

1. Dissertation titled **theme of material wealth in J.R.R. Tolkien's THE HOBBIT** submitted by **Muhammad Azmat** supervised by **Prof. Muhammad Nadeem Anwar** is accepted by Department of English Literature and Linguistics of Govt. College of Science affiliated with University of the Punjab, Lahore in partial fulfillment of requirement for the degree of Bachelor studies in English Literature,
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# DEDICATION

“I dedicate this thesis to my mentor Prof. Muhammad Nadeem Anwar who provided me moral support in desperate times. I also dedicate it to my parents and siblings whose love and constant optimism have always been a source of motivation for me. My dedication is for my seniors and friends too who stood by me through thick and thin.”

## **chapter 1**

### **1.1 Introduction**

Literature is a group of works of art made up of words. Most are written, but some are passed on by word of mouth. Literature usually means works of poetry and prose that are especially well written. There are many different kinds of literature, such as poetry, plays, or novels. They can also be put into groups through their language, historical period, origin, genre, and subject. The word literature comes from the Latin word "learning, writing, grammar".

Literature demonstrates the intellectual and psychosomatic perspectives of human being mind as well as social and geographical aspects of human life. Writers cleave to the authority to mirror the facts and realities no issue how amusing pitiable and cruel some the surroundings are. History is conserved and described by the literary plant of writers in the course of different genres of literature poetry, prose, criticism and fiction. At one perspective, literature and writers give you an idea about what the life, social circumstances and human way of life are in the surroundings, on the other hand they become the main source to mold, amend and remold readers' perspectives towards life and world. People accept as true what they read in literature unconsciously. What writers want to depict they reflect in their writings and as a result reader begin construction a state of mind whatever literature wants them to believe.

Before proceeding any further it is pertinent to establish a working definition of term "fantasy". There are various interpretations of the world available.

## **Fantasy**

Fantasy, from the Greek φαντασία meaning ‘making visible,’ is a genre of fiction that concentrates on imaginary elements (the fantastic). This can mean magic, the supernatural, alternate worlds, superheroes, monsters, fairies, magical creatures, mythological heroes—essentially, anything that an author can imagine outside of reality. With fantasy, the magical or supernatural elements serve as the foundation of the plot, setting, characterization, or storyline in general. Nowadays, fantasy is popular across a huge range of media—film, television, comic books, games, art, and literature—but, it’s predominate and most influential place has always been in literature.

According to Cambridge Dictionary ‘Fantasy’ is: A pleasant situation that you enjoy thinking about but is unlikely to happen, or the activity of imaging things. A story or type of literature that describes situations that are very different from real life.

According to Oxford Dictionary it is: A genre of imaginative fiction involving magic and adventure, especially in a setting other than the real world.

### **Types of Fantasy.**

There are dozens of Types read it and sabien was off fantasy. some of them our medieval fantasies, hi fantasies, fairy tales, mythological fantasies and fable.

### **Medieval Fantasy:**

Medieval Fantasy is defined less by its characteristics and more by its setting: namely, the medieval historical period. This sub-genre has had a great influence on the Fantasy genre as a whole. For instance, King Artur and his Knights, Regal Court, Magic enchantment, etc.

### **High/epic Fantasy**

High/Epic Fantasy stories that are set in an imaginary world and/or are epic in nature; meaning they feature a hero on some type of quest. This subgenre became particularly popular in the 20th century and continues to dominate much of popular fantasy today. Prime examples include J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* and C.S. Lewis' *The Chronicles of Narnia*.

### **Fairy Tales**

A fairy tale is a story, often intended for children, that features fanciful and wondrous characters such as elves, goblins, wizards, and even, but not necessarily, fairies. Famous collections include *Cinderella*, *Tales of Mother Goose*, *The Ugly Duckling* and *The Little Mermaid*.

### **Elements of Fantasy**

Fantasy enables us to enter worlds of infinite possibilities (Mathews 2002:1). Fantasy is characterized by implausible and nonexistent elements. It typically involves supernatural forces, like magic and mysterious creatures. Adventure is a key feature in most of the fantasy novels. The characters may find entrance to the other worlds and discover hidden magic and wonders in our own world. C.S. Lewis's classic *Chronicle of Narnia* series and J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series invoke imaginary worlds with mythical and mysterious characters.

Essential elements of fantasy are:

### **Magic**

Magic is the prominent element that distinguishes fantasy from other genres. Magic refers to something that does not occur in the real world but happens or exists in the imaginary world. Anything that evidences no logic or makes any sense in real world can be considered 'magic'.

### **Setting**

Setting is another important element in fantasy fiction. In fantasy, the setting or place has influence on characters and characters have effects on their worlds. This process is referred to as world-building.

### **Characters**

In fantasy fiction the cast of complex and engaging characters gets the readers invested in the story. Characters are the core of the fantasy novel. Fantasy can employ both human and supernatural characters such as fairies, demons, orcs, dwarves, elves, brownies, goblins etc.

The history of modern fantasy literature is usually said to begin with George MacDonald, the Scottish author of such novels as *The Princess and the Goblin* and *Phantastes* (1858), the latter of which is widely considered to be the first fantasy novel ever written for adults. MacDonald was a major influence on both J. R. R. Tolkien and C. S. Lewis. The other major fantasy author of this era was William Morris, an English poet who wrote several novels in the latter part of the century, including *The Well at the World's End*.

The wealth has been playing a central role in the lives of humans throughout the history. Since human has begun writing literature, wealth has been the central idea in literature. Like, Indian Fairy Tales, compiled by Joseph Jacobs; Famous Tales for Kids; The Bird Sweet Magic, North American Tales; The Gold Colt and the Fire Dragon Shirt, from China; Robin Hood and The Potter. Presenting wealth has been a tradition in literature that still continues. I wish to study wealth as an important theme of our lives and literature.

The novel, The Hobbit is very much researched. Few prominent topics in which novel is researched are; Themes of Obstacle, Sacredness, Riddles, Hero's development and Fellowship. but the theme of wealth is completely ignored by the researcher. That is why I am working on this topic.

## **1.2 Aims and Objectives**

My research will open new dimensions in the field of fantasy. It will explain the role of wealth in life of a common person and also the importance of wealth in our literature. It will also explain that how curse for wealth destroyed nations and societies.

It will explain the role of wealth in the novel. It will also explain the attitudes of different characters towards wealth.

## **1.3 Research Questions**

What is the role of wealth in J.R.R. Tolkien's The Hobbit?

What are the attitudes of different characters towards wealth?

What is the curse of wealth in the novel?

## **1.4 Literature Review**

A literature review surveys books, scholarly articles, and any other sources relevant to a particular issue, area of research, or theory, and by so doing, provides a description, summary, and critical evaluation of these works in relation to the research problem being investigated. Literature



reviews are designed to provide an overview of sources you have explored while researching a particular topic and to demonstrate to your readers how your research fits within a larger field of study. Literature review must concentrate just on the scholarly writings: well known and non-scholastic might be gotten every so often to outline a point, however the focal intrigue is consistent on the information gathered or the speculations set up together by perceived specialist in the field. There is no target meaning of literature. Literature is characterized as “ reflection of life” since it manages the life of individuals either issues or reforms. It can be characterized in various terms accordingly. People writing literature on different ideas like, Colonialism, Feminism, Partition, Democracy, Power, Religion, Society and social problems and many other fields of like Science etc.

My point of exploration is one of the major themes of the novel “The Hobbit” by J.R.R Tolkien, wealth is an important theme in the story. The story is mainly revolve around the wealth of dwarves and its lust for every creature of the Tolkien. In current time is very difficult to compose a book or story without use of materialism especially wealth. It has been a last of literature since it started for example, George R.R. Martin’s “A Game of Thrones (1996)” Robert Jordan’s “ The Eye of the World (1990)”, J.K. Rowling’s “Harry Potter 1997)”.

Many researchers, critics and students have worked on The Hobbit novel. Chris Lerimore on the lust of the wealth in the novel in a critical inquiry entitled “ The Problem of Greed in J.R.R Tolkien’s The Hobbit and Lord of the Rings”. While discussing the greed, he discussed dwarves, he wrote: The moral dilemma of greed in both The Hobbit and The Lord of the Rings is a prominent theme, driving the narrative forward as characters become bogged down in the ethical

and moral choices and consequences of their actions. It is plain to see, for example, that the Dwarves in *The Hobbit* are not driven by a desire for freedom from tyranny, or to create a utilitarian utopia, but are rather driven almost completely by greed, to recover the hoard of treasure guarded by the great dragon Smaug in the depths of the Lonely Mountain. The dragon made many enemies in his own lust and greed, which would ultimately lead to his destruction at the hands of Bard the Bowman on the edges of the lake town of Esgaroth (*The Hobbit* 228-9).

He states that dwarves are not come by desire but they are forced by dragon because, dragon has occupied their own wealth and homeland and forced them to wander. He also wrote:

As for Gollum/Sméagol, his story is fairly obvious to any that have read the books or seen Peter Jackson's adaptation: he has been consumed by greed completely, shunning all forms of companionship save that of his "Precious", the Ring that (arguably) converses with him, telling him what to do, how to be, where to go. After losing the Ring, Gollum becomes enraged, a burning desire envelops him

to find his one treasured possession at all costs:

[Gollum] had lost it: lost his prey [Bilbo],

and lost, too, the only thing he ever cared for,

his precious... “Thief, thief, thief! Baggins!

We hates it, we hates it, we hates it forever!”

(The Hobbit 82)

He lifted his head again, blinked at the

moon, and quickly shut his eyes. “We hates

it,’ he hissed. “Nassty [sic], nassty shivery

light it is – sss – it spies on us, precious – it

hurts our eyes.”

...“Where iss [sic] it, where iss it: my

Precious, my Precious? It’s our’s, it is, and

we wants it. The thieves, the thieves, the

filthy little thieves.” (The Two Towers 599)

Clearly, Gollum has been completely

consumed by greed over the “Precious,” the One

Ring, and when he loses it, he thinks Bilbo has

tricked him, and so curses the names of Baggins

and Hobbits forever for stealing the only thing he

ever cared for. Indeed, it is ironic that Gollum

curses Bilbo for ‘stealing’ the Ring, when all

Bilbo did was ‘find’ it; Gollum, on the other

hand, is the real thief in the long history of the Ring, as Gandalf explained to Frodo:

“Give us that, Déagol, my love,” said Sméagol, over his friend’s shoulder.

“Why?” said Déagol.

“Because it’s my birthday, my love, and I wants it, said Sméagol.

“I don’t care... I found this, and I’m going to keep it.”

“Oh, are you indeed, my love,” said Sméagol; and he caught Déagol by the throat and strangled him, because the gold looked so bright and beautiful. Then he put the ring on his finger.” (The Fellowship of the Ring 52)

Here again he discussed the greed but this time the greed is not for power or wealth, in the Lord of the Rings, when Tolkien describes that how Gollum got the ring, he stated that Gollum killed his employ for that ring. The ring cursed him and led him into darkness and he spent about five hindered years there in the cave of Goblins until Bilbo finds the ring. In the article, he described the Greed in the novels through different characters and examples.

Janet Brennan Croft in his critical inquiry entitled “ The Name of the Ring: or There, and Back Again, he write about the language of the novel The Hobbit. He write:

Words and language are the very heart of Tolkien's legendarium, and as Tolkien's fellow Inker Owen Barfield put it in *History in English* words, language “ reveals the evolution of consciousness”(14). He described the richness of Tolkien's language of the story he used.

He described the language of the novel as the best language used in a fantasy work. Language is the key to success of the novel. Tolkien's use of language made his work more comfortable and easier. One more important fact in the novel is use of other languages, like Elvish and Dwarvish languages richly used in the novel.

J.B. Croft described the richness of language and way of using language in the novel successfully and more effectively.

Another most important work on the novel is obstacles of the novel that the protagonist faced. Pramudia Deska Ananda, S. Hariani described the obstacles or difficulties of the protagonist's in the novel, in the article entitled as “OBSTACLE IN J.R.R TOLKIEN'S NOVEL THE HOBBIT” They wrote:

The *Hobbit* is about adventure in searching of dragon guarded gold. The protagonist's name is Bilbo Baggins. On his journey, he undergoes some obstacles such as being arrested by the trolls, being attacked and arrested by the goblins, falling down to the dark cave, being pursued by the wolves, and fighting with the spider. There are two solutions which are needed in solving the obstacle; ingenuity and physical endurance. This analysis uses the data taken from the novel applying Descriptive Qualitative Research. One of the dominant concepts of obstacle used in this study is proposed by Brian Kariger and Daniel Fierro (1998) who state that obstacle is something that obstructs or hinders progress. The conclusion from this analysis shows that the protagonist, Bilbo Baggins faces some obstacles and there are two solutions to solve the obstacles.

Here in the article they described the obstacles of the novel. They clearly defined what problems he faced in the achievement of his goal/purpose, he had to face Goblins, Elves, Works and Dragon as well, as defined in the research. Bilbo faced all the problems bravely and always helps his company, whenever they fall in troubles. For example, he frees them from the prison of elves, using the magical ring and he also barely escapes.

The other important work on the novel is done by Leah Underwood. He is a researcher and wrote about the heroism of Bilbo and his heroic journey in the paper entitled as “The Hero's Journey Through The Hobbit”. He wrote

This project begins with a journey that moves from the familiar to a place of adventure and trials through an instructional unit on the Hero's Journey and The Hobbit. It begins with a rationale for the selection of both the unit topic and the selected text which is followed by the standards covered, prior knowledge needed, and a map of the unit. Following this are the four weeks of lesson plans and the instructional materials the students would use. The project finishes off with a reflection on the process and the struggles and lessons learned along the way. Degree Type Open Access Senior Honors Thesis Department English Language and Literature First Advisor Dr. John Staunton Second Advisor Dr. Joseph Csicsila.

B. L. Beronio, is also a researcher, worked on divine force in the novel who saved Bilbo on many occasions. The main purpose is to highlight the religion in the novel, his work entitled as” A Fortunate Little Fellow: Divine Providence in J.R.R. Tolkien's "The Hobbit". He wrote:

The purpose of this research is to examine the many elements that inspired Tolkien in order to identify a central theme in his Middle-earth tales: Divine Providence. Providence is defined as the protective influence of some higher power in order to bring about an eventuality. Roman Catholicism has long held Divine Providence as central to its theology; while this force is only

expressly named three times in scriptures, the doctrine of Divine Providence features heavily in both the Old and New Testaments. First published in 1937, J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Hobbit* is a high-fantasy adventure in the medievalist tradition, complete with the hallmarks of the orthodox Christian interpretation of an intangible evil and a hero protected by forces unseen. Despite Tolkien's insistence that Middle-earth isn't a Christian world, his Catholic influences abound, presenting an orthodox Catholic view of the battle between good and evil; yet it also contains examples of Divine Providence reminiscent of the thought of Thomas Aquinas, whose *Summa Theologica* would have been well known to the medievalist Tolkien. Though God is never explicitly mentioned in *The Hobbit*, the unseen hand of Providence is at work throughout the novel; Bilbo Baggins's unusual lineage, the timing of the discovery of the enchanted map, Bilbo's finding of the ring, and the discovery of the Lonely Mountain keyhole, to name a few "fortunate" events, Divine Providence is revealed to be a key element in Bilbo's transformation from humble Hobbit to fated hero.

Here he presented the Roman Catholic as supreme religion and divine forces as well. He defined that religion is more important than any other aspect. He defined that Tolkien's major influence for the novel was Christianity.

This research entitled "The Dynamic Character as seen in J.R.R Tolkien's *The Hobbit* Novel". Mac Aditiawarman, Fitri Mardhatillah wrote about Thorin Oakenshield's dynamic character, the king who wants to take back his kingdom. This research is limited on basic ideas that relate to the observation into three questions as follow: (1) Why does Thorin also has an important role (2) Why is Thorin not the true leader (3) Why does Thorin change his role from hero to villain. The purposes of the thesis are, (1) To analyze Thorin's role in the *Hobbit* novel, (2) To analyze Thorin's role as a leader who considered not the true leader, (3) To analyze Thorin Oakenshield's dynamic

character as the story progress. This theory using Teeuw and Pradopo about structural analysis and Griffith about dynamic character. As for data analysis method, the writer uses systematic procedures by understanding the novels, the characters, as well as the structural theory. Data collection technique uses documentation technique in finding relevant data to the subject of analysis. The results are: (1) Thorin who has important role in the Hobbit novel, (2) Thorin as the leader of the company but his quality as the leader is so bad, (3) The dynamic character of Thorin when he get back his kingdom. As conclusion, Tolkien shows that the crownless king has desire to get back his kingdom and becomes blind to the presence of the people around him. However, before his death he admits his wrongs to Bilbo. The moral value from this story is the world would be a better place if people cherished friendship and joy over wealth and success.

C. McLaughlin, T. Bridgman, in his research entitled, The battle for 'Middle-earth': The constitution of interests and identities in The Hobbit dispute.

He wrote:

This article draws on an industrial dispute over the filming of The Hobbit in New Zealand in 2010 to contribute to the theorisation of the interplay between interests and identities and our understanding of mobilisation and collective identity. While industrial disputes are typically viewed as conflict between groups with opposing material interests, this may miss the way in which both the identities of those involved and their interests are discursively constituted in articulatory processes. Specifically, we apply Laclau and Mouffe's discourse theory and in doing so demonstrate that the dispute was more than a conflict over working conditions, it was a hegemonic struggle to fix meaning. In making this conceptual contribution we highlight a tendency within industrial relations analysis to reify interests



Iline Megale in his work, *The Development of Bilbo Baggins' Character through Leadership in J.R.R. Tolkien's The Hobbit*. He wrote:

Leadership has been interesting since it refers to a significant quality applicable to a wide context of human's life. Traditionally, there are two points of views related to leadership. One sees it is a trait one was being born with, and the other as a cultivated trait. Galton (1869) suggests how extraordinary intelligence as an important key of leadership is something inherited. However, this view has been challenged by newer theories, being one of them is servant-leadership introduced by Greenleaf in 1977. This model believes that in order to become a leader, one must firstly learn how to be a servant. *The Hobbit* (1937) by J.R.R. Tolkiens is a great showcase as to how servant-leadership is cultivated along the personal development of its main character, Bilbo Baggins. The novel narrates how Bilbo joins an expedition of dwarves as a servant and through these he learns how to become a leader. Since the focus is the character development of Bilbo and the servant-leadership attributes he cultivates along the way, this research employs qualitative method. The finding confirms the presumption that Bilbo Baggins is a round and dynamic character because of its complexities and developments throughout the story. Toward the end of the story, Bilbo succeeds in developing nine leadership attributes, i.e. vision, honesty, integrity, trust, service, modeling, pioneering, appreciation of others, and empowering. These attributes are not something Bilbo naturally endowed with, but he develops, practices, and cultivates them. It is also found that the attribute of service, as the heart of servant-leadership, is dominant in Bilbo Baggins. The findings also suggest that leadership as a trait is something that can be learned from an exploration into a literary work. Key words: leadership, servant-leadership, character development.

The role of a leader and leadership are defined and presented in the novel by Tolkien. Leadership is one of the major themes of the novel.

H. Stuckey in his work entitled

The Nature of Hero(es) in J. R. R. Tolkien's "The Hobbit"

He wrote:

The challenge of collecting and exhibiting videogames is a significant issue for contemporary museums. This paper provides a case study of Beam Software's successful text adventure of the 1980s, The Hobbit, which offers some insight to the challenge of videogames for museums. The Hobbit is an exemplary text in this regard because it exists in so many variant forms, which raises questions about what/where/ and which one is the game. The discussion is informed by my experiences working as the Games Curator at the Australian Centre for the Moving Image (ACMI) where in 2006 I showed The Hobbit (1982) as part of an exhibition Hits of the 80s: Aussie games that rocked the world. The game was surprisingly challenging for audiences and many found the text adventure's gameplay alien and difficult to engage with. It was hard for audiences to appreciate the ingenuity and creativity of the design, instead they saw only unfamiliar and outdated gameplay. The discussion also draws on my current research with the 'Play it Again' project, in particular the development of the online Popular Memory Archive. Play it Again is a collaborative project between researchers at several Australasian universities and three cultural institutions - ACMI, the New Zealand Film Archive, and the Berlin Computerspiele Museum. The multidisciplinary research team is endeavouring to research, collect, and preserve the production and reception histories of local digital games in 1980s Australia and New Zealand.

Rikky Julian in his work entitled THE COURAGE OF BILBO BAGGINS IN J.R.R. TOLKIEN'S  
The Hobbit or There & Back Again?

He wrote:

Novel is one of various modern literary works. By reading it, people can get much understanding about human characters. Courage is the most complex and important thing of all human emotions. Besides, by reading a novel we can learn so many aspects of life like moral and social relationship. As a part of literature, a novel gives us knowledge which is many in psychological aspects. It can be seen from its symbols, plot, and characters. The writer takes the material from in J.R.R Tolkien's novel The *Hobbit* or There & Back Again. The aim of this study is to describe the courage of Bilbo Baggins. This research used qualitative method in collecting and analyzing the data. The result of analysis shows that Bilbo Baggins has courage because there is some the courage such as to take responsibility, integrity, courage for friendship, and courage to take action. Bilbo Baggins has the courage to take responsibility because when dwarf need a help, Bilbo always carries although with grumble. He has courage integrity because he finds out the way to avoid a war with dwarf, human, and elf although Bilbo behaviors make he called a traitor from his friend Thorin. He has courage to integrity, because of his integrity war between dwarfs, human, and elf could be avoided. Bilbo has courage for friendship, because in the journey dwarfs in trouble, but he never runs away leave his friends behind and help them, in fact anytime Bilbo could run away without detected dwarfs.

Jon Garrad in his work The Riddles in the Hobbit he wrote:

One notion I am setting myself against, here--I may as well be plain--is that a given riddle has one right or correct answer. [...] I do not repudiate this pleasure [of finding an appropriate solution]; but neither do I think it a simple thing. The thesis of this study (to repeat myself) is that riddles are, amongst other things, ways of ironising the world; and adding an answer to an unsolved riddle does not resolve away such irony. (51) ADAM ROBERTS' THE RIDDLES OF THE HOBBIT ranges wide. A simple critical work about The Hobbit it is assuredly not; Roberts explores Anglo-Saxon wordplay, Tolkien's Middle-earth, the conventions of the fantasy genre, and the acts of reading, writing and literary criticism, with the titular Riddles as a kind of locus, a

central point to which he invariably returns. Decoding Roberts' term 'riddling' is essential to understanding both his perspective on Tolkien, and his project in presenting that perspective here. Central to it is the idea that the answer to a riddle is less important than the process of solution and the mindset by which it is found; a process which reveals greater and more significant truths than either a straightforward depiction of an imagined world, or a simplistic map-A-to-B analysis of that depiction. In short, riddles are "a truer representation of the nature of reality than simple declarative statements [...]. [T]he world is not a simple or transparent business, but a mystery to be plumbed" (20). This ludic aspect, the story-as-puzzle-game, the focus on process rather than product, characterizes Roberts's approach to Tolkien and also to the act of criticism. Some of his conclusions--his "solutions" to the Riddles of *The Hobbit*--are more tenuous than others, but the perspective which Roberts adopts suggests that this quality is a merit, that the ingenuity of his reading is its own reward. The very act of writing is represented as a riddling practice. Roberts points out (128-129) that there are very few actual written texts mentioned or deployed within Tolkien's novels, and that they are frequently ambiguous, puzzling, or actually threatening. Rather than the simplistic notion that writing "tends to mislead or wrongfoot us, to distract us from the answer" (129), which is ultimately at odds with his central thesis concerning answers, Roberts argues instead that writing "bridges the gap between text and world too immediately, and makes itself real with a dangerous completion" (129). Such a process is essentially postmodern, as Roberts acknowledges, but his product--the book I am reading right now--skews away from explicit alignment with, or namedropping of, postmodern theorists. Indeed, Roberts occasionally actively rejects theoretical approaches. Analysis of the dreams Tolkien described to Christopher Bretherton, connected to Tolkien's re-envisioning and repurposing of Atlantis as drowned Numenor, is dismissed as "an impertinence quite apart from anything else" (36). In this course

Roberts is in many ways taking inspiration from Tolkien himself, focusing his attention on content rather than "rationalised, historical or social explanations" (41), as Roberts paraphrases "The Monsters and the Critics." In his focus on Tolkien's content and its sources, Roberts presents us with the writer as a disingenuous riddler, exploring the contradictions in his correspondence and the layers of implication in those riddles he either borrows from the Anglo-Saxon culture, or those for which that culture has been a definite inspiration. As a result, Roberts spends several chapters detailing Tolkien's probable or definite sources, many of which are impenetrable without the insight into the Anglo-Saxon world and worldview which Roberts provides. Roberts is explicit about his reasons for doing so--"the point of the exercise is not really, ingeniously or otherwise, to answer these riddles.

There are many writers, researchers and critics who worked on the novel. Many ideas and themes from the story discussed by different peoples and in different point views, like Riddles, magic, heroism, etc.

But one thing is unrevealed or ignored by the researchers is the materialism in the novel. Materialism is an important factor of the novel, because, the story of the novel revolve around the wealth of dwarves, occupied by The Smaug, a mighty dragon. After the dragon's destruction dwarves were forced to leave their homeland and wander around the world. They became homeless and pitiful. Their destruction was because of their wealth and King's lust and greed for wealth. Thror the great king of dwarves was very fond of wealth and he gathered a mountain of gold and jewels in his palace under the mountain. Gold and jewels were beyond the measure and number. Thror fell sick and never wanted to leave his treasure, but Smaug the dragon who is also a lusty and greedy character of the story occupied the mountain and the treasure. Later, on Thorin the grandson of Thror decided to take control of his mountain and the treasure of his ancestors. Thorin's character is complex and miserable sometimes. He is the protagonist of the story but

sometimes he looks like an emotional and lusty fellow. Not only Thorin or Smaug but other characters are also interacted to the treasure.

Virtually every one of *The Hobbit's* primary characters—including both the heroes and the villains—is at least partially motivated by a desire for unnecessary material things. **Smaug**, the primary antagonist of the novel, is so greedy that he notices when **Bilbo** steals a single cup from his vast collection of treasure. (Tolkien notes that his anger is that of a rich man who's lost something he never uses.) The dwarves are struggling to reclaim what is rightfully theirs from Smaug, but when they succeed in their quest, it becomes clear that their love for treasure is almost as obsessive as Smaug's—notably, they refuse to use their riches to repair the town Smaug destroys, even though it is during its destruction that Bard kills Smaug, guaranteeing the dwarves their wealth. Similarly, the wood-elves who imprison **Thorin** and the other dwarves believe that they have a claim to some of the dwarves' treasure. Tolkien doesn't bother to clarify whether the dwarves or the elves are correct in this dispute—the point is that both sides are flawed by their greedy, irrational desire for things they don't need. Even Bilbo, who is largely indifferent to the dwarves' talk of glory and riches, shows occasional flashes of greed. Under the Misty Mountains, he pockets **Gollum's ring** without thinking twice about it, and later takes the Arkenstone for himself because he's afraid that the dwarves won't honor their promise to give him one-fourteen of their treasure. (It's also worth keeping in mind that Bilbo and dwarves are constantly in want of food, and when they eat, they eat huge feasts—while this isn't greed per se, it does suggest that it's natural to want things, and perhaps to want more than one needs.)

If everyone is at least a little greedy, Tolkien seems to say, then the best they can do is try to limit their nature with reason and self-control. Bilbo may be the best example of how to overcome greed—though Thorin offers him one-fourteenth of the dwarves' treasure in return for his services,

he's satisfied to take back a smaller portion, reasoning that it's enough to keep him satisfied for the rest of his life. Similarly, the dwarves, elves, and men ultimately overcome their greed by uniting together to defeat the wolves and goblins. On his deathbed, Thorin seems to renounce his former greed, saying that he's now traveling to a place (presumably, the afterlife) where this is no gold or treasure. Greed, then, is ultimately futile—compromise and personal sacrifice are more important for maintaining peace and building mutual prosperity (as is evident in the fact that back before Smaug the communities of Dale, the Kingdom under the Mountain, and the elves of Mirkwood traded together and developed prosperity and mutual connection by doing so). In fact, the novel seems to place greed in direct contrast to trust and cooperation, and every overwhelmingly greedy character lives in almost complete isolation: Smaug, Gollum, and, for a time near the end of the novel, Thorin. Looked at on a larger scale, the races of dwarves, men, and elves are also separated by greed and the mistrust sown by greed. It is only after the attacking armies of the dwarves force the dwarves, elves, and men to band together in fellowship against this common enemy that they are able to rebuild their communities and attain their former prosperity

The famous director Alfred Hitchcock coined a term that is still widely used today: the MacGuffin. A MacGuffin is the thing that the hero or heroine of a film is looking for. It could be anything: a murder weapon, some stolen jewels, the letters of transit, whatever. The important point about the MacGuffin is that it's what keeps the plot going. And that is what treasure is in *The Hobbit* – it keeps the dwarves on their quest and generates tension between Thorin and Bilbo (and Bard and the Elvenking, and pretty much everyone else in the world). Wealth is what makes the plot of *The Hobbit* move. But the odd thing about the dwarves' treasure is that everyone desperately wants a

piece of this MacGuffin except Bilbo. He is genuinely not greedy. So we have to ask ourselves, what is Bilbo in this adventure for?

There is a harshness or hostility between Lord Thranduil and the dwarves. I think having Thranduil and Thorin's family feud over Thranduil's dead wife's gems adds a more tangible reason why the dwarves and the elves don't get along. It does tie back to the line in the book about fights over gems in the mountain and it circumvents an anachronism in the original story.

The story was supposed to be about Thingol and the Silmaril because this was back when Tolkien wrote *The Hobbit* as having very little connection with anything else. Obviously that doesn't work now, so I think it was smart of Jackson to take the basic story elements and fit them back into the hobbit's current time period. Instead of a silmaril, they're just pretty white gems Thranduil wanted to be made into jewelry in remembrance of his dead wife.

Some might argue that's too similar to Thingol, but Thranduil himself is already a bit of a callback to him, so I think it fits.

Materialism or their lust for gold and wealth of the world drove them to destruction and destruction only. Their greed and materialism drove the whole middle earth into danger and under the threat of being destroyed. There was a time when every race became enemy of the other. No one was ready to accept the existence of other as a free race. Everyone wanted to rule over them and to provide his people comforts and easiness.

Further, Nothing is known about the Master's history prior to the arrival of Thorin and Company in T.A. 2941. Indeed, even his individual name is unknown. Nonetheless, as the elected Master of Lake-town, he would have been accounted amongst the old and wise of the town.



When the Dwarves and Bilbo reached Lake-town, they were taken to the great hall where the Master was feasting. Subsequently, Thorin declared the return of the King under the Mountain. This news spread quickly throughout the town and the people began to shout, sing, and rejoice. The Master doubted that there ever was a 'King under the Mountain' but he had to take heed of the clamour. Therefore he pretended to believe Thorin's story and the Master yielded his own great chair to him. The Master accommodated the Dwarves and Bilbo for two weeks before they thought about departing for the Lonely Mountain. The Master was shocked that Thorin would dare to approach Smaug and he wondered whether he really was who he said he was. All the same, he was more than willing to let them go because they were expensive to keep and their arrival had caused business to come to a standstill.<sup>[2]</sup>

When Smaug attacked Lake-town, the people urged the Master to tell them what needed to be done. But as the flames leaped from the dragon's jaw, the Master fled in his guided boat. Thus it was that Bard took control of the situation and ultimately slew the dragon himself. The surviving townsfolk gathered on the western shore of the Long Lake and lamented at the loss of their home. The people then directed their anger at the Master, accusing him of selfishness and calling him 'Moneybags'. They demanded that Bard become their king. In response, the Master, in a demonstration of his charisma and oratorical prowess, rebutted the people and convinced them that their anger should be directed towards Thorin and Company instead of him. The Master remained quiet as the survivors set up camps along the shore and Bard assumed effective control of all the people, but did so only in the Master's name. When the hosts of Esgaroth and the Elvenking set off for Erebor to demand their share in the treasure, the Master did not go. Those who stayed behind began to prepare for the oncoming winter by building huts and collecting resources; meanwhile, the Master directed the process of planning a new town.<sup>[1]</sup>

## **1.5 Research methodology**

In this section, the design of the study, the sources from which data is collected, the methods used to collect data and the theory to analyze the data while conducting this research are explained in detail. The nature of present study is qualitative. It will make use of text or content analysis for non-subjective, organized and qualitative elaboration of the textual material under investigations. Texts may be illustrated as book sections, essays, interviews, talks or discourse, newspaper headlines and columns, speeches and oral communication, advertisement and intra group conversations will come under this family or class, vernacular talk, or really any happening of communicatory language.

The primary data will be the text itself. Afterward, it is investigated

Employing one of the content analysis' fundamental techniques; relational analysis or conceptual analysis. The findings are then employed to form inferences about the subject matters with in the selected text, the authors, the audience and even the acculturation and the time of which these are components. A library research method is used for this study. From primary written data, detailed reading is done answer the research questions from Secondary data source, the data is arranged systematically in accordance with this study.

### **Theoretical framework**

For data analysis according to the topic the research will follow the theory;

Economic Materialism

In essence, economic materialism reduces the wealth of the dialectics of social development to the operation of a predominant age-old “economic factor.” While recognizing economics as the subject of history, economic materialism views people as the passive “element” of the productive forces or as the products of production relations. From the productive forces and production relations, economic materialism schematically deduces all other phenomena of social life that have no active role of their own. Economic materialism views people solely as personifiers of economic categories, or economic personae.

The ultimate expression of economic materialism can be found in the vulgar sociology of V. M. Shuliatikov. Economic materialism as a whole is characteristic of the opportunist “tradition” (of E. Bernstein, for example). It is also manifested in the works of certain Marxists, such as A. Labriola, P. Lafargue, and F. Mehring. As V. I. Lenin pointed out, what led to the emergence of economic materialism was the assimilation of Marxism “in an extremely one-sided and mutilated fashion [by those who] had learnt by rote certain ‘slogans,’ certain answers . . . *without having understood* the Marxist criteria for these answers” (*Poln. sobr. soch.*, 5th ed., vol. 20, p. 88). Criticism of economic materialism is a necessary condition of the creative development of Marxism.

Materialism is the most important part of the novel. It is the used in and novel Bradley and widely.

## **Chapter Summaries**

This dissertation comprises three chapters. Chapter one comprises comprehensive introduction of thesis, Aims and objectives, research methodology, Theoretical framework, review of literature. In this chapter, the researcher provides you brief summaries of short stories and gives

window to the text. The researcher has put forward the idea about wealth in the J.R.R. Tolkien's famous fantasy novel THE HOBBIT.

The novel is the story of an adventure of a Hobbit to reclaim the home of Dwarves, Lonely Mountain, along with thirteen Dwarves and a Wizard. John Ronald Reuel Tolkien, English writer, born in South Africa. Tolkien is a famous fantasy writer of twentieth century. He was a close friend of C.s. Lewis. He spent most of his life in England in service of Queen Elizabeth. He is known as 'father of modern fantasy literature'. Various researches conducted on the novel. Some examples include; The Hobbit: A Turning Point by John D. Rateliff, The Hobbit: A Mythopoeic Need for Adventure by Jelena Borojevic, Tolkien's Treasures: Marvellous Objects in The Hobbit and The Lord of the Rings by Marie H. Loughlin, Paleoanthropology. The Fellowship of the Hobbit by Elizabeth Culotta, Hobbit Histories: the origins of Homo florosensis by Shamini Bundel..

Moreover chapter three includes, conclusion, citation and suggestions, etc.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Theme of material wealth in J.R.R. Tolkien's The Hobbit**

A commonly misquoted Biblical passage is that "money is the root of all evil." The actual passage is "For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils" (1 Timothy 6:10).

When we're talking about money, that's an important distinction to make. Many wealthy people give generously and live frugal, moral lives. Having money doesn't necessarily make us evil.

And money isn't the root of all evil either. It isn't always at the root cause of murder, for example.

But loving money can lead to all different kinds of evil. Everything we love competes with everything else we love for the position of priority in our lives. If we love money, we can end up loving it and valuing it more than our family, more than our friends, more than our honor and morality.

That's what happens in *The Hobbit: Battle of the Five Armies*.

Once Smaug, the dragon under the mountain, is killed, Thorin Oakenshield (the new dwarven king), Bilbo, and the rest of the dwarves take possession of the mountain and the treasure within it.

The treasure goes to Thorin's head. He refuses to honor the agreement he made with the nearby city of men. They helped him, and thanks to his meddling with the dragon, their city was destroyed. The survivors are facing winter with no home. Thorin refuses to take them into the mountain or to give them the money he promised so that they can get a fresh start.

He won't return the jewels that rightfully belong to the eleven king either, and he stands by and watches as hundreds of dwarves, elves, and humans are slaughtered by orcs. All he cares about is making sure his treasure is secure.

While I was watching the movie, the friend I was with leaned over and said "what people won't do for money, eh?"

Her words burrowed inside, and I haven't been able to stop thinking of them because I know someone who seems to love his money almost more than he loves anything else. To him, having wealth is a sign that someone is a "good man." He spends hours worrying that someone is going to steal his money from him. He trusts no one. And when he gives his money away, he does it to try to earn God's favor or to buy respect, loyalty, love, and obedience from the people around him.

It makes my heart hurt for him. You can't buy those things. At least, when it comes to me, they're not for sale. And money, or the lack thereof, doesn't prove that someone is a good person or a bad person.

He reminds me so much of Thorin. Or perhaps I should say that Thorin reminded me so much of him.

At the end of *The Hobbit*, Thorin was redeemed, but I don't think it's as easy in real life. Once the love of money has hold of us, it's much harder to see it and change.

It served as a good reminder for me of where I want my values to lie.

The novel "The Hobbit," written by J.R.R Tolkien is about Bilbo Baggins, a normal Hobbit, who had never asked for an adventure until 13 dwarves and Gandalf the Wizard show up at his doorstep for tea. They want to use Bilbo as a thief for their quest to reclaim the treasure from the fearsome dragon, Smaug. Bilbo reluctantly joins the company of the dwarves as they set off on their journey to cross the Misty Mountains, which is troll and goblin country and the untamed wild of Mirkwood, where straying from the path can be deadly and lead you to Giant Spiders, Wargs and Orcs.

An admirable character in the The Hobbit is Bilbo Baggins. At the start of the story he

would much rather relax in his comfy hobbit-hole or take long walks in the Shire than go on adventures, as Mr Baggins thinks “adventures make one late for dinner.” Bilbo reluctantly accepted the offer, and soon finds himself on a long journey through the forests of Mirkwood, to get to Smaug’s dark lair hidden away in the Lonely Mountain. Thorin Oakenshield who is the leader of the group wasn’t that keen about having Bilbo on the quest but soon realises the goodness in him “There is more in you of good than you know child of the kindly West.” Bilbo is quite unlike the dwarves as he cherished friendship and happiness over gold and wealth and he shows this by putting his life at risk several time by escaping ferocious goblins and killing giant spiders to save Thorin and the other dwarves. Throughout the story Bilbo’s maturity develops and he begins to gain a better sense of identity and confidence outside of the comfort of his hobbit hole. Tolkien has done this by contrasting Bilbo’s personal growth with the clear lack of development shown in the dwarves. I think Bilbo is an admirable and remarkable companion as he shows wisdom, courage, bravery and above all nobility. Bilbo taught me a valuable lesson because of his goal to survive and be happy while the dwarves desire for treasure and jewels was their main concern. Greed is a recurring theme throughout the novel with many events stemming from the dwarves intense greed for food or gold. In our world today many people are equally as greedy as the 13 dwarves and would much rather be wealthy than have an enjoyable life full of wild adventures and long-lasting friendships. Many the story themes and ideas related to the saying ‘money doesn’t buy happiness’ which in this case is quite true because even though Thorin was already extremely rich he still wanted more treasure and did not care that it would put his companions lives at great risk. The story demonstrates to me that you

need to make the most of what you have got in life because nothing will last forever!

An important event in the story was when Bilbo was accidentally left behind inside the Goblin caves and tried to find a way out by himself. In the tunnels Bilbo finds a ring, which he puts in his pocket. By an underground lake, Bilbo meets the creature Gollum. Gollum and Bilbo play a game of riddles. If Bilbo wins the game, Gollum will show him the way out but if Gollum wins, he will eat Bilbo. When Bilbo can not think of another riddle to ask Gollum, he finds the ring in his pocket and asks himself "What have I got in my pocket?" Gollum thinks this is a riddle, but cannot answer it, and so Bilbo wins the game. Gollum gets angry and does not want to help Bilbo. Gollum then goes away to get something, a magical ring, which turns the person invisible. Gollum cannot find his ring, and realises that Bilbo has it, "Curse the Baggins! It has gone! What has it got in its pocketses? He's found it, yes he must have. My Birthday present." Gollum goes back, but Bilbo is afraid and runs away. While running Bilbo slips the ring onto his finger and he becomes invisible. Gollum ran past Bilbo, towards the way out of the cave. Bilbo realises that the ring makes him invisible. With the help of the ring he followed Gollum and got out of the cave. Outside, Bilbo again meets Gandalf and the dwarves. It showed the relationship between the two characters and how neither Bilbo nor Gollum trusted each other but their relationship was based around language and riddles and who could outsmart the other. I thought this was an important event because it demonstrated the great courage that the little Hobbit had and it made me feel that even in the scariest of situations you need to keep a positive attitude and don't let anything distract you from your goals. Tolkien portrays Bilbo as a



modern thinker living in an ancient world. Bilbo is able to communicate and make connections with the past and present through language and traditions. For example, Gollum's riddles are taken from historical sources whilst Bilbos come from modern children's stories. It is the riddle game itself that allows Gollum and Bilbo to engage with each other rather than what the riddles are actually about. The unity between the old and the new world were ongoing theme throughout The Hobbit.

I really enjoyed The Hobbit as it was full of suspense and adventure. It really made me think about how different the world we live in is compared to the fantasy world even though many of the characters had similar traits and personalities to humans. However, the fact that greed and selfishness can rule over a fantasy world is no different to what happens in our world today. The problems still stem from the same issues such as wealth and jealousy. Bilbos kindness and willingness to help those with greater needs reminds me that there are good leaders and heroes in every situation. The book inspired me to be courageous and determined about every problem that I come across and find a way to solve them. It also taught me that all of us in our lives (not only characters from a book) can enter new worlds, overcome great obstacles, "slay dragons," learn and grow and then return with new powers and strengths that could help others. Even though our adventures may not seem as big as the Hobbit's, I think they can still be as difficult and rewarding as his.

It seems that greed never allows you to think you have enough, and in the case of The Hobbit by J.R.R. Tolkien it demonstrates how corruptive it can truly be. From the surface one may not think of a half sized person as the usual hero. However, by looking into the personalities of the characters from The Hobbit it is obvious that heroes come in many different shapes and sizes. By comparing

the various cases of greed and selflessness exhibited by Smaug, Thorin, and Bilbo, it becomes apparent that the what each character valued as important was one of the true driving forces behind their actions throughout the novel.

The dragon Smaug is the true epitome of greed. Its conquering of the Lonely Mountain had the sole purpose to collect treasure. It has absolutely no use for the treasure that used to better the lives of people such as those who live in Lake Town. Smaug symbolizes the true extent of what happens when one gives in to greed. Furthermore, any interest Smaug didn't place on his gold was instead focused on himself and his reputation. This is shown when Smaug risks the loss of his gold by allowing Bilbo to live when he is given complements, bolstering his self centered attitude. In a way Thrór had taken the place of Smaug long before his conquering when he embraced the power that comes with gold. The day that Smaug came simply shifted power from a figurative dragon to a real one.

J.R.R. Tolkien wrote the Hobbit to entertain his young children in addition to just the sheer urge to explore this rich fantasy world inside his head. So it would be quite curious if he had chosen *not* to imbed a few nuggets of worldly wisdom for his kids' edification.

And indeed, a close read of the Hobbit reveals an almost linear relationship between a character's active surrender to greed and their doom.

As the OP noted, Thorin II Oakenshield is Exhibit A. Upon the death of Smaug, Thorin's original laudable goal of restoring his kindred's ancestral home metastasizes into a fierce, unbridled lust for the gold and jewels of the hoard (in particular, the Arkenstone). Thorin dies shortly after expressing regret for his greed.

But numerous other characters in the Hobbit meet an untimely (but well deserved) demise because of greed:

*The Trolls*. Their lust for ill-gotten treasure and fresh meat drove them down from the hills into the lowlands ... where they are turned to stone.

*The Goblins of the Misty Mountains*. Their reprehensible avariciousness is punished first by their setback at the hands of Gandalf the Grey & company. But their devastating defeat comes from their attempt to satiate their greed by attacking Erebor to sack its golden hoard.

*Sméagol/Gollum*. The ultimate victim of greed, he murdered and became outcast as a result of his unholy desire for Sauron's Ruling Ring.

*Smaug the Golden*. His suicidal attack on Esgaroth (Lake-town) was motivated by volcanic anger at being dispossessed by Bilbo of a single treasure cup.

*The Master of Esgaroth (Lake-town)*. He was already a typical greedy politician which made him vulnerable to falling under the dragon-sickness which ultimately killed him.

By contrast, those characters in the Hobbit who flourish do so not because of monetary rewards, even if they get them. Elrond's household gives away far more than they ever receive yet they are the merriest people in the book. The Beornings craft a proud existence and lineage through hard work and clean living. The elves of Mirkwood prosper despite (or perhaps because of?) selflessly assisting the destitute men and women of Esgaroth (Lake-town).

And we can't forget Bilbo! True, he returns home with more money than he left. But then, he was already a rich, prosperous gentlehobbit. Tolkien makes plain that his true treasures are the

experiences and friendships he gained along the way ... with Gandalf, Balin, Beorn, Thranduil, Bard and, yes, Thorin II Oakenshield.

On the contrary, Bilbo never demonstrates this mixing of good and evil; he is entirely untainted, and represents self-sacrifice at its finest. One of the things that makes Bilbo such a heroic character is his incredible selflessness, which is seen throughout the novel. He aids Thorin and his Company repeatedly, without any reason for helping them besides a desire for adventure and the fact that he helps those in need. He attempts to infiltrate the camp of trolls, rescues the Dwarves from the spiders in the Mirkwood, frees the Dwarves from the Elvenking's hold, and confronts Smaug face to face. All of these are acts that put Bilbo directly in harm's way, but he does them because he feels that he cannot stand idly or turn the other way; he takes direct action when necessary, whether it benefits him or not."

The major theme of *The Hobbit* is the quest, one of the oldest themes in literature. As a scholar of ancient languages and literatures, Tolkien would have known the theme well through Greek and Norse myth and Old- and Middle-English poetry. The quest theme is central to the story of Beowulf, the Old-English epic about which Tolkien published an essay of lasting scholarly significance in 1937. The quest story best known to modern readers is probably the Arthurian legend of the Holy Grail, in which a knight ventures forth in search of a sacred cup (the Grail) that he brings back to restore power to his king and, thus, improve the welfare of the kingdom. The Grail story is an important sub-plot in the middle English poem *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, which Tolkien edited with his friend E. V. Gordon and published in 1925. Given that a cup and the Grail are similar objects, it is interesting that it is a cup that Bilbo Baggins steals from the dragon's treasure when he first descends to Smaug's lair in Chapter 12.

The quest theme is related to two important features of *The Hobbit* and other works in which it occurs. The first of these is the journey plot structure. The protagonist or main character who embarks on a quest must physically go somewhere; his search involves travel, usually in a circular route such that he returns home with the object of his quest. The journey allows the main character to encounter various characters and circumstances that are unfamiliar and even threatening to him. Thus, novelty and suspense are built into the journey plot. Bilbo, for example, encounters Goblins, Wargs, elves, Gollum, and Smaug the dragon on his journey to help the dwarves retrieve their treasure, and he travels well beyond the hobbit-lands through Mirkwood and the Misty Mountains to the Lonely Mountain. Along the way, he escapes death several times, undergoes the privations of hunger and bad weather, and ultimately sees combat in the Battle of Five Armies. None of this would have been possible if he had stayed at home in the safety of his hobbit-hole. The structure of a journey plot is often described as episodic, meaning that the protagonist moves from scene to scene (or episode to episode) in a rather simple linear fashion; there is no complex interweaving of the various characters he meets throughout the story. This is generally true of *The Hobbit*: It is not until Chapter 15 that the various groups of creatures Bilbo encounters on his journey converge on the Lonely Mountain.

The second important feature related to the quest theme is in the character development of the protagonist. In most quest stories, the physical journey serves as a metaphor for the personal growth of the questing character, for whom the quest is often the fulfillment of a personal destiny. As the protagonist travels physically farther from home, he develops psychologically and/or spiritually beyond the self he was when he started out. The episodes of the plot serve as trials and lessons to him, and when he finds the object of his quest, he also finds his authentic self. Bilbo, for example, begins his journey with the dwarves reluctantly, not at all sure that he is suited for it.

Throughout much of the journey, he regrets his decision to join them and daydreams about the comforts of his own home that seem so attractive in comparison with the dramatic adventures he undergoes. In early episodes, when he is threatened with death, he must be rescued by Gandalf. As time goes on, however, Bilbo develops both ingenuity and courage, partly under the tutelage of Gandalf and partly through a combination of good luck and the exercise of his own will. It is apparently through luck that he finds the ring of invisibility in Gollum's cave, but its powers allow him, in the absence of Gandalf, to use his intelligence and courage to rescue the dwarves from the dungeon of the Elvenking and later take the Arkenstone to Bard in an attempt to prevent a war over the dragon's treasure. Bilbo is depicted as making sound ethical judgments and choosing to do good, as he does when he does not use the advantage of his sword and invisibility to kill Gollum. Like other quest heroes, Bilbo returns home at the end of his journey. In keeping with the tone of *The Hobbit*, however, his life is changed only subtly: He writes poetry and he lives somewhat eccentrically, more like his mother's family, the adventurous Took, than the Bagginses he so thoroughly resembled before.

Related to the quest theme is the theme of community, and in *The Hobbit*, you see the value of community especially in relation to property. The object of the quest hero's search is usually something that will improve the welfare of his community. In Arthurian legends like that of Gawain, for example, the kingdom has fallen to ruin and the king has become powerless. The Grail or sacred cup that Gawain brings back is meant to restore the power of the king and the welfare of the kingdom. In *The Hobbit*, there is a parallel in the disinherited situation of Thorin, the leader of the dwarves, who is no longer King under the Mountain like his grandfather and who has lost his birthright, the treasure trove, to Smaug the dragon. The town of Dale, once a thriving dwarf town, is in ruins; other stretches of landscape on the way to the Lonely Mountain are also described as

desolate places where nothing can grow. Despite his dwarvish love for beautiful material things, Thorin does not want to reclaim the treasure only for himself; he wants it for the entire dwarf community so that their world can be restored to what it was under his ancestors, before the invasion of Smaug.

Smaug and Gollum represent the perverted use of property. They are monsters because isolation and selfishness such as theirs is evil. They do not recognize community; there are no other creatures like them. Smaug makes his home in the Lonely Mountain, and Gollum is so self-centered he does not even know the word for "you." They are vehemently opposed to sharing; indeed, they would rather kill than share what they possess, whether it be Gollum's ring of invisibility or Smaug's treasure trove. Smaug makes no use at all of the treasure trove; he only sits on top of it and sleeps. Ironically, Smaug is killed himself as he wages war in defense of his treasure. (Gollum, too, dies in *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy as he finally reclaims his prized possession, the ring of invisibility.)

But other characters possess lesser versions of Smaug's and Gollum's flaws. The Master of Laketown, who is given a share of the treasure trove after the Battle of Five Armies, becomes corrupted by the wealth. He does not share it to rebuild the town devastated by Smaug and he is described as falling prey to the dragon sickness. He loses power; Bard replaces him. At various times, the dwarves are described as being overly fond of material wealth, and there is a sense in which the pursuit of his personal ancestral treasure kills Thorin, although it also brings about the necessary death of Smaug.

Even Bilbo Baggins, that mildest of creatures, must learn to leave the safety of his home, where he lives alone, and act as part of a group. He is rather social in his own way, on his own terms, but his journey requires him to push himself beyond the limits of his own comfort. Whereas

he formerly could think of nothing better than the solitary pleasure of a breakfast of eggs and bacon or a pipe full of tobacco, he eventually wins the respect of others for acting in their behalf. In agreeing to accompany the dwarves on their journey, he agrees to cooperate in a communal venture in which he has no personal investment.

### The Uses of Power

One of the major themes of *The Hobbit* concerns the use of power on several different levels. Gandalf has magical powers that you see him use almost immediately. As the story begins, he places a secret mark on Bilbo Baggins' door that causes the dwarves to congregate at the hobbit-hole. He seems to know much more about Bilbo than can be explained, and he has a certain gift for prophecy. He uses a magic wand at times, and he appears and disappears at will. The full extent of his sorcery is demonstrated in *The Lord of the Rings*, but even in *The Hobbit*, Gandalf clearly has powers that exceed those of the other travelers. His magical power is reflected in his age and his wisdom.

Although much younger than Gandalf, Bilbo's wisdom increases throughout the story and as a quest hero, he very much develops a kind of personal power. He grows from a reluctant, rather cowardly creature who complains when he is hungry or rained upon into a clever and courageous one who rescues the dwarves from the dungeon of the Elvenking, defies both Gollum and Smaug, and survives the Battle of Five Armies. He gains the respect of his companions and develops a personal authority that defines him as a leader. When Gandalf temporarily leaves the group, Bilbo becomes the leader in essential ways: He devises plans and he volunteers to go first in risky situations. Although he is the beneficiary of a great deal of good luck, Bilbo also exercises his will to take on difficult tasks, like confronting Smaug, and he makes ethical choices, like when he



spares Gollum's life. He declines heroism and chooses instead to live a relatively quiet life when he returns home, but it is a life enriched by the self-knowledge he achieves on his journey.

There are suggestions in *The Hobbit* that Tolkien is interested in the problem of a more worldly power than either Gandalf or Bilbo represents. At the beginning of the story, Gandalf tells Thorin that their journey requires a hero or a warrior, but he cannot find one because all the warriors are far away fighting each other. Later, in Chapter 4, the narrator explains that Goblins are so wicked they are probably responsible for inventing the machines that have since been used in war to kill many people at once. Such machines were a distinguishing feature of World War I, in which Tolkien served in France; formerly, wars had been fought much more as a series of hand-to-hand combats. As his writing of *The Hobbit* drew to a close, the events that would result in World War II were taking shape in Germany. Even his friend C. S. Lewis remarked that as Tolkien began writing the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy, political events in Europe were imitating his "history" to an uncanny degree. There is no evidence that *The Hobbit* was intended as an anti-war fable, however; Tolkien was adamant that he was not interested in writing allegory. Nevertheless, Chapters 14 through XVII certainly depict the flaws inherent in political power. You see the leaders of various groups committed to war for personal gain — namely Smaug's treasure — and you see failures of diplomacy, as when Thorin refuses to parley with Bard because Bard has allied himself with the Elvenking. The personal failures of characters like Thorin, whose pride prevents him from negotiating peace, the Master of Lake-town, whose political power ultimately corrupts him, and Bilbo's failure to buy peace, in effect, with the Arkenstone represent an attitude toward war that is both critical and resigned. The Prime Minister of England, Neville Chamberlain, signed the Munich Agreement with Adolph Hitler as Tolkien was beginning the Rings trilogy; it was not long before "monster" became the common description for Hitler.

Readers frequently comment on the voice of the narrator of *The Hobbit*, often attributing to it the book's success. Some have called it professorial, because it gives a great deal of information on rather esoteric topics like runes, the lifestyle of hobbits, and the ancient history of dwarves and elves. It is certainly congenial, however, and one of the reasons *The Hobbit* is so enjoyable to read is the pleasure the narrator takes in telling the story.

The story of *The Hobbit* is related from a third-person omniscient point of view; that is, by the narrator who is not a character in the story himself (there is no "I" in *The Hobbit*) but who nonetheless knows everything there is to tell. He knows what some of the characters are thinking, especially more complex characters like Bilbo, Gollum, and Smaug. He describes Bilbo's daydreams about food and tobacco, for example, and the alternatives he faces when making choices; he describes Gollum's unique psychology.

This narrator also knows what will happen in the future of the story. The first time Bilbo thinks longingly of his hobbit-hole and wishes he were back home, the narrator explicitly tells you that this will not be the last time Bilbo has such regrets. On different occasions, he reveals that a certain character or place won't be seen again; he hints at the future death or disappearance of some characters. When Bilbo is rescued by the Lord of the Eagles, you are told (Chapter 7) that Bilbo won't see the eagles again until the Battle of Five Armies (Chapter 17). In his prophetic vision, the narrator shares some of Gandalf's magical power; this is consistent with the power that has traditionally been attributed to storytellers. He is in control of the plot of the story.

On the most superficial level, the journey of Bilbo and the dwarves conforms to the maps, drawn by Tolkien himself, that serve as the endpapers for most editions of the book. More subtly, the narrator draws your attention to the significance of events, as when Bilbo finds the ring of invisibility, that you might otherwise pass over. When a character is mistaken, the narrator

sometimes shares with you the more accurate judgment, the better decision that could have been made. Despite the fact that he is narrating a story of his own invention, he assumes you are in sympathy with him and even share in his knowledge, as when he identifies the Wood-elves and comments that "of course" that is what they are.

At one point in the story, Tolkien offers a peek behind the scenes, as it were, to see the crafted structure of his plot. After Smaug has flown out of the Lonely Mountain in a rage and destroyed Esgaroth, the narrator begins Chapter 14 by asking you to go back two days to imagine the terror the people of Esgaroth felt as they saw Smaug descend upon them.

These narrative intrusions — places where the narrator breaks in upon his own story, destroying any illusion that it is reality unfolding before you — contribute to your sense that the plot is being capably managed and that the story is told by someone who really does know, down to the smallest detail, what happened. You are, in other words, in the hands of a master storyteller. While there is no "I" in *The Hobbit*, you find a great many references to "you," the reader. Tolkien's great attention to you as you read *The Hobbit*, his care that you understand every detail along the way, and his welcoming you into the world in which his story takes place accounts for much that makes the narrative voice so attractive.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Conclusion**

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