

**A aventura heroica na narrativa *O Hobbit* de J. R. R. Tolkien /**  
***The heroic adventure in the narrative *The Hobbit* by J. R. R. Tolkien***

Ismael Arruda Nazario da Silva - UERN\*

Livia Maria Rosa Soares - UERN\*\*

**ABSTRACT**

Bilbo Baggins, protagonist of the narrative *The Hobbit*, written by J. R. R. Tolkien, enters a heroic adventure through Middle-earth in the company of twelve dwarves and a wizard. The journey undertaken allows him to undergo a process of interior development. The narrative leads him to dangerous and wonderful places that put his courage and other attributes into test. In view of this, we aim to investigate the heroic journey undertaken by the protagonist, Bilbo, in the fairy tale mentioned, and to verify how it entails changes for the hobbit. For that, we will use Campbell's (2007a) studies about the monomyth and the heroic journey as the main theoretical-methodological contribution of this work, and Tolkien's (2013) studies about fairy tales. We will also use Chevalier and Gheerbrant's *Dictionary of Symbols* (2009) in the understanding of the symbols that appear in the narrative. We will analyze the story according to the stages of development proposed by Campbell: *Departure, Initiation* and *Return*. After mapping the adventure, we found that the hobbit considerably changes his way of perceiving the world that surrounds himself at the end of the narrative, presenting a set of characteristics that he did not present before the adventure.

**KEYWORDS:** Literature; *The Hobbit*; Hero's journey.

**RESUMO**

*Bilbo Bolseiro, protagonista da narrativa O Hobbit, de J. R. R. Tolkien, ingressa em uma aventura heroica pela Terra-média na companhia de doze anões e um mago. A jornada realizada por ele o permite passar por um processo de desenvolvimento interior. A narrativa o conduz a lugares perigosos e maravilhosos, que colocam sua coragem e outros atributos em prova. Em vista disso, objetivamos investigar a jornada heroica empreendida pelo protagonista Bilbo, no conto de fadas citado, e verificar como ela acarreta mudanças para o hobbit. Para tanto, utilizaremos os estudos de Campbell (2007a), acerca do monomito e da jornada heroica, como aporte teórico-metodológico principal deste trabalho, e o estudo de Tolkien (2013) acerca do conto de fadas. Nos valeremos também do Dicionário de Símbolos de Chevalier e Gheerbrant (2009) no entendimento dos símbolos que aparecem na narrativa. Analisaremos a história segundo as fases de desenvolvimento propostas por Campbell: partida, iniciação e retorno. Após mapearmos a aventura, comprovamos que o hobbit muda consideravelmente sua forma de perceber o mundo que o cerca e a si próprio no final da narrativa, apresentando um conjunto de características que ele não apresentava antes da aventura.*

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** Literatura; *O Hobbit*; Jornada do herói.

## **1 Introduction**

The literary works of John Ronald Reuel Tolkien (J. R. R. Tolkien) have become objects of fascination between lay people, filmmakers and academics. Narratives such

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\* Master student of the Literature, Criticism and Culture research line of the Postgraduate Program in Letters (PPGL), of the State University of Rio Grande do Norte - UERN, Pau dos Ferros, Rio Grande do Norte, Brazil, will\_dublin @ outlook.com.

\*\* Doctoral student of the Literature, Criticism and Culture research line of the Postgraduate Program in Letters (PPGL), of the State University of Rio Grande do Norte - UERN, Pau dos Ferros, Rio Grande do Norte, Brazil, livia.soares@ifma.edu.br.

as *The Hobbit* (1937) and *The Lord of the Rings* (1954-1955) present a marvelous universe with creatures from Nordic folklore that have influenced many generations of readers and even writers. *The Silmarillion* (1999), *The Children of Húrin* (2007), *Béren and Lúthien* (2017) and, more recently, *The Fall of Gondolin* (2018), works posthumously released, are other narratives written by the author, born in South Africa, which also explore the mythological imaginary of Middle-earth.

In the narrative *The Hobbit*, focus of this work, we find a 14-member group seeking to reclaim the ancient home of the dwarves, Erebor, or the Lonely Mountain, which was taken by a dragon in the glory days of the dwarves kingdom. Bilbo Baggins is the hobbit chosen as the 14th member of the group and will be the protagonist of the story. Throughout the narrative, the entourage will go through various adventures in which they will face dangers in the form of trolls, giants wolves, goblins (orcs), spiders, and the dragon itself at the end of the narrative. The reader follows Bilbo's journey, noting if the protagonist changes somehow his way of being and living in the world.

We start from the assumption that the heroic journey undertaken by the protagonist presents itself as a catalyst for a profound change in the way Bilbo, the protagonist of the story, perceives himself and perceives the world around him. In other words, the adventure helps the individual to develop and become aware of his identity as an indivisible and unique being in the world, as Jung (2008) states. Based on this point of view, we expect, at the end of the narrative written by Tolkien, to verify if the personality of the hobbit has undergone through some significant change.

Tolkien's narratives are examples of modern works that explore the hero as a theme, presenting impressive journeys within a marvelous universe, geographically based in northern Europe (LÓPEZ, 2004), that make the reader immerse himself deeply in the history. They are child-juvenile narratives, with a strong mythological content, developed to be fairy tales (DURIÉZ, 2006). In view of this, it is important to discuss the myth of the hero in Tolkien's works, as well as to map it, so that we can accurately understand the walk of the protagonists, attributing new meanings to them.

Concerning the hero's journey, it will be portrayed here from the developmental stages proposed by the American anthropologist Joseph Campbell in his book *The Hero of a Thousand Faces* (2007a), in which he points out that the hero goes through

different stages until he reaches his objective. The heroic journey is the means we will use to understand the process of inner maturation in Bilbo Baggins' trajectory through Middle-earth.

We will therefore investigate, in this research, the narrative *The Hobbit*, by R. R. Tolkien. Our focus will be on the investigation of the hero's journey, carried out by the character Bilbo Baggins. For the analysis, we will use the 2002a edition in Portuguese of the cited work, and we will use Campbell's studies on the myth of the hero, which is presented in the book *The Hero of a Thousand Faces* (2007a), for the understanding of the heroic adventure. We will also use Chevalier and Gheerbrant's *Dictionary of Symbols* (2009), to help us understanding the symbols that appear during the adventure.

## **2 Fairy tales from Tolkien's perspective**

Tolkien was born in 1892 in South Africa and died in 1973. He was an English Literature professor at the University of Oxford, England, and was a world-renowned philologist who helped compile *Oxford's Advanced English Dictionary*. He also wrote the acclaimed *The Silmarillion* (1999), *The Hobbit* (1937) and *The Lord of the Rings* (1954-1955), to name a few, as well as short stories and poems, still little known in Brazil.

As a child, Tolkien observed landscapes and topographies of places he knew. It is imagined that this habit helped him in creating the landscapes of his imaginary world. Another passion developed by Tolkien during his childhood was his interest in the diversity of languages stimulated by his mother, especially the Germanic, Welsh and Finnish, who formed the basis for the development of the languages from Middle-earth. Along with this, he cultivated a fond taste for legends and stories that involved mythology, especially tales of Nordic origin, for example, as Duriez (2006) reports.

The writer aimed to test in practice his idea that imaginative literature can integrate stories and languages, theory and practice, reality and fiction, allowing access to dimensions of reality that are beyond science. As Greggersen relates:

His hypothesis [...] was that the truths expressed by mythological language have the same rationality as those expressed by scientific language. And this, with the advantage of appealing to reason,

imagination and emotions, fields that are difficult to attain by formal language, but not less real or important. For Tolkien, the myth allows us to glimpse dimensions of reality ignored by science, in a holistic and non-fragmentary perspective, opened to the totality. Hence he has chosen him as a model and a type for his literature. (GREGGERSEN, 2003, p. 22).<sup>1</sup>

Tolkien used the mythical narrative to write his stories and named them legendary, that is, a set of legends. In his view, England's past lacked a set of mythical tales of heroic deeds, like Nordic tales such as *Beowulf*, for example, by which he was fascinated. His stories are made up of elves, dragons, giant spiders, orcs, hobbits, wizards, dwarves, gods and countless heroes who play the narrative. The maps available in the books, especially in *The Lord of the Rings*, are nothing more than drawings of northern Europe in a pre-Christian period set in a medieval atmosphere, as Duriez (2006) points out.

The legendary of Tolkien was considered by him a composition of fairy tale narratives. Tolkien reports in his essay *On Fairy Tales* (2013) that in the Oxford Dictionary, at the fairy-tale entry, we can find some pertinent definitions, recorded since the year 1750. The following meanings are thus given: (a) a fairy tale or, in general, a fairy tale with unfolding meaning; (b) an unreal or incredible story and (c) a falsehood. Tolkien considered the earlier definitions to be very limited, since they did not contemplate the true essence of fairy tales as he perceived them. In other words, the so-called fairy tales little reported the presence of fairies, if we took it literally. About this, Tolkien writes:

He said the sense of "fairy tales" was too narrow. It is too restricted even if we reject the diminutive size, for a regular English usage fairy tales are not stories about fairies and elves, but stories about the Enchanted Kingdom, Faerie, the kingdom or state in which fairies exist. The Enchanted Kingdom contains many things besides the elves and the fairies, and besides dwarfs, witches, trolls, giants or dragons; it contains the oceans, the sun, the moon, the firmament and the earth, and all the things that are therein: tree and bird, water and stone, wine and bread, and ourselves deadly human beings when we are delighted. (TOLKIEN, 2013, p. 10).

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<sup>1</sup> All the excerpts on this research were originally written in Portuguese and were translated by the author of this paper.

The author then elaborated his own definition of what a fairy tale would be, even though, as he admitted in his essay, it was only a curious person discussing this subject. According to the quote from above, for Tolkien, fairy tales are narratives with adventures that take place in the Enchanted Kingdom, in which heroes and mythological elements (elves, dragons, dwarves and magicians, for example) relate to the production of a Marvelous history. According to Tolkien (2013, p. 10), "a fairy tale is the one that touches or uses the Enchanted Kingdom, no matter which is its primary purpose, satire, adventure, morality, fantasy."

In Tolkien's works, the reader is carried to the essence of the marvelous genre, in which there are events that can not be explained by the laws of the observable real world. It is a world inhabited by wizards, dragons, elves, dwarves whose existence, according to the laws of that world, are seen with "normality" or likely to happen without the character or the reader's questions. According to Chiampi (1980), the marvelous tale does not cause astonishment because the narrative does not establish any connection with the empirical world.

Still according to Chiampi (1980), in the marvelous literature the characters or the reader of the narrative accept the existence of meta-empirical phenomena, since they constitute an essential part of that universe, unlike fantastic literature, according to Todorov (2014), in which the character or reader hesitates at the strangeness of the "supernatural" events unfolded in the story, since such phenomena are not part of the laws of the immediate world. In this perspective, marvelous and fantastic literature, although dealing with meta-empirical events, differ from one another in the way of approaching supernatural phenomena.

Within Tolkien's fantasy universe, the subgenre myth is inserted, since the author develops a narrative that tells the past of a world and/or a population. The myths are closely linked to the inaugural phenomena as the creation of worlds, fauna, flora and man. It is conceptually related to the marvelous literature itself, since the characters, or the reader, do not miss the events unfolding in its narrative body. In this perspective, the Tolkienian novel seeks to clarify how reality was created and how the ancestors of the characters of the story arose.

In this literary subgenre, there are the acts of evil forces that must be fought and destroyed or controlled by the heroes. The clash of the force of good and the forces of

evil engenders battles that take on a grandiloquent tone as the plot is developed. It is precisely in this mythical and marvelous universe that Tolkien's works fit in, portraying heroes and adventures, dangers and grand feats.

Tolkien's fairy tales portray the experiences of characters that carry out the heroic journey and go through situations that require interior changes. Bilbo Baggins is a good example of this. However, in order to perform these feats, the individuals involved need to mature in strength and wisdom, and this happens within the phases of the heroic journey proposed by Campbell (2007a), in which the hero faces challenges, many of them dangerous, which help him to develop.

Tolkien developed his legendary using narratives with strong mythological content, in which there is a consistent work with archetypes of the collective unconscious, widely studied by Jung (2000) and Von-Franz (2008). The archetype of the hero, for example, awakens in the psyche of the protagonist because of the heroic journey in progress. By making contact with these primordial images, the character "[...] enlarges his relationship with the world and is able to escape from the petty and selfish perspective of illusory desires, fears, fleeting and punctual perspectives." (LÓPEZ, 2004, p. 27).

### **3 Campbell's Heroic Journey**

The myth has great presence and strong influence in tribal and ancient societies like Egypt, Greece, Rome, Mesopotamia, etc. in which it performs the greater function of explaining the existence of the human being and his relations with the natural world, according to Campbell (2007a). In every age and in every places, man has produced marvelous narratives that enable him to relate to the material and immaterial world. According to the author, "religions, philosophies, arts, social forms of primitive and historical man, fundamental discoveries of science and technology, and dreams themselves that cause us sleep come from the basic and magical circle of myth." (CAMPBELL, 2007a, p. 15).

Campbell (2007a, p. 16), concerned about man's need to produce such fantasies, asks: "What is the secret of this timeless vision? What deep layer does she come from? Why is mythology, everywhere, the same, under varieties of customs? And what does

this vision teach?" These questions lead us to the search the reason for the emergence of narratives so similar to each other, in cultures that have never been in contact with each other. It is precisely in this curious phenomenon that Campbell's monomith enters.

The monomith is a narrative structure that assumes different aspects according to the culture of each people. Campbell studied countless popular myths, tales, and stories in order to understand how these stories were organized and whether there was anything in common between them. According to the him, all popular stories and tales follow the same structure with the same developmental phases: *Departure*, *Initiation* and *Return*. These phases are marked by the figure of the hero, included in all the narratives created by man.

The monomith's hero, according to Campbell (2007a), has exceptional characteristics or unusual gifts that set him apart from other people. It can be an apathy for the activities from the community in which he lives. It can be a critical attitude towards some behaviors of people from the community. It can also be a wonder or a desire to know what is beyond the limits of the village. It is possible to notably perceive this characteristic in the fairy tales, in which there is always the exit of some character to know the world.

Propp (1984), in his book *Morphology of the Marvelous Tale*, very similar to Campbell, proposed a construction scheme of the Russian tales that can be also applied to the mythological narratives. In the author's scheme, there are thirty-one moments that can be identified in the narratives produced by man. Not all points, however, will necessarily be included in every story. Some may be missing or slightly misunderstood.

As mentioned, the heroic adventure is divided into three major phases: *Departure*, *Initiation* and *Return*. Each area is subdivided into moments that the hero goes through until the end of the cycle of the journey. The phases of departure comprise the following moments: *The Call of the Adventure*; *The Refusal of the Call*; *Supernatural Support*; *The Passage through the First Break Point* and *The Belly of the Whale*. The initiation phase is divided into: *Path of Obstacles*; *Encounter with the Goddess*; *Woman as Temptation*; *Attunement with the Father*; *Apotheosis* and *The Last Blessing*. And the moments of the return phase are: *The Refusal to Return*; *The Magic Escape*; *Rescue with External Assistance*; *The Passing through the Break Point of Return*; *Lord of Both Worlds* and *Freedom to Live*.

The journey begins with *The Call of Adventure*, in which the hero is invited to move away from the home comfort to board on a journey beyond known limits. It is the first step taken in the direction of the unknown, in which rooted personal beliefs are questioned. After the hero is called to the adventure, follows *The Refusal of the Call*. He may not want to venture into strange places, since the adventure would put him in contact with the unknown and with himself. According to Campbell (2007a, p. 67), "the refusal to the call turns the adventure into its negative counterpart. Imprisoned by boredom [...] the subject loses the power of meaningful affirmative action and becomes a victim to be saved."

*Supernatural Aid* comes next. If the hero has decided to accept the adventure, he will find a protecting figure, a person who will help him in the task of moving forward. An old man will provide him magical amulets that will protect him from the titanic forces with which he is about to come into contact.

*The Passage through the First Break Point* is the next stage of the adventure. The hero lies on the break point between two worlds: the one that is known and safe, where he comes from, and the new, dangerous and unexplored world where he is heading to. "The ordinary person is more than content, even proud, to remain within the limits indicated [...]" (CAMPBELL, 2007a, p. 82). The stage *The Belly of the Whale* bears the idea of a rebirth for the adventurer. The hero goes through symbolic death or self-annihilation. The protagonist must leave old beliefs behind to know new concepts that the journey will present.

*Initiation* is the second phase of the heroic journey. After crossing the First Break Point and suffering a symbolic death in *The Belly of the Whale*, the hero passes through *The Path of Obstacles*, where he must survive a sequence of obstacles. The evidence he will face represents the crisis of perception that needed to happen in order to develop his conscience. After defeating all the evidence placed in his path, the hero performs a symbolic marriage with the Goddess of the World. This is the final test that the hero goes through to obtain the blessing of love that is life itself. This step leads to the later moment, *Woman as Temptation*, in which the feminine form, as a symbol of life itself, appears to the hero.

The individual, soon after, is confronted with the negative aspect of the father, in the step *Attunement with the Father*. This is the reflection of the hero's own ego from



the memory of the mother's protection. The hero should seek hope in the male figure, through which he is protected throughout the experiences of initiation. It consists in the abandonment of the self-generated monster by the oedipus complex, thus reestablishing a healthy relationship with the male figure.

*Apoteosis* follows the previous step. In it, the protagonist becomes free of all fear, conscious and unconscious bonds. The conception of apotheosis, according to Campbell (2007a, p. 146), lies in the fact that the mind is driven "beyond objective experience into a symbolic domain that leaves behind duality." The duality, here, refers to the conceptions of male and female gods, symbolic figures included in earlier stages. The last stage of initiation is *The Ultimate Blessing*. Here the hero is perceived as a superior man and seeks, through intercourse with the gods, their grace, or the power of their sustaining substance, which is taken as the imperishable, beyond time and space.

The last phase of the heroic adventure is *Return*. The protagonist, in most stories, returns to where he came from, carrying with him a transmuted life artefact that will benefit the community or himself. The first stage of this phase is *The Refusal to Return*, in which the hero may choose not to return to his home, deciding to settle in another location, or even choosing to live adventures around the world. The next moment sets up what is called *The Magic Escape*. The escape happens because the hero has won the trophy with the opposition of the guardian, or even returns to the community contradicting the gods (powers of life) or demons. From this, the hero can be helped to return to the outside world, in *Rescue with External Assistance* phase. The world goes against him with the purpose of taking him back into the bosom of the community.

*The Passing through the Break Point of Return* represents a division between returning to the everyday world and remaining in the other world, which once was considered unknown, but now is dominated by the hero. He will have to accept the temporary joys and sorrows of daily life and the banalities of life. The last but one stage refers to the freedom the hero has to come and go between the two worlds - known and unknown - called *The Lord of the Two Worlds*.

*Freedom to Live* is the stage that ends the journey. After the individual leaves the comforts of home, faces trials and challenges, overcomes them and returns to the community from which he came, he now faces the freedom to live his life in a different

way compared to the way he lived before. The hero changed because the way he perceives himself and the world around him which has been altered.

It is important to note that not all the stages included in the journey formulated by Campbell (2007a) necessarily appear in all stories. It happens that, in many narratives, some of the steps mentioned above may not exist, such as *Attunement with the Father*, for example.

#### **4 The heroic journey of Bilbo Baggins**

The story presented in the book *The Hobbit*, written by J. R. R. Tolkien, tells the adventure of a hobbit through Middle-earth, along with a group of dwarves and a magician. This company faces dangers in the form of trolls, orcs, wild wolves and spiders to finally reach a mountain, in which a dragon, called Smaug, keeps a stolen treasure. Bilbo is the name of the hobbit that enters in this adventure. And the stolen treasure belongs to the dwarfs.

Bilbo is a hobbit. A hobbit, according to Tolkien (2002b), is a small fast creature with hairy feet. They are so linked to nature and tranquility, preferring the calmness of their home/ community to take part in strange adventures. Bilbo is the son of Belladonna Tuk and Bungo Baggins, and he was not expected to possess any traits from his mother's side, because he resembled his father so much being calm and non-adventurous. But Bilbo had a Tuk side from his grandfather, who liked adventures. This characteristic waited for the right moment to emerge in the hobbit's life. "The opportunity did not appear until Bilbo was an adult, in his fifties, living in the beautiful hobbit hole built by his father, which I have just described to you." (TOLKIEN, 2002a, p. 3).

The adventure of Bilbo Baggins will be told and analyzed below, based on Campbell's journey of the hero of (2007a), previously presented. For the analysis of the symbols that appear during the narrative, we will use the *Dictionary of Symbols*, written by Chevalier and Gheerbrant (2009).

##### **4.1 Departure**

Bilbo's journey through Middle-earth begins when Gandalf, a magician, approaches the hobbit in the Shire, and says he is looking for someone to take part in an adventure, as the opening chapter, *An Unexpected Journey*: "Very cute! - Said Gandalf. - But I do not have time to blow smoke rings this morning. I am looking for someone to participate in an adventure that I am organizing, and it is very difficult to find someone." (Tolkien, 2002a, p. 4-5).

Bilbo, clearly, finds himself nervous, since adventuring was not part of the hobbits' lifestyle, even though there was in his family a relative, his grandfather, named Urratouro Tuk, who enjoyed adventures. The adventure call sets up a ritual, as Campbell (2007a) points out, in which the familiar limit of life is exceeded and old ideas and emotional patterns are no longer adequate in the relation of the individual to reality.

In the same conversation with Gandalf, Bilbo performs *The Refusal of the Call*. He says adventures make him late for dinner and asks the wizard to seek adventurers beyond the Hill or across the Bywater, a river in the area. This refusal evidences the shock that unbalances the personality in the process of inner maturation. Here's what Bilbo says, "I'm sorry! But I do not want any adventures, thank you very much. Not today. Good Morning! But, please come and have tea anytime you want! Why not tomorrow? Come tomorrow! See you later!" (TOLKIEN, 2002a, p. 6).

In the next day, the hobbit begins the journey in the company of Gandalf, because *The Refusal of the Call* is only momentary. At this point, this is what Campbell calls *Supernatural Aid*. Gandalf is the hobbit's guide and protector, since he was responsible for looking for a person to compose the adventure's entourage. Gandalf chose him as the 14th member of the company because, according to him, the warriors were busy fighting each other in distant lands and because heroes, at that time, were rare. (TOLKIEN, 2002a, p. 20-21).

Bilbo goes with Gandalf to the scheduled place to meet the dwarves. This stage is unfolded in the next chapter, entitled *Roast Sheep*. In it, the hobbit realizes *The First Crossing of the Break Point*, in which he crosses the known limits of the region where he lives. "Beyond these limits there are the darkness, the unknown and the danger, just like, in addition to the parental perspective, there is danger to the child and, in addition

to the protection of society, danger to the member of the tribe." (CAMPBELL, 2007a, p. 82).

In the Lonely Lands, the protagonist faces his first adventure. He finds three trolls, among the trees, eating roasted lamb. The dwarves group is captured and Gandalf saves them. According to Chevalier and Gheerbrant (2009), in *The Dictionary of Symbols*, trolls are clear representations of the repressed instincts and contents that make up the Shadow. The fire used to roast the sheep is related to the initiatory rites. In the story, it reports the idea that Bilbo is going through a process of initiation.

After getting rid of the trolls, Bilbo arrives at Rivendell and meets the elves of the last friend house, as the place is also called. The habitation is located in a valley cut by a river and the chief of the elves is called Elrond. This scenic cut in the narrative refers to *The Belly of the Whale* stage, in the division made by Campbell, composing the last stage of the first phase (*Departure*). Rivendell represents the belly of the whale, in which Bilbo immerses himself to be reborn, reinforcing the reason for crossing the break point.

#### **4.2 Initiation**

Bilbo's adventure continues and he enters the second stage of the heroic journey, called *Initiation*, according to Campbell (2007a). *The Path of Obstacles* is the most expected stage of this part, because it involves the existence of various events for which the hero will have to pass.

After resting and feeding himself in the house of the elves, Bilbo and the company go to the Dark Mountains, in the chapter *Mountain upward, Mountain inward*. In the mountains, it is the first time that the hobbit gets in touch with the orcs. The hobbit is captured, along with the dwarves, and taken to the presence of the Grand Orc. This one is killed by Gandalf and all everybody escapes. However, Bilbo is left unconscious behind in the tunnels, and when he wakes up he finds Sauron's One Ring, the ring of power, the artifact of which *The Lord of the Rings* saga unfolds. He also finds Gollum, a viscous creature with large eyes, who inhabits a cave at the root of the mountain. The ring belonged to Gollum, who had lost it in the tunnels.

Bilbo manages to escape from the mountain and finds Thorin's company outside in the woods. He had already experienced the invisibility power of the ring and that was how he managed to escape from the tunnels. Outside, the group is surrounded by Wargs, large wild wolves that want to devour them. Wolves can symbolize regressive tendencies in the hobbit's unconscious that need to be accepted. According to Chevalier and Gheerbrant (2009), they may also represent light, the sun or the warrior hero emerging.

The company is saved by the great eagles of the mountains and they are all taken to the lands of Beorn in the chapter *Strange Accommodations*. Beorn is a fur-trader: sometimes a big man, sometimes an even bigger bear. He is unpredictable, neither friend nor enemy. According to Chevalier and Gheerbrant (2009), "[...] the bear is part of the symbols of the chthonic unconscious: lunar and therefore nocturnal, it is connected to the internal landscapes of the mother earth." (CHEVALIER; GHEERBRANT, 2009, p. 925). At Beorn's house, they eat, rest, and get help to keep going.

Then, Bilbo and the company proceed to the Forest of the Darkness. It presents an ambivalent mystery, as pointed out in Chevalier and Gheerbrant (2009), because it generates, at the same time, anguish and serenity, oppression and sympathy. In the heart of the forest, danger glimpses in the form of giant spiders. The hero, while resting, is attacked by one of these creatures and confronts it by killing it. After killing it, he feels a new braver person. Bilbo goes through a deep initiation, as attested to the symbolism of the spider pointed out by Chevalier and Gheerbrant (2009). Bilbo's courage is being gradually developed, which enables the emergence of the hero's archetype in Bilbo's psyche.

During the crossing of the forest, the dwarves are captured by the spiders and Bilbo, using the magic ring, saves them from those animals that wanted to devour them. Soon after, the same dwarves are captured by the forest elves and taken to their domains, led by Thranduil. The hobbit frees the dwarves from their cells in the *Loose Barrels* chapter, placing them in barrels that would be taken to the Lake City, Esgaroth, where men reside.

In Esgaroth, the company is well received. The king of the city welcomes them and feeds them, and they can rest again. Bilbo and the company were awarded with

boats and guns that helped them on their way to the Lonely Mountain. On the mountain, after Bilbo finds the entrance door, he finally performs the function for which he was called: to be a thief. He walks down a long dark corridor into the mountain. Bilbo was apprehensive. He did not know what he was going to find down there. He was about to face his greatest probation: the encounter with the dragon. He also had to steal the Arken Stone, also called "The King's Stone." At the end of the tunnel, the hero encounters the following scene: "It is almost dark, so that its magnitude [from the interior of the mountain] can only be vaguely imagined; but on the stone floor by the door there is a great light. The light of Smaug." (TOLKIEN, 2002a, p. 209-210).

The dragon awake inside the mountain indicates that the latest negative tendencies, such as greed and violence, were awakened in the hero's mind and that this was the opportunity to face and assimilate them. By talking to Smaug he recognizes the greatness of the dragon, reporting that it is the "Greatest and Most Important of Calamities" (TOLKIEN, 2002a, p. 216). This act gives Bilbo the acceptance of his negative tendencies, and becomes very clear symbolically when, after the conversation, Smaug leaves the mountain and goes to the city of the lake. In other words, it goes away. The fact that the dragon moves away from the mountain and from Bilbo configures the assimilation of the negative aspects. The dragon is no longer a threat.

In the chapter *Out of Home*, the hobbit enters the stage called *The Last Blessing*, which main characteristic is the achievement of a blessing, that is to say, something valuable. Bilbo finds the Arken Stone. This is the moment of greatest glimpse of the protagonist's personality development in the narrative. According to Von Franz (2008, p. 278), "[...] the self is often symbolized in the form of a stone, precious or from another kind." The act of picking up the stone, the appropriation of something solid which glows with many colors, represents the appropriation of oneself among so many available treasures. In other words, the hero has matured and encounters the Self, representing the growth of the psyche to the totality. It is the union of opposites, the true meaning of the heroic journey.

### **4.3 Return**

After *The Battle of the Five Armies*, in which Bilbo was involved and which years later he assumed it to be the best adventure he had ever participated in, it is time for the hero to return to his community of origin. The third phase of the great journey, *Return*, begins.

*The Refusal to Return* happens when the hero does not want to return home and decides to stay in the unknown regions and to live other adventures, so the blessing is kept only for himself. However, this is not Bilbo's case. Throughout the adventure, the hobbit longed to return home dreaming about his food, his comfortable living room, and the fire in the fireplace. However, in the adventure's course this desire became smaller. But even so, he longed to return to his home.

Now the hero returns home with the blessing awarded to him - a new conception about himself and the world - guided once more by Gandalf, the wizard. The return suggests that the hero will take with him something that will benefit the community in which he lives. He has a responsibility to return and share his findings and experiences with the group.

*The Passing of the Break Point of Return* occurs when Gandalf and Bilbo reach the limits of the known lands in the chapter *The Last Step*. In this trajectory, the hero returns to the limits of the known and inhabited regions. In the narrative, it is exactly at this limit that Thorin's company encountered the trolls, a year ago, and Bilbo encountered the first danger.

Having now returned to his community, the hero becomes what Campbell called *The Lord of Both Worlds*. He possesses the knowledge of the known world, the Shire, and has acquired the experience of the unknown world, the Wild. This characteristic of being the lord of both worlds gives the hero a freedom of movement between the two spaces. In fact, Bilbo made other trips after the great adventure to Erebor. The hobbit would often visit the elves in Rivendell or go beyond the Wildlands.

At the end of the adventure, the protagonist was no longer the hobbit who had left the Shire for some time and Gandalf pointed this out in a speech when they reached the edge of the known lands: "[...] - My dear Bilbo! - he said. - There's something wrong with you! You are no longer the hobbit you were." (TOLKIEN, 2002a, p. 290). The wizard notices the hero's maturity and the change in his personality as something positive.

Bilbo was now free, because his perception of life has changed. He no longer perceived the world only as the Shire itself: with its rivers, forests, and known people. The world was something bigger than him and that region. The journey made him self-aware, allowing the development of his latent potentials. He performed many other adventures later, but this was the one he liked the most and reported in the following years for those who were willing to listen to.

### **Final Considerations**

In this paper, we propose to understand the heroic adventure undertaken by the character Bilbo Baggins, in the narrative *The Hobbit*, written by J. R. R. Tolkien. For this purpose, we used Campbell's (2007a) studies about the heroic journey and analyzed the narrative following the divisions proposed by the American mythologist: *Departure*, *Initiation* and *Return*.

As shown, the monomith is a narrative structure that assumes different forms, according to the culture of each people. According to Campbell (2007a), all popular stories and tales follow the same structure with the same developmental stages. These phases are faced by an archetypal figure called the hero, present in all the marvelous narratives created by man.

In the first part of the analysis, also titled *Departure*, the hobbit receives from Gandalf the proposal of the adventure. Apprehensive, he refuses, because the idea of leaving home frightened him, since Bilbo was strongly attached to the known and predictable environment. In the protagonist's mind, at that moment, the personality goes through a psychic injury and old concepts and attitudes begin to be questioned and modified.

After overcoming the state of comfort and facing the first obstacles, in the form of trolls, Bilbo introduces the second stage of development proposed by Campbell, *Initiation*. At this stage, Bilbo undergoes various tests and faces various obstacles that make him progressively change personal concepts and fixed attitudes about himself and life as a whole. His personality is conflicted several times, and for several times the hobbit's experience is magnified, which directly reflects on the development of courage, for example.



As a conclusion, Bilbo Baggins's adventure through Middle-earth changes him too deeply. Aspects like courage, resolution of conflicts in difficult situations, companionship, friendship, justice, etc. are developed and/or expanded. The protagonist had experienced several tests during the journey that led to a review of concepts and attitudes. At the end of the narrative, the hero appears modified: the narrator points out that Bilbo made other adventures through Middle-earth and visited the elves and the mountains.

That way we point out the need for other Tolkien stories also to be studied under the bias of Campbell's studies, so that we can understand and re-signify the narratives and the characters included in them. Works such as *The Lord of the Rings* (1954-1955), *The Silmarillion* (1999), *The Children of Húrin* (2007), *Berén and Lúthien* (2017) and, more recently, *The Fall of Gondolin* (2018) are examples of other narratives of the writer who also works with heroic journeys and can be analyzed in Campbell's studies' perspective.

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