an adventure – together with 13 dwarves and one wizard – is the starting point of what will be a journey into the unknown; there, in the darkness, will he continually face obstacles and encounter evil forces, which culminates in the confrontation with Smaug, the terrifying gold-hoarding dragon. The hero's journey as a journey towards self-development or personal growth is not a new concept, but compared to *The Lord of the Rings* less research has been done on *The Hobbit* within the Jungian framework. Dorothy Matthews did a psychological interpretation of Bilbo's journey where she examined Bilbo and his individuation process and interpreted Bilbo's journey as a "metaphor for the individuation process, his quest as a search for maturity and wholeness, and his adventures as symbolically detailed rites of maturation" (30). However, current research offers little in terms of possible psychological interpretations of the dragon and the treasure in the hero's journey, something that Neumann referred to as the "treasure hard to attain" (Neumann 195).

Archetypes, which are primordial images that lie hidden in the part of the psyche that Jung calls the collective unconscious, can be found in hero stories. According to Jung, the archetypes are universal and collectively exist in all individuals – regardless of culture and time period. I propose that *The Hobbit* is an archetypal hero story because it contains three of the most basic elements of the hero-story: The hero, the dragon and the treasure. The story about the hero as a dragon slayer is perhaps one of the oldest stories of mankind, a story that has been told again and again. The purpose of the essay is to examine Bilbo's psychological maturation in accordance with Jung's individuation process. This study aims to explain how Bilbo's self-development occurs in *The Hobbit*, as well as to investigate the psychological significance of his confronting his shadow, the dragon and gaining the treasure. So the questions to which I seek answers are: how does Bilbo's individuation process occur in *The Hobbit*? And what is the psychological significance of Bilbo's journey, which culminates with the confrontation with the dragon and the attainment of the "treasure hard to attain"?

In addition to Carl Jung's *Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*, I will refer to Campbell's *The Hero With a Thousand Faces* as Campbell offers a mythological perspective based on Jung's theories. In this essay I will argue that from a Jungian perspective, Gollum, Bilbo and Smaug represent the archetypes of the *shadow*, *the hero*, and *the dragon*, respectively. I propose that Bilbo's journey is a journey of maturation and that he transforms through trials and tribulations. His journey is an inner journey of self-

development, following Jung's individuation process: the psychological integration of the unconscious into the conscious. Moreover, for Bilbo to reach his full potential and transform into the hero he is meant to be, I claim that he needs be courageous, take responsibility, and learn the importance of sacrifice, and that he, by integrating his shadow and confronting the dragon, will be able to reach psychological integration and wholeness.

# Psychoanalytic theory: The Archetypes

Freud, the father psychoanalytic theory, explained the human psyche by dividing it into the 'id', the 'ego' and the super-ego' (Freud 53). However, Freud's disciple, Carl Jung, was not content with Freud's explanation of the unconscious as "denoting the state of repressed or forgotten contents (Jung 3). He believed that there was a deeper level – he named it the collective unconscious – to that which Freud called the unconscious (Jung 3).

According to Jung, Freud's notion of the unconscious was just a superficial layer and in *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious* he explains the relation between the layers:

> A more or less superficial layer of the unconscious is undoubtedly personal. I call it the personal unconscious. But this personal unconscious rests upon a deeper layer, which does not derive from personal experience and is not a personal acquisition but is inborn. This deeper layer I call the collective unconscious (3).

He goes on by saying that he chose the term collective because he believes that part of the unconsciousness is universal, and that it has "contents and modes of behavior that are more or less the same everywhere and in all individuals" (4). According to Jung, the archetypes were primordial images, nestled deep inside our psyche, but from which valuable information could be extracted under certain circumstances. When he observed his patients – through their dreams, fantasies, and visions – he noticed that there were certain regularities. He called these types, which consisted of types of situations and types of figures and they "repeated themselves frequently and had a corresponding meaning" (183). For example, he found that human figures could be arranged under certain archetypes, such as *the shadow* and *the wise old man* (183). These archetypes can be found in almost any kind of narrative – certainly in every hero story.

Jung stressed the fact that the archetypes were bipolar, and that they could oscillate between their positive and negative meanings (Jung 734). The archetype of the great mother, for example, can manifest herself as the good mother as well as the terrible mother. Therefore it is paramount to look at the archetypes in context, if one is to understand their meaning. In Jung's model of the psyche, the archetypes of the self, the shadow and the anima/animus can be found. He saw the self as the totality of the psyche, whereas the ego, subordinate to the self, was related to the self like a part to the whole (Jung 5). Jung refers to the shadow as the dark side of the human personality – aspects of our personality that for the most part are negative, but in some cases also can be positive (493). Lastly, the anima represents the inner feminine side of a man, which is hidden in the man's psyche and is commonly projected upon other women (Jung 30).

For Jung, the goal of the individual was to integrate the unconscious into consciousness, a process that he named the individuation process (183). The individuation process can be seen as a psychological maturation that the hero undergoes during a journey. Even though there are a number of archetypes, Jung places particular importance on the shadow, the anima and the self as crucial to the individual's development. For Jung the encounter with one's shadow is the first step of the individuation process. He refers to it as the "apprentice-piece" in the individual's development, whereas the anima is the "master-piece" (137). The individuation process, if done properly, culminates with the synthesis of the self. The self, as the totality of the psyche, is a "wholeness that transcends consciousness" (Jung 853). It is who you are and everything that you could potentially be.

# The Archetype of the Hero

According to the *Oxford English Dictionary* (EOD), a hero is: 1) "A person who is admired for their courage, outstanding achievements, or noble qualities." 2) "The chief male character in a book, play, or film, who is typically identified with good qualities, and with whom the reader is expected to sympathize." 3) Or, in mythology and folklore, "A person of superhuman qualities and often semi-divine origin, in particular one whose exploits were the subject of ancient Greek myths."

The English word "hero" is derived from the Greek word ἥρως, or hḗrōs. The *OED*'s third definition of the word "hero", regarding "a person of superhuman qualities and often semi-divine origin", refers to the epic hero in the ancient Greek myths, such as the heroes of *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey* (Rom 2). Homer's epics, *The Odyssey* and *The Iliad*,

were the first in the Indo-European tradition and, according to Dean A. Miller, Homer managed to "convince his audience of the extraordinary heroic-epic status of Akhilleus and others" (22). Typical for the epic hero is that he is often a man who is capable of extraordinary deeds in the face of extreme danger. He is not divine, yet he is godlike in the sense that he often possesses exceptional strength and bravery that is not typically in the realm of possibilities for a mere mortal. The Greek heroes were closely linked to the gods, and they were often said to be "offspring of a deity and a mortal, which subsequently accorded them a distinct level of honor and respect, below the gods, but certainly above the average person" (Rom 10). Typical in epic literature – and not just in the epic literature of the Greeks – is that the hero is set apart from other people due to his "superior abilities, both mental and physical, and his exceptional traits of character" (Fant 2).

The EOD's first and second definitions of the word hero, which refers to a person with noble and good qualities, more accurately describe Bilbo, the hero of *The Hobbit*. Bilbo is just a common man, who, at the beginning of the novel, has little knowledge of the world and who has never done anything challenging in his life. As he lacks courage and physical prowess, he bears little resemblance to the epic hero. In addition to that, his deficit of superhuman attributes makes him vulnerable – which makes his courageous deeds even greater as he thereby exposes himself to a greater danger than does the epic hero. Bilbo is a common man – just like us. In the novel, Tolkien puts emphasis on his being a burglar and not a warrior:

> That would be no good, said the wizard, not without a mighty Warrior [...] That is why I settled on *burglary* […] And here is our little Bilbo Baggins, *the* burglar, the chosen and selected burglar. So now let's get on and make some plans (26-27).

With Bilbo, however, there is more than meets the eye. Juxtaposed with the epic hero, he is a three feet tall man who would perish should he choose to rely on his strength. As such, he needs to rely and develop other qualities. As Cecilia Wiklander observes:

> The hero that is described in Tolkien's *The Hobbit* is different than other common heroes in literature: Hercules, Achilles, and Beowulf to mention a few,

> all of whom are strong males and warriors. Bilbo, however, is a small hobbit with more heart than muscles and he still changes the world into something better (3).

As Wiklander points out, Bilbo is contrasted with his predecessors by his small and unimposing nature. He is, however, still a hero. The difference is that his heroism rests upon intrinsic qualities rather than extrinsic, physical attributes. This is one of the things that the evolution of the hero has brought about: the shift in focus from external to internal qualities in the depiction of a hero. The hero, as a concept, is not irresistible to change. When society changes, the hero must follow. As the values and norms of contemporary society change – which they always do with time – the hero transforms accordingly. In Classical Greece they had a more "finite understanding of the meaning of the word 'hero'", which made it possible for them to treat it as something "more tangible and tractable" than we are able to today (LaFrance 1). Our definition of the word hero has expanded – Modern English offers eight definitions of the word – and today a hero can be "anything or anyone" (2). Bilbo is an example of that transformation; he cannot, unlike the epic hero, rely on extraordinary strength and bravery. Bilbo is an everyman character, in the sense that he is just like us. It is, truly, in the realm of possibilities for us to be Bilbo.

## The Duality of Bilbo's Personality

Before an adventure even can begin, however, the hero must accept his role in it. When Gandalf, who symbolizes the archetype of the wise old man in the novel, brings forth the adventure, Bilbo shows little interest:

> Good morning! He said at last. We don't want any adventures here, thank you. You might try over The Hill or across The Water (Tolkien 7).

This reluctance to accept an adventure brought forth by an initiator is what Campbell refers to as the "refusal of the call" (36). Here we begin to see the duality of Bilbo's personality that will be crucial for his development as a hero. Just like the archetypes, his personality is bipolar in nature; the Bagginses, on his father's side, are known for being wealthy, respectable and for never doing anything exciting. The Tooks, however, are notorious for having taken part in adventures. This inner conflict in Bilbo, the battle of the adventurous

with the non-adventurous side, is crucial for the growth of his personality. Murat Arslan suggests that *The Hobbit* is a Bildungsroman, as it is "all about the adventures of the protagonist Bilbo Baggins and his maturation through these adventures" (137). Matthew Grenby suggests that "*The Hobbit* is more a novel of personal development, than a straightforward fantasy quest narrative" (62). As Grenby and Arslan correctly have observed, *The Hobbit* is a novel in which the hero undergoes personal development and where the hero comes out at the other end of the adventure as a changed man. *The Hobbit* starts with the hero living an ordinary life, and, after having endured trials and tribulations, Bilbo is transformed into a "highly moral or competent hero" (Allison 385).

As previously mentioned, the development of Bilbo's personality is governed by his inner conflict between two opposing personalities types – the Tookish and the Baggins side. The Baggins side, the non-adventurous trait, is the side of him that wants to stay in the known, that is, in the hobbit-hole, a world of familiarity and comfort that protects him from the dangers of the outside world. The hobbit-hole, which Arslan argues symbolizes "the comfort in mother's womb", is a place in which Bilbo has nothing to fear (137). However, that lack of exposure to the unexpected and the dangerous, which is important for someone to mature, entails that Bilbo never really grows up. His Tookish side, however, is the part of him that is willing to face the chaos of the unknown. If you take a leap from the known, and leave that which is familiar to you – your house, your family, your city – and go on into unfamiliar territory, you will undergo transformation. There is a sacrificial element to this, as Bilbo voluntarily is moving forward into chaos. Bilbo's Tookish side is the trait that needs to be expanded in order for him to mature and reach his full potential as a hero. In the beginning of the novel, his Tookish side is but a seed latently hidden in his psyche; however, as the story progresses, that repressed seed grows stronger and stronger until it eventually blossoms out and becomes a vital part of his personality:

> Then something Tookish woke up inside him, and he wished to go and see the mountains, and hear the pine-trees and the waterfalls, and explore the caves, and wear a sword instead of a walking-stick […] and he thought of plundering dragons settling on his quiet Hill and kindling it all to flames. He shuddered; and very quickly he was he was plain Mr. Baggins of Bag-End, Under-Hill, again (15).

The awakening of Bilbo's Tookish side, which occurs as a result of the dwarves' singing together in Bilbo's house, marks the starting point of the development of his adventurous side as it slowly begins to pull itself free from the chains of dormancy. At this early stage of the story, Bilbo's personality "is out of balance and far from integrated", with his Tookish side being repressed as he chooses to cling on to a rather childish way of life. At this infant stage, he has not even "begun to realize his full potential" (Matthews 31). When Matthew asserts that Bilbo has not even "begun to realize his full potential", it seems that she refers to the self – one of Jung's archetypes. The self is, as already mentioned, the culmination of the individuation process. It is who Bilbo is and everything he could potentially be. Bilbo's individuation process is dependent on his facing and overcoming the tribulations that are put in front of him. Only by overcoming the "road of trials", as Campbell calls them, will he be able to integrate his personality and reach his full potential (97).

Before Bilbo reaches wholeness and becomes who he is meant to be – a more conscious, wise, courageous and humble being – he needs to develop his intrinsic qualities to such an extent that he will be able overcome the challenges which gradually increase in difficulty as the story progresses. Certain key events in his maturation can be identified: his departure from the womb-like state of existence of Bag End into chaos; the confrontation with the trolls and his first trial as a burglar; confronting and outwitting Gollum and stealing the ring; killing the spider and rescuing the dwarves; becoming a master burglar and saving the dwarves from the Elven-king; accepting his fate in the tunnel into Smaug's lair and confronting Smaug; and, finally, handing over the Arkenstone to negotiate peace.

Something that Bilbo needs to realize that he actually is – or at least can be in the face of danger – is courageous. His first act of courage is really when he, as the newly appointed burglar of the group, tries to steal the keys of three giant trolls:

> Then Bilbo plucked up courage and put his little hand in William's enormous pocket […] "Ha!" Thought he, warming to his new work as he lifted it out carefully out, "this is the beginning!" It was! Trolls' purses are the mischief […] and William turned round at once and grabbed Bilbo by the neck, before he could duck behind the tree (43).

Even if Bilbo fails and gets captured – and thereby exposes himself and his party to danger – he still succeeds internally; by acting courageously, as the burglar, he overcomes a situation

of crippling trepidation, and as a result his Tookish side is strengthened. This is significant, because in order to grow in life, you must first be willing to fail. Bilbo, by being willing to risk looking like a fool, begins to lay the foundation for his future success.

## The Shadow

> Deep down here by the dark water lived old Gollum, a slimy small creature. I don't know where he came from, nor who or what he was. He was Gollum – as dark as darkness, except for two big round pale eyes in his thin face (84-85).

This is how Tolkien introduces us to Gollum, the cave dwelling creature that lurks in the depths of the underworld. Bilbo encounters Gollum as he is "symbolically swallowed up by the whale/mountain", as he descends into the depths of the underworld through a crack in a cave (Levin 20). By meeting Gollum – his biggest obstacle yet – Bilbo confronts the negative aspects of his own personality: his own shadow. Just like Gollum dwells in the depths of the underworld, the shadow, in Jungian terms, dwells deep down in the unconscious as a destructive force. After Bilbo finds – or steals – the ring, he must outwit Gollum in a game of riddles in order to survive. He tricks Gollum, and then uses the ring so that Gollum, unknowingly, leads Bilbo to the back door so that he can escape. Jane Chance explains that the theft of the ring is significant, as it gives Bilbo "the means to perform the burglary of the dragon's hoard – the invincibility caused by the ring" (67). Indeed, from this point onward he is in possession of the instrument that is needed to rescue friends, hide from foes, and confront dragons. More importantly, he gets a substantial boost of confidence, which allows Bilbo to, Chance argues, "demonstrate real heroism and leadership as a burglar" in the following chapters, beginning with the rescuing of his friends and the slaying of spiders (67).

As indicated previously, Bilbo encounters his own shadow as he confronts Gollum in the underworld. For Jung the encounter with one's shadow is the first step of the individuation process. He refers to it as the "apprentice-piece" in the individual's development, whereas the anima is the "master-piece" (137). Jung equates the shadow with the dark side of the human personality, and he warns against the dangers of not integrating it into your personality (493). Gollum, who personifies the shadowy aspect of Bilbo's personality, is a mirror image of Bilbo; it is what Bilbo, if not careful, could become if he walks down the same path as Gollum and gives into the possessive and evil nature of the ring. However, with the exception of Gollum, the idea of the ring as an evil entity is not fully

developed in *The Hobbit*. Whereas the ring in *Lord of the Rings* is a destructive object, possessing its bearers and enslaving humanity as a whole, it is but a "harmless and useful talisman" in *The Hobbit*, which allows Bilbo to mature and transform in the face of adversity, enabling him to "rise to the same adventurous level as the battle-hardy dwarves (Scoville 277).

Although the shadow typically represents things we dislike in others and refuse to see in ourselves, such as egotism, aggression and cowardice, it can sometimes represent things that are beneficial to us. It is through Bilbo's "half-guilty use of the magic ring hoarded by his shadow" that he survives the encounter with Gollum and manages to escape from the tunnels in the underworld (Green 36). By becoming a thief and by acting more aggressively, he is able to get his hands on the ring of invincibility, which is the instrument that is needed for him to continue on his adventure successfully. The ring aids his development and, in the end, it allows for him to transform into the hero he is meant to be. Furthermore, Bilbo succeeds where Gollum fails, as he never, unlike Gollum, becomes the ring's slave; instead, he uses its powers to aid him on his journey of transformation.

According to Jung, the shadow is something each and every one of us carries, and not integrating it into our personality can have dire consequences. Someone who has not integrated their shadow becomes an easy pray for predators; it is a person who gets bullied, attacked and taken advantage of by others – simply because that person lacks the ability to say no to people, and, instead, does everything to please others, looking upon the world with naïve, childlike eyes, believing that the world is a benevolent place in which no evil exists. To be able to accept your shadow, you must first accept the fact that in your heart – and in the hearts of each and one of us – lives the capacity for evil. "In Hitler, every German should have seen his own shadow, his own worst danger", Jung once said (Conger 91). The integration of the shadow, as a key moment in the development of the individual, is what Bilbo manages to do as he confronts and outsmarts his own shadow in the underworld.

After Bilbo's encounter with Gollum, as he puts on the ring of invincibility, he must decide whether or not he should kill Gollum:

> He must fight. He must stab the foul thing, put its eyes out, kill it. It meant to kill him. No, not a fair fight. He was invincible now. Gollum had no sword. Gollum had not actually threatened to kill him, or tried to yet. And he was

> miserable, alone, lost. A sudden understanding, a pity mixed with horror, welled up in Bilbo's heart […] he leaped (102).

Here Bilbo clearly has the opportunity bring destruction on the creature that just seconds earlier wanted to devour him. He chooses not to because his moral compass deems it not a fair fight, as he has the unfair advantage of being invincible and having a sword in his hands. Wiklander argues that "a warrior would have killed Gollum, like Beowulf killed Grendel, but Bilbo chooses not to kill him and still remain a hero because he makes a heroic decision by showing mercy" (8). Wiklander makes a good point, as Tolkien never draws Bilbo as a warrior in *The Hobbit*. In fact, he is not even the stereotypical hero – he is the unexpected hero. Bilbo's function in the novel is axiomatic: he is a burglar, not a warrior. That is why it is Bard, and not Bilbo, who pierces Smaug's breast with an arrow that ultimately leads to its fall. The fact that *The Hobbit* is not in complete congruence with the archetypal dragon-story, that is, a story of a warrior that slays a dragon, is of minor importance. For him it is the confrontation with, and not the slaying of, the dragon that matters. All the trials and tribulations, the hardship, is there in order to prepare Bilbo for the inevitable moment of his maturation process: the meeting with the demon of the underworld, Smaug.

Mercy, Wiklander suggests, is what makes Bilbo spare Gollum's life. While Bilbo certainly has the capacity for mercy, I would argue that it is impossible for Bilbo, from a Jungian perspective, to kill Gollum. By reading Jung, you realize that you cannot kill your shadow – you can only integrate it. Bilbo – by becoming a burglar, and therefore managing to integrate his shadow – takes a step closer to maturation, to wholeness, and to achieving his full potential. Now, as he has looked true malevolence in its eyes, has he ceased to be the naïve hobbit of Hobbiton.

## Taking Responsibility

Learning to take responsibility, a common theme in the hero's journey, is something that Bilbo needs to accept during his journey. The moment when Gandalf leaves the party, at the edge of Mirkwood, marks the moment when Bilbo becomes the standard-bearer, assuming the leader role of the group. As he slays a giant spider in the darkness by himself, without Gandalf and his comrades to support him, he realizes a change in him: "a growing fierceness and boldness" (181). With the killing of the spider he names his sword, a symbol of masculinity, Sting (Howe 16). His newly acquired boldness helps him to save his friends

from a certain death, and Bilbo now sees himself as a "bold adventurer" (192). Bilbo continues to show his leadership as the dwarves get captured by the elven-king; here, as the burglar and the leader of the group, he uses his "ring, wit and courage" to get the dwarves out of captivity from the dungeons (Aslan 140).

As discussed above, taking responsibility is crucial to Bilbo and his metamorphosis into a hero. He must accept his role in society and shoulder the responsibility of carrying the cloak as a leader in order to mature and reach his full potential. Accepting responsibility is part of what it means to grow up and become an adult. It aids in the transition from childhood into adulthood, allowing one to become a mature and fully functioning being in society. Bilbo accepts his fate and does what it is demanded of him as he with trepidation enters the tunnel leading into Smaug's lair:

> Then the hobbit slipped on his ring […] he was trembling with fear, but his little face was set and grim. Already he was a very different hobbit from the one that had run out without out a pocket-handkerchief from Bag-End long ago […] Going on from there was the bravest thing he ever did. The tremendous things that happened afterwards were as nothing compared to it. He fought the real battle in the tunnel alone, before he ever saw the vast danger that lay in wait (248-249).

As Bilbo's enters Smaug's cave, he descends into the underworld, a common mythological motif in the hero's journey. It is the inevitable journey into the unknown, a place in which chaos rules. Jung regarded the death of a hero as an "entry into the mother's womb (for rebirth)" (238). Matthews asserts that there is a "suggestion of rebirth" in the novel, such as when Bilbo confronts Gollum in the underworld (33). It is with Bilbo's repeated deaths and rebirths that he transforms into a new and better version of himself. The first instance occurs when he, as an immature man with little knowledge of the world, throws himself out of the safe comforts of his home in Hobbiton into chaos. His second rebirth occurs as he meets the shadowy aspects of his own personality, Gollum, and comes to the realization that the world contains malevolence and evil forces that would devour him if given the chance. His third – and final transformation – occurs in the cave of Smaug, ultimately leading to his metamorphosis into a hero. Smaug, serving as the monster of the underworld, is the

gatekeeper; he is the creature that holds the treasure – the keys as it were – to Bilbo's transformation into a hero.

Psychologically, the journey into the underworld is the journey into the unconscious – that which is yet not known. Bilbo's descent into the cave is similar to Aeneas's descent into the underworld, and Pinocchio's descent into the 'belly of the whale' – it marks the moment in the hero's journey where the hero must face the monster of chaos in order to reach full maturation. It is the bravest thing in the hero's journey because the price to pay for failing is the highest possible: death. Bilbo, in the same way that Pinocchio risks being permanently swallowed up by the great whale in the abyss, risks being swallowed up by the great dragon of the underworld.

The reward, however, can also be substantial. At the same time as Smaug represents chaos and danger, he also represents potential. Smaug holds the keys to Bilbo's development in his claws, as he hoards the treasure through which Bilbo transforms into a new man. His old self dies in the caves of the underworld, and out from the tunnels – the very same tunnels from which he was once born out of his Hobbit-hole – emerges a reborn man, a hero. His final test comes as he, mesmerized by the beauty of Arkenstone, steals the great jewel of the mountain:

> It was the Arkenstone, the Heart of the Mountain […] it took all the light that fell upon it and changed it into ten thousand sparks of white radiance shots with glints of the rainbow. Suddenly Bilbo's arm went towards it drawn by its enchantment […] and put it in his deepest pocket. Now I am burglar indeed! (274-275).

Bilbo, enchanted by the beauty of the gem, steals the Arkenstone despite the fact that he knows that Thorin treasures it above anything else. As Bilbo performs his last theft, his role as the appointed burglar becomes full circle. He rationalizes his actions by convincing himself that the Arkenstone could represent a fourteenth share of the great treasure, his right as established in the signed contract. As Anthony Burgde argues: "Thorin promises Bilbo one fourteenth of the treasure, which Bilbo interprets to be applicable to the Arkenstone" (25). However, Bilbo knows deep down in his heart that he is doing something morally questionable when he steals the gem, as Thorin had sworn to avenge anyone who tried to

steal it. In addition, Thorin arguably has the best claim to the gem, for it was Thorin's ancestors, and not Bilbo's, who were robbed of the treasure and slain in the process.

As a result of Smaug's fall, and everyone now being possessed by "dragon-sickness", a great war is stirring: The war of the five armies. Bilbo is now faced with great moral dilemma. He believes that he could potentially be instrumental in avoiding the war by offering the Arkenstone to the opponent as a bargaining piece, but to do that he must betray Thorin, which could potentially damage his relationship with him and the other dwarves. Again, he follows his moral compass and sneaks out of the mountain in secrecy to meet up with Bard and the Elven-king:

> This is the Arkenstone of Thrain […] it is also the heart of Thorin. He values it above a river of gold. It will aid you in your bargaining (314).

This is where Bilbo understands the importance of sacrifice, a sign of a true hero. Despite the fact that he earlier gave into the temptation of the Arkenstone, he comes to the realization that he needs to ignore his own selfish needs and sacrifice himself for the greater good. Contrasting Thorin – and Thorin's failure as a hero by virtue of being possessed by greed and power – Bilbo is able to "give up the power and wealth the jewel represents for the greater social good" (Rorabeck 75). It is in this act of altruism that he shows that he has matured as an individual, rising to the occasion when it is needed the most. As Matthews concludes:

> [His] maturity is demonstrated in the Arkenstone episode. His decision to use the gem as a means of negotiating with the opposition is made with the knowledge that it might mean the sacrifice of his friendship with Thorin and the dwarves. But Bilbo makes that choice […] Bilbo makes the decision independently, trusting his own judgment and being willing to face censure, and, if necessary, isolation (39).

It is with Bilbo's sacrifice of the Arkenstone that he takes the final step of his individuation process. When everyone is possessed by lust and greed and is fighting for the spoils of Smaug's treasure, Bilbo shows his newfound maturity. He has walked through the fires of hell and faced the monster of the underworld, and, as a result, he knows that materialistic items, such as gold, holds little value. "If more of us valued food and cheer and song above

hoarded gold, it would be a merrier world", Thorin says to Bilbo in his tent as he lies on his deathbed (333). Bilbo, now fully embodying that of a hero, is content with transformative treasure he already has gained: the transformation of his personality. He has reached his full potential as a hero, and the very thing that earlier was the driving factor in his development – the clash between his Tookish and Baggins side – is now in harmony.

The utterance of Gandalf – "you are not the man you once were" – indicates that Bilbo maturation is complete (347). By letting his adventurous side, the Tookish part of him, develop and expand, he has ultimately reached balance between his two earlier conflicting personalities. With the unification of his Baggins side and his Tookish side, he has reached psychic wholeness.

## Attaining the "treasure hard to attain"

As in most archetypal hero stories, Bilbo receives a treasure in the form of gold as a reward at the end of his adventure. Neumann explains that the mythological goal of the dragon fight is "almost always the virgin, the captive, or, more generally, 'the treasure hard to attain'" (195). This also holds true for Bilbo, who, by confronting Smaug and handing over the Arkenstone, attains psychic wholeness and reaches his full potential. For the hero, the "treasure hard to attain", or the captive, is the final award that is given to him for his troubles. In the end, "the captive always marries the hero; union with her is the essential outcome of dragon fights all over the world" (Neumann 198). In Jungian terms, the treasure represents the archetype of the self – of psychic wholeness. The captive and the treasure should not be interpreted literally, but symbolically, as metaphors for the psychological integration that occurs in the individual. As I stated earlier, the individuation process is completed in two steps: by integration of the shadow and the anima. The first step occurred in Bilbo when he, by confronting Gollum and becoming a burglar, integrated his shadow. The second phase, however, takes place as he confronts Smaug in the underworld. Bilbo's transformation, which occurs through his confrontation of Smaug, can be seen as an apotheosis, which in Bilbo results in a birth of a "higher mode of personality" (Neumann 149). Neumann's explanation seems to be accurate, as the Bilbo who enters the cave of Smaug, differs from the Bilbo who later exits the cave. Bilbo emerges out of the cave as a changed man, which Gandalf later confirms by uttering, "you are not the man you once were."

As Bilbo descends into the underworld, the unconscious, he confronts the monster holding the keys – the treasure – to his psychological integration. Not until he confronts Smaug can he reach psychological maturation, and, as J.W.T. Redfearn explains:

> There is an equally valid interpretation, which sees the captive as something within – the soul itself. The myths deal with the relation of the masculine ego to the feminine soul, with the final deliverance of the captive, who is analogous with the 'treasure hard to attain', and the achievement of individuation (187).

The feminine soul, or the anima, represents the inner feminine side of a man. When Bilbo confronts Smaug, he "conquers, captures and wins the anima" (Neumann 191). There is no external captive in *The Hobbit*, but, psychologically, there is an internal one: his Tookish side. As he confronts Smaug, he releases his anima, his Tookish side, from captivity as his clashing personalities finally reaches harmony. In the same moment he releases his anima, he wins "the treasure hard to attain", representing the archetype of the self – symbolizing that he has achieved psychic wholeness and reached his full potential as a hero.

# Conclusion

In this essay I have analyzed J.R.R. Tolkien's novel *The Hobbit* from a psychological perspective, using Jung's theories of the archetypes as the theoretical framework. In this study I have examined Bilbo's psychological maturation, which occurs in accordance with Jung's individuation process, and which is dependent on him integrating his shadow and confronting the dragon.

I have explained that Bilbo is the unexpected hero, a simple man who lacks physical prowess, and, as a result, he functions as a burglar instead of a warrior in the novel. Unlike the epic hero, he cannot rely on superhuman strength; rather, he has to rely on and develop other intrinsic qualities. I have stated that, in order for him to reach his full potential, he needs to be courageous, take responsibility, and learn the importance of sacrifice.

I have observed that Bilbo's journey is an inner journey towards self-development, developing in accordance with Jung's individuation process. His journey is thus a journey of maturation. As I have stated, the development of his personality begins as he leaves the safe comforts of his home and voluntarily moves into the chaos; there, in

unknown, is he forced to overcome trials and tribulations – some of which are key events that propel the development of his personality even further.

As I also have pointed out, the development of his personality is foregrounded by the clash of his personalities between his Tookish side, his adventurous trait, and his Baggins side, his non-adventurous trait. I have explained that Bilbo's maturation develops in two steps in accordance with Jung's individuation process – by integration of his shadow and his anima. The first instance is when he, by becoming a burglar and confronting Gollum, manages to integrate his shadow. The second step occurs as he confronts Smaug, the fire-breathing dragon of the underworld. By confronting Smaug, the creature holding the keys to his development, he wins the "treasure hard to attain." I have argued that the treasure that Smaug hoards only is a metaphorical one. The real treasure, however, is not of gold, sapphires or diamonds; it is an inner treasure, which, through the confrontation of the dragon, does something much greater for Bilbo: it makes him psychologically integrated and, ultimately, a better person.

As I have concluded, it is with Bilbo's confrontation of Smaug that he "conquers, captures and wins the anima." When his anima, represented by his adventurous Tookish side, is released from captivity his personality is finally in balance. By releasing his anima, he wins "the treasure hard to attain." The treasure, symbolizing the archetype of the self, marks that he has achieve psychic wholeness and reached his full potential as a hero.

When Bilbo emerges out of the womb of Smaug's cave – similar to the womb from which he once was born out of in Hobbiton – it is as a new man; no longer is he the naïve, childish Hobbit of Hobbiton, but rather, a responsible and courageous hero who, when it was demanded of him, sacrificed himself and acted as a leader. He has walked through the fires of hell and emerged out of those fires as a phoenix – as a reborn man.

# Works Cited

## Primary sources

Tolkien, J.R.R. *The Hobbit*. Harper Collins Publishers, 2006.

## Secondary sources

Arslan, Murat. "'There and Back Again': The Quest and Self-Discovery in J.R.R Tolkien's The Hobbit." Journal of History, Culture and Art Research, vol. 4, no. 2, 2015, pp. 136-143.

Bjarnason, Einar. *The Hero, The Shadow and The Wise Old Man*. Dissertation, University of Iceland, 2016. UMI, 2016.

Campbell, J. *The Hero with a Thousand Faces.* Pantheon Books, 1949.

Chance, Jane. *Tolkien's Art: A Mythology for England.* University Press of Kentucky, 2001.

Conger P. John. *Jung and Reich: The Body as Shadow*. North Atlantic Books, 2005.

Fant, J. Barbara. Cuchulainn compared with other folk epic heroes. MA thesis, University of Montana, 1954. UMI, 1954.

Freud, Sigmund. *The Ego and the Id.* Dover Publications, 2018.

Green, H. William. "Bilbo's Adventure in Wilderland." *Bloom's Modern Critical Views: J.R.R. Tolkien*, edited by Harold Bloom, Infobase Publishing, 2008, pp. 27-43.

Grenby, O. Matthew. *Children's Literature*. Edinburgh University Press, 2014.

Heaney, Seamus. *Beowulf: A new verse translation.* W.W. Norton & Company, 2000.

"Hero." The Oxford English Dictionary. 2nd ed. 1989. EOD Online.
http://www.oed.com.ludwig.lub.lu.se/search?searchType=dictionary&q=hero&_searchBtn=Search. Accessed 27 March 2018.

Howe, Asia. “In the Company of Thorin Oakenshield: A Baggins’ Styled Femininity and Acquired Masculinity in The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey.” HOHONU, vol. 14, no. 1, 2016, pp. 15-20.

Jung, Carl. *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*. Pantheon Books, 1959.

---*Symbols of transformation*. Routledge, 1956.

LaFrance, M. Adrianne. “Clash of Civilizations: Classical & Modern Definitions of Heroism in Vergil’s Aeneid.” Reason and Respect, vol. 4, no. 1, 2008, pp. 1-2.

Lundqvist, Ann-Louise. *There and Back Again: The Hobbit Bilbo as a Hero*. Dissertation, University of Jönköping, 2007. UMI, 2007.

Matthews, Dorothy. “The Psychological Journey of Bilbo Baggins.” A Tolkien Compass: Including J.R.R. Tolkien’s Guide to the Names in The Lord of the Rings, edited by Jared Lobdell, Open Court, 1975, pp. 27-40.

Miller, A. Dean. *The Epic Hero*. The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000.

Neumann, Eric. *The Origins and History of Consciousness*. Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1954.

Parella, J. Nicolas. “An Essay on Pinocchio” *The Adventures of Pinocchio: Story of a puppet*, edited by Nicolas, J. Parella, University of California Press, 1991, pp. 1-52.

Redfearn, J.W.T. “The captive, the treasure, the hero and the anal stage of development.” Journal of Analytical Psychology, vol. 24, no. 3, 1979, pp. 185-205.

Rom, Daniel. The Suffering Heracles: An Analysis of Heracles as a Tragic Hero in The Trachininiae and the Haracles. MA thesis, Stellenbosch University, 2016. UMI, 2016.

Rorabeck, Robert. *Tolkien's Heroic Criticism: A Developing Application of Anglo-Saxon Ofermod to*

*the Monsters of Modernity*. MA thesis, Florida State University, 2003. UMI, 2003.

Scoville, N. Chester. "Hobbiton." *J.R.R. Tolkien Encyclopedia: Scholarship and Critical Assessment*, edited by Michael D.C. Drout, Routledge, 2006, pp. 277-279.

Valett, E. Robert. "Carl Gustav Jung: Some contributions to modern psychology." Journal of Humanistic Psychology, vol. 2, no. 1, 1962, pp. 23-24.

"Where the Star Wars Myths came from." *YouTube,* uploaded by WastedGeek, 25 November 2009, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bSyyqctan2c

Wiklander, Cecilia. *The Image of Heroism in Tolkien's The Hobbit*. Dissertation, University of Gothenburg, 2011. UMI, 2011.