In a hole in the English classroom there lived a hobbit

Archetypal criticism and ways to use The Hobbit for EFL learning
Abstract
This essay focuses on Bilbo Baggins’ journey towards becoming a hero in J.R.R. Tolkien’s *The Hobbit*. In order to analyse Bilbo’s development as a character, Joseph Campbell’s theory of the hero’s quest is applied to his journey. Since Bilbo does not possess the traits of a traditional hero character, the model is not expected to fit Bilbo’s journey. However, the model does actually fit his journey, in contradiction to the expected. This essay also argues for the use of *The Hobbit* in the EFL classroom since the novel’s variety of themes and large fandom can work as an incentive for students to analyse fantasy in order to get familiar with older literature and use the fantasy worlds as a metaphor for our own world. Since the main focus of this essay is on archetypes the critical lens is archetypal criticism.

Key words
Archetypal criticism, Tolkien, *The Hobbit*, Campbell, Hero’s journey, Mythology, EFL teaching, Upper secondary school

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1 Introduction

This is a story of how a Baggins had an adventure, and found himself doing and saying things altogether unexpected. He may have lost the neighbours’ respect, but he gained - well, you will see whether he gained anything in the end (Tolkien 4).

Mr. Baggins was once a relaxed, quiet figure living safely in his little hobbit hole. He had close to no worries at all and he was very pleased with that lifestyle. However, soon Bilbo’s life was about to change drastically and he would return back home from a journey as a different person. One could say, as a hero.

The main aim of this essay is to explore Bilbo’s journey towards becoming a hero. It will investigate to what extent J.R.R. Tolkien follows Joseph Campbell’s model for the Hero’s Journey. Since Bilbo does not possess the more normal hero traits such as being a tall, strong warrior, the model is not expected to fit Bilbo’s journey. The model does, however, fit his journey, in contradiction to what can be expected. Campbell writes about this theory in his book *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* which came out in 1949, twelve years after *The Hobbit*. In addition to this, the essay will explore the use of archetypal criticism while reading *The Hobbit* in order to understand Campbell’s theory better. The origin of archetypes (archetypal criticism) will be discussed with Carl Jung as the starting point since he is one of the most famous scholars in this field. His theory of archetypes will, however, not be used directly. As well as Campbell and Jung, this study will also include some of the work by Northrop Frye, another famous scholar in archetypal criticism.

There has been plenty of work done on Tolkien’s literature previously. Books and articles have been written on everything from how his experiences in the First World War affected his writing to his love for Norse mythology (Carpenter; Croft; Jackson). Most of these books and articles are however focused on his grand masterpiece, *The Lord of The Rings*. *The Hobbit* has been the target for some research but not nearly as much as its successor and therefore it is a favourable primary source for this essay.

Moreover, this essay includes a discussion of how *The Hobbit* can be used in the EFL classroom. The syllabus for English 6 states that students should work with “themes, ideas, form and content in film and literature; authors and literary periods”, as well as “contemporary and older literature, poetry, drama and songs” (Nat. Ag. f. Ed.) and *The Hobbit* is rich with different themes to work with. In addition, the essay will cover how the archetypal elements in the hero’s journey can be used as a critical tool for students to
use when watching films and reading fantasy. Another argument that justifies the use of this novel and genre in the EFL classroom is the popularity of fantasy in the Western world at the moment. There are the film adaptations as well which can help reluctant readers get into the books.

This essay argues that J.R.R. Tolkien in his novel *The Hobbit*, playfully challenges the archetype of a hero inherent in old myths and stories and makes Bilbo take a different journey towards becoming a hero. The novel and its immense fandom can be of use in the EFL classroom as an incentive for students to analyse fantasy in order to become familiar with older literature and to use fantasy worlds as metaphors for our own world.

2 Archetypal criticism and *The Hobbit* in the EFL classroom

As this essay’s main focus will be on archetypes (archetypal criticism) it is important to know where this literary theory originated. Archetypes can be described as a recurrent symbol or motif in literature or mythology (Samuels 20). Carl Jung was a pioneer in the field but his theory of archetypes will not be used directly. Rather the scope of the essay is *The Hobbit* and the archetypes used by Tolkien in the novel. The film adaptations of the novel will not be integrated into the essay. The method used to generate a result was a close reading of the novel.

2.1 Archetypal criticism

Carl Jung is one of the most famous scholars in the field. He was a psychologist and psychoanalyst who founded analytical psychology. One of its focuses is on the importance of the individual psyche and a key concept is archetypes. According to Anthony Stevens, who is a Jungian analyst, Jung explains that archetypes are “identical psychic structures common to all” (Chapter 2). This means that archetypes are common elements which all people around the world can find familiar. They induce similar thoughts, images, ideas and feelings in people and they do this regardless of class, race, geographical location or historical epoch. The elements may differ in meaning between some cultures, but the archetype of the wise mentor e.g. looks the same in all cultures. Stevens goes on to state that “[a]n individual's entire archetypal endowment makes up the collective unconscious, whose authority and power is vested in a central nucleus, responsible for integrating the whole personality, which Jung termed the Self” (Chapter 2). This means that we as individuals are affected by the collective unconscious and see archetypes in more or less the same way as those around us do. Jung explains that the
The collective unconscious is “a certain psychic disposition shaped by the forces of heredity; from it consciousness has developed. In the physical structure of the body we find traces of earlier stages of evolution, and we may expect the human psyche also to conform in its make-up to the law of phylogeny” (226). What this leads to is that we inherit elements of our psychological makeup from our ancestors and use these in modern day life. These are primordial experiences embedded in the collective unconscious and according to Jung, the primordial experience is the source of creativeness. This makes the primordial experience important for writers of literature.

Two important scholars whose work will be of use in this essay are Joseph Campbell and Northrop Frye. Both were literary scholars ranked as some of the most influential in the 20th century. Campbell was most active in the work of comparative mythology and his theory of the journey of the archetypal hero will be one of the major theories used and discussed in this essay and it ties together with Frye’s ideas of the quest myth as the central myth in all literature (Frye Archetypes 501). According to this myth, the hero ventures out on a long journey, which can be a literal journey to unknown lands but also a symbolic journey in his mind. In the process, he learns more about the world and himself and at the end, he achieves his hero status. Campbell’s theory of the journey of the archetypal hero, which he writes about in his work The Hero with a Thousand Faces, divides the journey into three main stages which in turn are divided into smaller sections. The three main stages are departure (45-89), initiation (89-179) and return (179-227). When dissecting a fantasy novel these elements are usually clearly visible. This is the theoretical perspective from which I will look at Bilbo’s journey in The Hobbit and how he evolves from an ordinary little hobbit into what can be called a hero as well as analysing other archetypes that Tolkien used in the novel.

In the following section, I will further explain the division that Campbell makes in his theory. Starting with departure, it is divided into five sub-stages; the Call to Adventure, Refusal of the Call, Supernatural Aid, The Crossing of the First Threshold and The Belly of the Whale. The Call to Adventure is the start of the adventure and signifies that destiny has summoned the hero. It will transfer the hero “from within the pale of his society to a zone of unknown” (53). Campbell continues to describe the summons as “some high historical undertaking or some task that will bring a change to the hero’s life, which will never be the same again, for better or for worse” (47). It will be the moment when the hero meets a force which will change his life. Following the Call to Adventure is the Refusal of the Call. The call might not always to the hero’s liking and
he has the option to refuse it. Campbell explains these stages as “[r]efusal of the summons converts the adventure into its negative. Walled in by boredom, hard work or ‘culture,’ the subject loses the power of significant affirmative action and becomes a victim to be saved” (54). But if the hero accepts the call the journey moves to the phase of The Crossing of the First Threshold which is where the hero takes his first stumbling steps into the unknown. As Campbell says:

> The adventure is always and everywhere a passage beyond the veil of the known into the unknown; the powers that watch at the boundary are dangerous; to deal with them is risky; yet for anyone with competence and courage the danger fades. (76)

During the departure, the hero will get help; so-called Supernatural Aid. This is some kind of supernatural element that helps and guides the hero on his journey. It can be an amulet, a charm or something of that kind as well as a protective figure or being. This is typically where we see the archetype of the ‘guide’. The final stage of the stage of departure is The Belly of the Whale. Campbell acknowledges The Belly of the Whale as:

> The idea that the passage of the magical threshold is a transit into a sphere of rebirth is symbolized in the world wide womb image of The Belly of the Whale. The hero . . . is swallowed into the unknown and would appear to have died. (83)

Typically at this stage, the hero experiences time alone in isolation. He has often lost his company and is separated from the known world. This is a symbolic death and rebirth, and afterwards, the hero emerges as a changed man as he has successfully passed through this trial.

The next main stage of the journey is, as mentioned previously, the initiation phase. The initiation phase also has six stages in Campbell’s theory but for this essay, only three are relevant and will be introduced. The three stages are The Road of Trials, Woman as the Temptress and The Ultimate Boon. To start off with The Road of Trials, this is what follows the hero during his journey. In order to undergo his transformation, the hero must face different tests or ordeals in his travels and “surprising barriers [have to be] passed” (100) and throughout the journey “there will be a multitude of preliminary victories, unretainable ecstasies, and momentary glimpses of the wonderful land” (100). Secondly comes Woman as the Temptress. This is the stage in which the hero is tempted to give up on his quest and return home often because someone or something is tempting him with promises of a better life or offer of something he has always wanted. Lastly,
The Ultimate Boon occurs after the final villain has been slain and when this has taken place, the world undergoes a transformation with renewal and revivification.

The final stage of Campbell’s theory is the Return. Campbell describes the stage as “when the hero-quest has been accomplished . . . the adventurer still must return with his life-transmuting trophy” (179). This stage has five different sub-stages in it but this essay will exclude Refusal of the Return since Bilbo does not refuse to return. The other four sub-stages are Rescue from Without, The Crossing of the Return Threshold, Master of the Two Worlds and Freedom to Live. In order to return safely, the hero might need assistance from the Supernatural Aid which is the stage of Rescue from Without. Once the hero is able to return, the stage of The Crossing of the Return Threshold starts. This stage contains “the hero’s ultimate difficult task” (202) and that task is how to “teach again . . . what has been taught correctly and incorrectly learned a thousand thousand times” (202). When the hero has returned, he needs to relearn all of his former habits. The next stage of the return is Master of the Two Worlds, in which the hero is honoured both in the new world where he has ventured and in his old world. Campbell describes this stage as

Freedom to pass back and forth across the world division, from the perspective of the apparitions of time to that of the causal deep and back—not contaminating the principles of the one with those of the other, yet permitting the mind to know the one by virtue of the other—is the talent of the master. (212-3)

The final stage is Freedom to Live. After the grand adventure, the hero needs to be able to live on remembering all the deaths and other elements that have affected him but nonetheless having the will to live on and live in peace.

Some critique that can be brought up against Campbell’s theory could be that it is too generalized and broad. This means that the theory tends to remain within generic terms excluding factors such as race and religion. Robert Ellwood is one scholar that raises these concerns in The Politics of Myth (1999) where he writes that “[a] tendency to think in generic terms of peoples, races, religions, or parties . . . is undoubtedly the profoundest flaw in mythological thinking” (x). In addition, there exists a critique against the focus on heroes in stories and one example of an author with this mindset is Ursula Le Guin. In “The Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction”, she writes that she prefers novels because they have people instead of heroes in them (153). When a story has a hero in it, the focus is typically on classical heroic deeds such as slaying monsters and being a grand figure and a more humble narrative gets completely forgotten. As Le Guin states it, “the
reduction of narrative to conflict is absurd” (153) meaning that telling a story is so much more than having a hero fight other beings in a triumphant way.

To conclude archetypal criticism, Northrop Frye, was one of the first to theorize archetypal criticism in literary terms. He focused on recurring imagery and narrative patterns found in literature. The narrative patterns are divided up into the literary genres romance, comedy, tragedy and satire, which are related to the different seasons. He calls them phases and they are the dawn, spring and birth phase (comedy), the zenith, summer, and marriage or triumph phase (romance) the sunset, autumn and death phase (tragedy) and the darkness, winter and dissolution phase (satire) (Archetypes 510). Frye’s ideas will be integrated into Campbell’s theory of the hero’s journey as well as in the analysis of other archetypes in the novel.

2.2 Tolkien in the EFL classroom
As previously mentioned, the fantasy genre’s popularity is extensive and is growing immensely, especially among youths and young adults and is therefore suitable to use in the EFL classroom since it is a genre familiar to the students. Fantasy can work well as a tool of showing elements that the students then can apply to the contemporary reality. Louise Simone suggests that by reading fantasy, students witness injustice, inequality and privilege enclosed in a fantastical society which serves as a metaphorical narrative for the world we live in and the historical conditions that they were written in. As a result, reflecting on these elements in a fictional world, students gain insight into those same conditions in the contemporary reality (157). Fantasy authors tend to create worlds that are affected by the historic conditions during the time in which they were written. Simone continues by saying that these worlds “draw attention to uncomfortable ‘motifs’ of our own experience” (158) and as mentioned, by studying these motifs the students can draw parallels between the fictional world and their own. For instance, fantasy can be used as a way of teaching trauma narratives in order for the students to better understand the harsh reality some people live in. Rachel N. Spear is one scholar who focuses on teaching trauma narratives. She states that by writing trauma narratives the author has the potential of being healed (59) and since trauma is prominent in our world at the moment it can be rewarding for those who have experienced it to get the chance of telling their story.

The familiarity that fantasy literature can offer is an aspect that E.L. Risden focuses on when he writes about Tolkien’s Middle Earth. He addresses that despite Middle Earth’s originality, the world feels familiar and appealing (182). Tolkien’s love for medieval literature is one of the connections that Risden draws when he discusses why
Tolkien’s works seem so familiar to us. Therefore, using the knowledge about Tolkien’s love for medieval literature can inspire the students to be more interested in older literature as they may want to find out where he got his inspiration from. Since the syllabus states that students should work with “contemporary and older literature, poetry, drama and songs” (Natl. Ag. f. Ed.) this can serve as the beginning of a project regarding the Middle Ages.

One problem that has been occurring in the Swedish EFL classroom is the divide between language and literature in language learning. The students tend not to use what they have learned in one area while studying the other one. Shannon Sauro and Björn Sundmark have written an article on how to teach Tolkien, which is one of the few peer-reviewed articles on that subject, and the source text they used was *The Hobbit*. They remark that there is an interest in bridging the divide between language and literature in language learning. The bridging is “motivated in part by the recognition of the range of analytical and rhetorical tools language learners can gain from the analysis of literary texts, which they can apply to the reading and writing of other genres” (415). In addition, they also state that “[c]arefully sequenced activities that include reflective components around analysis and response to literary text are useful for fostering language awareness through literary analysis” (416). This means that writing tasks which demand that learners reflect on both language and literary choices could be ideal for bridging the divide between language and literature in language learning. *The Hobbit*, with its enchanting narrative and the large quantity of online fan fiction already written, is a great novel to use with a fan fiction-inspired project and since the syllabus states that students should work with “themes, ideas, form and content in film and literature; authors and literary periods”, as well as “written production in different situations and for different purposes” (Natl. Ag. f. Ed.) using *The Hobbit* in this way ties it all together.

3 Analysis of Bilbo’s journey and the implication in the EFL classroom

3.1 Bilbo’s journey towards being a hero
The main character in *The Hobbit* is Bilbo Baggins, and he is not the ordinary hero character frequently used in fantasy novels. The description of a hero character in a fantasy novel is usually a strong male warrior, and he becomes a hero when he has done some major accomplishments, in a war or another heroic deed, and has gained material success. An example of a hero from a fantasy novel is Eddard Stark in George R.R.
Martin’s book series *A Song of Ice and Fire*. In the first installment, *A Game of Thrones* (1996), the reader learn about Starks heroic deeds together with Robert Baratheon. Eddard Stark is the case in point of a traditional hero as he is a strong male warrior and after the deaths of his father and older brother he raises his banner and joins Robert’s Rebellion to overthrow the mad king Aerys II Targaryen.

Bilbo’s quest starts as a quest for wealth and revenge, but it is from the dwarves’ side. They seek revenge on Smaug for killing their families and stealing their home along with all their gold and other riches that dwell in the mountain (*Hobbit* 23-24). That Bilbo should join this quest is rather unbelievable, since he is more than just a reluctant hero. The Baggins side of his family has the reputation of a well-ordered family who resents anything remotely connected to adventures. Bilbo’s journey will be deeper explored during the following segments. At the beginning of *The Hobbit*, Gandalf claims that he has sought after “a mighty Warrior, even a Hero” (21) but alas they “are busy fighting one another in distant lands, and in this neighbourhood heroes are scarce, or simply not to be found” (21). Therefore, in order for the quest to be a success, they need a new type of hero and that is Bilbo’s role.

### 3.1.1 Bilbo’s Departure

#### 3.1.1.1 Bilbo’s Call to Adventure
As mentioned, the first stage of departure is when the hero gets the Call to Adventure. This phase starts with the hero being in a, for them, familiar setting and the familiar setting for Bilbo is his luxurious hobbit-hole which his father built. As previously mentioned, the Call to Adventure comes when someone or something drags the hero out of his familiar setting into an unknown zone. In *The Hobbit*, this call comes when Gandalf arrives at Bilbo’s doorstep. All Bilbo sees when Gandalf arrives is “an old man with a staff” (5). Bilbo greets him good morning and asks him to sit down and have a smoke with him. Gandalf being short on time tells Bilbo that he is “looking for someone to share in an adventure [that he is] arranging” (6). Bilbo is quick to tell him that there will be trouble finding anyone who wants to join in an adventure in these parts as they are quiet folks who think adventures are nasty things and he tries to show that the conversation is finished by starting to read his morning letters. When Gandalf still refuses to leave Bilbo goes back into his hobbit-hole (7-8). As Bilbo does this, he has declined Gandalf’s request twice, and he is hence an utmost reluctant hero.

At this point, Bilbo still has not been introduced to the unknown and the Call to Adventure is still not fully in place. The next day, the thirteen dwarves arrive along with
Gandalf and they throw a party at Bilbo’s expense. It is during this party where the dwarves sing songs and tell tales of the Misty Mountain and the lands beyond, that something awakens inside Bilbo, his Tookish side, and he wishes to see these things (16). Afterwards, he is presented with the purpose of the adventure and the unknown (Campbell 53), and after hearing it he faints. When he awakes, he overhears the dwarves questioning his ability to be of use during the quest, stating that “[h]e looks more like a grocer than a burglar!” (18). His Tookish side takes over once more as he proclaims his determination to prove them wrong. His Baggins side regretting it later saying to himself “Bilbo, you were a fool; you walked right in and put your foot in it” (18). This further cements his place in the adventure. Now the Call to Adventure has truly come to Bilbo.

As mentioned, this is the birth phase of the hero and in his theory, Frye connects the birth phase with the season of spring which is in fact when the adventure starts in the novel (510). This is also his comedy phase that is portrayed by the party and the comedic meeting of Gandalf and Bilbo.

3.1.1.2 Bilbo tries to Refuse the Call
If the hero does not accept the call but rather refuses it, the adventure, as Campbell states, will turn into its negative (54). Bilbo tries to refuse the call when he attempts to get rid of Gandalf several times during their morning meeting. He first takes out his morning letters to read, trying to show that the conversation is finished and when Gandalf does not leave, he bids him good morning once more to which Gandalf responds “[w]hat a lot of things you do use Good morning for! . . . Now you mean that you want to get rid of me, and that it won’t be good till I move off” (Hobbit 6). The conversation ends with Bilbo once more trying to refuse the call by fleeing into his hobbit-hole but in his own hurry and confusion, he asks Gandalf in for tea the next day, this shows that he has accepted the call rather than refused it. As soon as he enters his home, he regrets what he has said, “[w]hat on earth did I ask him to tea for!” (8).

If the hero refuses the call, he will become a victim needing to be saved (Campbell 54) and perhaps this is what happens to Bilbo when he wakes up the morning after the party. Bilbo discovers that all the dwarves have disappeared. At first, Bilbo is a little disappointed, but he quickly finds the matter to be to his liking and continues with his day as he would have any other day of the year. He becomes a victim to be saved and is trapped in his familiar zone and does not go through his transformation to the potential hero he could become. At this moment, Gandalf bursts into his house and wonders why he has not left yet. He tells Bilbo that the dwarves are waiting for him. Gandalf gives
Bilbo the final push out of the door and makes Bilbo accept the Call to Adventure (*Hobbit* 28).

In this scenario, a typical hero would not have given the Call to Adventure a second thought as he would immediately have accepted the call and ventured out on his journey. One example of a character with this mindset is Aragorn in Tolkien’s magnum opus, *The Lord of the Rings*. Aragorn is an illustrative example of a strong male warrior who fears nothing and no one. In *The Fellowship of the Rings* (1954), Aragorn shows no hesitation upon protecting Frodo on his journey to Mount Doom and when Gandalf is presumed lost after his battle with the Balrog, he steps up as the leader of the fellowship since he feels responsible for Frodo.

### 3.1.1.3 Bilbo receives Supernatural Aid
After having accepted the call for adventure, the hero ventures out on his journey and will soon receive Supernatural Aid (Campbell 57). This typically comes from a mentor who gives the hero items, knowledge and defends him from dangerous elements. Campbell describes the mentor as often being “a little crone or old man” (63). In fantasy lore, this is generally a wizard and in *The Hobbit*, Bilbo’s mentor is Gandalf. This is also something that Frye says in his book *Anatomy of Criticism* “. . . the divine or spiritual figures are usually parental, wise old men with magical powers . . .” (151). In addition, this ties in together with the archetype of the guide as often being a wise old man (Campbell 57). This stage continues throughout the journey and is integrated into the other stages. Therefore, there will be references to when Bilbo receives Supernatural Aid during the other stages.

### 3.1.1.4 Bilbo crosses the First Threshold
As the hero ventures out from the known into the unknown, he will come to a threshold that divides the two worlds (Campbell 76). The first threshold that Bilbo and the company come to is when they have gone far into the Lone-lands and a disastrous event occurs. One of their ponies falls into a river and most of their food is washed away and they are left with nearly nothing for supper and even less for breakfast. Meanwhile, Gandalf has disappeared and feeling defeated the company sees a light in the forest close to them. The company decides that Bilbo should scout and when he gets close to the fire, he sees three trolls roasting mutton. Bilbo is captured by the trolls and as the dwarves come to see what has happened to him, they are captured as well, one by one. They are saved by the returning Gandalf who fools the trolls just long enough for the sun to come out and turn them into stone. Afterwards, they discover the trolls’ cave and inside Bilbo finds a short
sword (Hobbit 40-41). He also receives some knowledge from Gandalf and so Bilbo has, with the help of his mentor, crossed the first threshold into the unknown. This being the first real threshold because it is the first danger that they come across and Bilbo has to prove himself in ways he has not done before.

3.1.1.5 Bilbo enters The Belly of the Whale
In order to grow as a person and fully become a hero, the hero must go through the stage of The Belly of the Whale (Campbell 83) and Bilbo does this when he is alone in the caves under the Misty Mountain. After passing through the Last Homely House in Rivendell where they gained new information essential to the quest and filled up the provisions they set out once more towards their final destination. During the night they are captured by goblins but Gandalf saves them. However, in the following commotion, Bilbo is lost in the caves under the mountain all alone. It is during this time when he is crawling around in the darkness that he finds a ring, which will prove to be one of the most useful supernatural elements that will aid him during his journey. When he has delved deeper inside the mountain, he encounters Gollum who is Bilbo’s next threshold to cross. After winning a riddle-competition with him he sneaks after Gollum, who wants to murder Bilbo after the competition, to a secret exit of the mountain. While Gollum is standing watch, Bilbo has a chance to kill him. He stands invisible with his sword in his hand, but he hesitates, thinking that

[h]e must fight. He must stab the foul thing, put its eyes out, kill it. It meant to kill him. No, not a fair fight. He was invisible now. Gollum had no sword. Gollum had not actually threatened to kill him, or tried to yet. And he was miserable, alone, lost. A sudden understanding, a pity mixed with horror, welled up in Bilbo’s heart . . . All these thoughts passed in a flash of a second (Hobbit 81)

and he leaps over Gollum instead and rushes towards the exit. This is a foreshadowing of the kindness of the hobbit heart which will be fundamental for his transformation into a hero. These events are essential for Bilbo’s development during his journey. In contrast to how Bilbo handles this situation, a more traditional hero would feel no remorse for Gollum and would kill him since he is in the way. After having emerged from the mountain (The Belly of the Whale) he is a changed hobbit, feeling that he has accomplished something great in the tunnels all by himself. Afterwards, an event occurs where Bilbo for the first time in a long time is fully fed and it is hinted that, although he does not know it at the time, the experience in the caves has meant something for him.
He slept curled up on the hard rock more soundly than ever he had done on his feather-bed in his own little hole at home. But all night he dreamed of his own house and wandered in his sleep into all his different rooms looking for something that he could not find nor remember what it looked like (103-4).

It seems like Bilbo has lost something down in the caves, his Baggins side. He is beginning to more and more become what his mother was like and being the venturous hero, he has the potential to grow into.

### 3.1.2 Bilbo’s Initiation

#### 3.1.2.1 Bilbo on The Road of Trials

After crossing the threshold of The Belly of the Whale the hero comes across new trials along his journey and throughout these trials, Bilbo will, as mentioned, receive Supernatural Aid to guide and help him (Campbell 100).

The first trial after Bilbo’s rebirth happens as soon as he has reunited with the rest of the company. As the company flees from caves, Wargs and goblins chase after them and they need to take refuge up in trees, since they have run out on a cliff with nowhere else to go. They are once again saved by Supernatural Aid and afterwards, they enter the realm where Beorn rules. Beorn is a shapeshifter who can take the form of a great bear but as a human, he is gentle towards animals and after some wit from Gandalf he agrees to let the company stay at his house. During this visit, a glimpse is shown that Bilbo has not yet fully transformed into the hero character:

> There was a growling sound outside, and a noise as of some great animal scuffling at the door. Bilbo wondered what it was, and whether it could be Beorn in enchanted shape, and if he would come in as a bear and kill them. He dived under the blankets and hid his head, and fell asleep again at last in spite of his fears. *(Hobbit 120)*

Bilbo is scared of a noise coming from outside and like a child, he hides under his blankets as though that will protect him if Beorn would enter the room in his bear form. Since this book is written for children, Bilbo hiding under his blanket could be an incitement for identification for those reading or being read to.

The next part of the novel is another segment essential to Bilbo’s transformation. After they have been granted provisions and ponies from Beorn they travel to the edge of Mirkwood where Gandalf part ways with the company since he has other business to attend. After the company enters Mirkwood they face multiple problems and after an encounter with some elves, the whole company except Bilbo is captured by spiders. Bilbo
is nearly caught, and a fight breaks out between Bilbo and the spider trying to eat him and the struggle and killing the spider is what completes Bilbo. After the fight he “fell down and remembered nothing more for a long while” (144), he dies a symbolic death and gets reborn as something else since after he awakes he feels different.

Somehow the killing of the giant spider, all alone by himself in the dark without the help of the wizard or the dwarves or of anyone else, made a great difference to Mr. Baggins. He felt a different person, and much fiercer and bolder in spite of an empty stomach. (144)

Bilbo completes the transformation by naming the sword given to him by Gandalf which he used to kill the spider, “‘I will give you a name,’ he said to it, ‘and I shall call you Sting’” (144). By using his ring and wit to lure the spiders, Bilbo frees the other dwarves. The dwarves are, however, be captured by elves instead and taken to the Elven-king’s palace. Bilbo, anew, using the ring, liberates the dwarves by stealing the keys to the dungeon in which the dwarves have been imprisoned and he sneaks them out of the palace in barrels, once again showcasing his wit and bravery in succeeding with the escape.

The journey then takes the company to Lake-town where they are greeted as returning heroes in hope that they will fulfil the prophecy of the dragon’s downfall. This happens during the autumn which is the tragedy phase according to Frye (Archetypes 510). The story, however, is in more of a triumphant phase at this moment as the company manages to get inside the mountain using a side entrance that they found using the map gifted to them by Gandalf and it is Bilbo’s job to go inside the great halls to scout and

[going on from there was the bravest thing he ever did. The tremendous things that happened afterwards were as nothing compared to it. He fought the real battle in the tunnel alone, before he ever saw the vast danger that lay in wait. (Hobbit 197)]

As Bilbo enters the great hall, he sees Smaug lying there asleep. Bilbo steals a cup and returns to the dwarves and they are overjoyed to see him. The fact that Bilbo is brave enough to do this signifies how far he has come in his transformation from the puny hobbit that fainted upon hearing of the quest. But the company’s trial has just begun, for Smaug had passed from an uneasy dream (in which a warrior, altogether insignificant in size but provided with a bitter sword and great courage, figured most unpleasantly) to a doze, and from a doze to wide waking. (199)

Here, Smaug dreams of a warrior (hero) and just as the different hero type that Tolkien writes about, his size does not matter. After Smaug’s death, all seems well for the
company, but Bilbo still has one major trial left to complete which will be explored in the next segment of the essay.

3.1.2.2 Bilbo is tested by the Woman as the Temptress
After news reaches the company of Smaug’s death, they dare to enter the great halls. As Bilbo goes around in the hall observing all the treasure, he comes upon a spectacular-looking gem glowing in the dark, the Arkenstone. Thorin has previously spoken of the stone as one of the major reasons for the quest to happen. Bilbo falls victim to the power of the gem and the power that lies over the treasure following its closeness to the dragon. This is referred to as dragon-sickness. He pockets the stone and intends to keep it as his promised fourteenth share. As time passes and none of the other dwarves find the Arkenstone, Thorin’s mood changes. as he becomes more ill-tempered.

In *The Hobbit* there are no women, so the Woman as the Temptress in this story is for Bilbo the Arkenstone which symbolizes greed. The gem nearly foils the whole adventure as Bilbo firsts intend to keep it to himself even though he understands its value for Thorin. It represents the power that draws out the worst in the hero and makes him forget everything else. Bilbo almost succumbs to this temptation and the only way for him to fulfil his quest is to “surpass the temptations of her call, and soar to the immaculate ether beyond” (Campbell 112). Bilbo gets a grip of himself when he figures out that the Arkenstone can stop the imminent war between the dwarves and the armies of men and elves. He gives the Arkenstone to the leaders of the men and elves and hopes that it will be enough to bargain with Thorin. By doing this, Bilbo overcomes the temptations and reaches higher moral grounds. Bilbo proves his pure heart once again and, as mentioned, surmounted The Woman as Temptress.

Thorin is however filled with rage when the leaders show him the Arkenstone and warns Bilbo that if he does not leave, he will be thrown down the wall. In order for Bilbo to attain The Ultimate Boon, he needs to reconcile with Thorin. But it is not until after the battle of the five armies where dwarves, men and elves fight together against evil forces that they meet again. However, Thorin is lying on his deathbed and his link to the material world is fading. Thorin, who himself had been inflicted by dragon-sickness, realises that he will leave behind “all gold and silver, and go where it is of little worth” (262). He therefore tells Bilbo that he wants “to part in friendship from you, and I would take back my words and deeds at the Gate” (262). Thorin praises Bilbo for who he is and for his beliefs:
There is more in you of good than you know, child of the kindly West. Some courage and some wisdom, blended in measure. If more of us valued food and cheer and song above hoarded gold, it would be a merrier world. (263)

And after going through the whole adventure without acknowledgement from a person in power Bilbo, finally, is celebrated by the king under the mountain. After completing the quest to the mountain and the final trial of the battle, Bilbo can attain The Ultimate Boon (Campbell 179).

3.1.2.3 Bilbo attains The Ultimate Boon

After the battle, the Misty Mountain stands tall. It is no longer the besieged place where good would face good in a strive for earthly possessions but a monument of where the allied forces fought against their true common enemy. The quest to defeat Smaug and reclaim the Lonely Mountain is complete and during it, Bilbo has showcased his many skills and the growth he has undergone. This is Frye’s winter and dissolution phase (Archetypes 510). Things are coming together and reconciling after the death of the king under the mountain. And precisely as Gandalf stated at the start of the novel: “[t]here is a lot more in him than you can guess, and a deal more than he has any idea of himself” (19), Bilbo has shown that he is much more than the grocer the dwarves took him for at first.

If this was the story of a typical hero, Bilbo would have heroically defeated Smaug himself. Afterwards, he would have lead the armies to victory in the fight against the goblins showcasing his skill and bravery facing bad odds. Nonetheless, it is Bard the Archer that slays Smaug and the battle is won thanks to the appearance of the Great Eagles and Beorn enraged in his bear form.

3.1.3 Bilbo’s Return

3.1.3.1 Bilbo’s Rescue from Without

Bilbo’s return to his homelands fits well into Campbell’s theory as Bilbo is guarded by a Supernatural Aid the whole way home (Campbell 192). A few days after the Battle of the Five Armies he leaves in a party with Gandalf, Beorn and the wood-elves. After they part ways with the wood-elves at their kingdom, Bilbo, Gandalf and Beorn continue. When they reach Beorn’s house, they spend the winter there. And after a short stay in Rivendell Bilbo returns during the summer in Frye’s triumph phase (Archetypes 510). For Bilbo it is a triumphant return until he sees that his relatives and other people of the Shire are trying to acquire his house and goods.
3.1.3.2 Bilbo crosses the Return Threshold
As mentioned previously, the hardest part during the hero’s return journey is The Crossing of the Return Threshold (Campbell 202). The hero now needs to go back into his ordinary life with all his newfound knowledge and integrate the two. If the hero fails to do so, his return is unsuccessful. Bilbo manages this crossing by showing his growth during the adventure. At the start of the novel, Bilbo is described as acting rather prosy. Yet, while standing on the Return Threshold, the border of the known and unknown world, Bilbo recites a poem for Gandalf which he produced on the spot. Gandalf tells Bilbo that “you are not the hobbit that you were” (274). During the poem, Bilbo captures all the changes he has gone through. He has left his prosily Baggins’ side for his poetic Tookish side and he enters the known world with the knowledge of the unknown world mastered.

3.1.3.3 Bilbo becoming The Master of the Two Worlds
It is shown that Bilbo is a Master of the Two Worlds as he “remained an elf-friend, and had the honour of dwarves, wizards and all such folk as ever passed that way”. And although he “was no longer respectable . . . held by all the hobbits of the neighbourhood to be ‘queer’” (275), he does not mind. His nephews and nieces on the Took side like him a lot and he took to “poetry and visiting the elves” (275). Bilbo staying in contact with his newfound friends and being liked by the younger generations shows that he has the freedom to pass back and forth over the threshold and not neglecting either side of it.

3.1.3.4 Bilbo achieves The Freedom to Live
A few years later, Bilbo is sitting in his study and writing his memoirs when he gets a visit from Gandalf and Balin and they reminisce about their journey together. After Gandalf has praised Bilbo for his accomplishment during the adventure, he says that “you are only quite a little fellow in a wide world after all!” to which Bilbo laughingly responds “‘[t]hank goodness!” (276). The fact that Bilbo sits and writes his memoirs shows that he is happy and fond of his adventure and wants to share it with future generations. As a result, more hobbits might explore the world. Bilbo’s response to Gandalf saying that he still is a little fellow indicate that he is quite content with his life and has no regrets; hence he has achieved his Freedom to Live (Campbell 221).

3.2 The Hobbit in the EFL classroom
The Hobbit is a novel that fits well into the syllabus as it is a work filled with different themes and ideas. The novel is also rich in poetry and songs which can be used as an
independent project. Areas related to current issues and experiences, as well as ethical and existential issues, are other elements stated in the curriculum (Nat. Ag. f. Ed.). Students in the class might have experienced something similar to the refugees in the novel. While teachers are not trained counsellors, *The Hobbit* might be used as bibliotherapy for milder versions of PTSD. The students can read extracts from the novel, chosen by the teacher, and discuss how archetypal stories can serve as ways to deal with trauma. This project can later be expanded into a writing task where the students can write their own story as a refugee from Lake-town. As mentioned previously, writing trauma narratives can help the author handle his own trauma experience, should he have any. This is something that Tolkien might have done when he wrote *The Hobbit* after his experiences in WW1. However, teaching trauma narratives is a complex task since no two people experience it the same way, which is a factor that Spear lifts as well (60).

The hero’s journey used in *The Hobbit* is a special kind since Bilbo is such a reluctant hero. An interesting project can be to let the students read *The Hobbit* and analyse Bilbo’s journey and afterwards compare it to other fantasy novels. The students will also learn other archetypal elements familiar in the fantasy genre. To have the critical tools to analyse movies and literature on their own is something that can aid the students in their future school and work years. Furthermore, the realization that many fantasy stories are built up with the same types of characters can be interesting for the students and help them when they need to dissect a story and its plot. This is similar to how Risden suggests that Tolkien’s love for older literature can get the students more interested in it. Risden also expresses the importance of constructing intriguing and useful technical questions for the students to reflect upon such as, “what is the world in this story like, and how did the author build or realize it” (183).

A valid issue to consider is that reluctant readers can have motivational problems with this project. Rebecca Dierking writes about using Nooks as a tool to aid reluctant readers. Nooks can, for example, help the reader by letting them adjust the letter size. Another discovery that Dierking made was that some students did not like to read in print and that is where a Nook comes in handy (413).

While reading and analysing the novel, the students can apply the hero’s journey to their own life. Simone summarizes it well when she writes that “[r]eaders connect the images and emotions they experience while reading and carry them across the bridge from the text to their world and back again” (159). Likewise, the readers’ personal knowledge of their own world is applied to the fantasy world. In the same way that Bilbo departs
from his safe, ordinary world, the students themselves leave their secure homes and venture into the unknown. They can move to a new town or go on a vacation to some place they have never been to. Along that journey, they will cross thresholds and be on a Road of Trials and in the end, they will return home as the Master of Two Worlds. One reason that good fantasy works, is not because of the escapism it offers. The reason is that it creates an alternative world for us readers to observe confrontations and solutions to great problems without having to be in any danger (Risden 186). Similar to heroes or other characters in fantasy novels, the students will find themselves in trials that test them and they have to overcome these struggles. And even though they might fail at first, it is important to enter the Belly of the Whale and emerge as a new person with a feeling of accomplishment.

Amos Paran highlights the advantage of having a student-centred approach rather than traditional teacher-centred while lecturing on literature. The lessons should be a mixture of group work and whole-class discussions and contain short lectures and writing tasks. If these factors are upheld, there will be “a statistically significant improvement in the results” (472). This implicates that by having the students in focus and letting them do different tasks they might be more interested and willing to cooperate. Jeremy Harmer mentions something similar when he states that students tend to “strive harder than usual to produce a greater variety of correct and appropriate language [when they receive imaginative tasks from their teachers] than they might for more routine assignments” (366). Furthermore, this adds to what Sauro and Sundmark say regarding developing English language proficiency through creative writing:

Beyond learning discrete vocabulary items, more than a third of all students felt that the collaborative writing task improved their ability to write in English. Most of these emphasized developments in the area of creative writing in particular because they had little or no prior experience of this, while others identified an improvement in overall writing fluency. (420)

However, when creating these creative writing tasks they point out how important it is to choose the right material. In order to achieve the best outcome for the students, choosing a source text that has, for example, extensive multimedia and supporting material is favourable. For some students in their study who rarely read books, it was motivating and helpful to watch the film adaptations of *The Hobbit*. 
4 Conclusion
In conclusion, concerning the hero’s journey, J.R.R. Tolkien’s *The Hobbit* is a novel that follows a different hero character than that which is typically used. Bilbo Baggins is at the start of the novel a laid-back figure without a care in the world other than getting his food on the plate and enjoying his time. The usual hero character would probably be out fighting a war or returning home from one and finding out that something happened while he was gone and that will trigger his revenge quest. The quest that Bilbo joins may be a revenge quest, but not for him only for the dwarves. Before the quest can begin, the dwarves start questioning Bilbo’s place in the group, since he is just an ordinary hobbit and does not look like much to the world. During the journey, Bilbo transcends his expectations time and time again and eventually becomes the hero figure that he had the potential to be. As seen, Campbell’s hero theory applies to most of Bilbo’s development. This signifies that Tolkien’s Bilbo has a special journey to become a hero. A journey that differs from those heroes that typically have been seen in literary history.

At the start of the Departure, many of the essential narrative points are matched with the model. Gandalf as the herald in the Call to Adventure stage and the mentor during the Supernatural Aid stage. The model fits well with The Crossing of the First Threshold and again in The Belly of the Whale where Bilbo is assumed dead and later emerges as a changed hobbit. Furthermore, in the Initiation phase, Bilbo meets with many ordeals and adventures during The Road of Trials stage. He is tested by The Woman as Temptress until he attains The Ultimate Boon. The Return is the stage which most closely can be matched with Campbell’s theory. Bilbo is Rescued from Without by Gandalf and other powerful companions who guide him home safely. As he stands on The Crossing of the Return Threshold he passes over it, thus reconciling his knowledge of the two different worlds. He becomes the Master of the Two Worlds and thus attaining The Freedom to Live.

During his adventure, Bilbo grows immensely psychologically as he is constantly challenged by the physical world and must struggle to undergo these changes. As a result, he showcases his growth and emerges as an improved person in the Return phase. To sum up, *The Hobbit* conforms well with Campbell’s theory and one explanation could be Tolkien’s and Campbell’s shared passion and understanding of mythology.

As for the pedagogical implications of the novel, *The Hobbit* is filled with a diverse set of themes and ideas that can be focused on. The novel’s richness in poetry and songs, e.g. is one element well suited for a school project. Another element that students can
discuss is different refugee situations. They can for example discuss Lake-Town’s destruction and how villagers become refugees afterwards. That discussion can expand into a creative writing project where the students write from the perspective of one of the refugees. If the students are given the critical tools to analyse movies and literature, those tools can aid them in their future school and work years. By analysing the hero’s journey in *The Hobbit*, students can learn how to analyse and compare different fantasy novels. Student’s ambition and willingness to participate in given tasks can improve by handing them a variety of tasks. In addition, creative writing can be a method for the students to improve their language proficiency. Fantasy literature works well as a way to experience a harsh reality without having to be in the middle of it in person. That harsh reality can be applied to our reality. In other words, students can analyse our world with the help of fantasy literature.

Future research could delve deeper into Tolkien’s life and how it may have affected *The Hobbit*. His war experience and Catholic background are two examples of areas that could be more thoroughly explored. But now that Bilbo has gone there and back again, it is time for him to rest until his next grand adventure.
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