



Myth and Mysteries in “The Lord of the Rings”

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ABSTRACT:

*Sanderson’s ‘The Way of Kings’, Jim Butcher’s ‘Storm Front’. ‘American Gods’ by Neil Gaiman, ‘Small Gods’ by Jerry Pratchett are some books which are a great blend of Sci-Fi, mystery and dark fantasy. An incredible Trilogy, one of the unsurpassed fantasy tales to come out, more solicitous, more pragmatic, post modern fantasy, prototypical fantasy of 20th century, there is indubitably much in Tolkien’s ‘**The Lord of the Rings**’ that invites us seeing it through the Jungian framework. The first part of Tolkien’s ‘The Hobbit’ is followed by ‘**The Lord of the Rings**’, both have the hobbits as its protagonists and carries a very old chronicle with the eminence of antiquity. ‘The Lord of the Rings’ registers all the persona of a magical land with all its mysteries as mysteries are often a habitual part of fantasy. The Hero, King(s), the Warrior and the Wizard are quite palpable and map easily and directly to Jung’s “standard” archetypal images. It has a lot to hollow out since it is more rich in myth and mysteries.*

KEY WORDS:

Modern Fantasy
Myth and Mysteries
Norse, Germanic, Greek Mythologies
Proto-World
Middle earth
Archetypes
Hobbits
Wizard
Orcs and Elves



INTRODUCTION:

‘Three Rings for the Elven-kings under the sky,
Seven for the Dwarf-lords in their halls of stone,
Nine for Mortal Men doomed to die,
One for the Dark Lord on his dark throne
In the Land of Mordor where the Shadows lie.
One Ring to rule them all. One Ring to find them,
One Ring to bring them all and in the darkness bind them
In the Land of Mordor where the Shadows lie.’

-TOLKIEN

Mythic composition and the syntax of an archetypal lingo give the works their vital supremacy. In his magnum opus ‘**The Lord of the Rings**’, J.R.R. Tolkien created what he called a “new mythos”. The Lord of the Rings is an epic high fantasy novel written as a sequel to Tolkien's 1937 fantasy novel **The Hobbit**. **The Lord of the Rings** was published in three volumes over the course of a year from 29 July 1954 to 20 October 1955. The three volumes were titled ‘**The Fellowship of the Ring**’, ‘**The Two Towers**’ and ‘**The Return of the King**’. Structurally, the novel is divided internally into six books, two per volume, with several appendices of background material included at the end.

The title of the novel refers to the story's main antagonist, the Dark Lord Sauron, who had in an earlier age created the ‘One Ring to rule the other Rings of Power’ as the ultimate weapon in his campaign to conquer and rule all of Middle-earth. From quiet beginnings in the Shire, a hobbit land not unlike the English countryside, the story ranges across Middle-earth, following the course of the War of the Ring through the eyes of its characters, not only the hobbits Frodo Baggins, Samwise "Sam" Gamgee, Meriadoc "Merry" Brandybuck and Peregrin "Pippin" Took, but also the hobbits' chief allies and travelling companions: the Men Aragorn son of Arathorn, a Ranger of the North, and Boromir, a Captain of Gondor; Gimli son of Glóin, a Dwarf warrior; Legolas Greenleaf, an Elven prince; and Gandalf, a wizard.



A BRIEF STORYLINE OF THE LORD OF THE RINGS:

LOTR begins sixty years later when the power of the Dark Lord Sauron grows again and Bilbo's ring turns out to be the Ring of Power which Sauron seeks to control the whole of Middle Earth. Therefore, the Ring must be destroyed in the Mount Orodruin in the dark land of Mordor where it was originally forged. This task is appointed to Bilbo's nephew Frodo who is on his way to Mordor accompanied by three other hobbits (Merry, Pippin and Sam), a wizard (Gandalf), a dwarf (Gimli), an elf (Legolas) and two mortal men (Aragorn and Boromir). The group is called the Fellowship of the Ring. At Part Galen near Mordor, Frodo and Sam are divided from the rest of their companions and make their way through Mordor guided by a treacherous former-hobbit Gollum who is a slave to the Ring. The rest of the Fellowship eventually allies with the ents (living trees) and the men of Rohan, conquer a evil wizard Saruman, help in the defeat at Pelennor Fields of one of Sauron's army and then march with the last Alliance of the West to fight the battle at the Black Gate of Mordor. Meanwhile, Frodo and Sam overcome many obstacles and succeed in destroying the Ring. With this, Sauron's power fades, his armies collapse, Aragorn is restored King of Gondor and the hobbits return to their homeland – the Shire. A few years later, Frodo who has been badly wounded in his quest leaves the Shire and Middle Earth with Gandalf and the last of the elves for Undying Lands of the Far West.

THE LORD OF THE RINGS AS A REVIVED FORM OF MYTH:

Myths are eminent from other universally composed narratives such as folktales and legends. Myths were defined as stories of ancient times believed to be true. Myths, as explanations of the cosmos and how to live, are parallel to science in many ways. In our post-modern world many people believe myths exist in new, combined, or revived forms. As Hugh Lloyd-Jones states that myth is a story that is or was considered a true explanation of the natural world and how it came to be, Characters are often non-human – e.g. gods, goddesses,



supernatural beings, first people, setting is a previous proto-world somewhat like this, one but also different. Plot may involve interplay between worlds, this world and previous or original world, depicts events that bend or break natural laws reflective of connection to previous world, cosmogonic/metaphysical explanation of universe, formative of worldview. Functional: “Charter for social action” – conveys how to live: assumptions, values, core meanings of individuals, families, communities, evokes the presence of Mystery, the Unknown has a “sacred” tinge, reflective and formative of basic structures, dualities: light/dark, good/bad, being/nothingness, raw/cooked, etc., that we must reconcile. Dualities often mediated by characters in myths, Common theme: language helps order the world, cosmos; thus includes many lists, names, etc., metaphoric, narrative consideration/explanation of “ontology” study of being. Myths seek to answer, “Why are we here?” “Who are we?” “What is our purpose?” etc. – life’s fundamental questions, Sometimes: the narrative aspect of a significant ritual, core narrative of most important religious practices of society; fundamentally connected to belief system. Tolkien was strongly influenced by old Germanic, Nordic, Greek, Finnish, and many other mythologies and, since he was a very religious person, Christianity. Some parts of his stories were also inspired by his own life. Tolkien spent almost twenty years of his life writing what later turned out to be his lifework – a novel **The Hobbit** which was later followed by **The Lord of the Rings**. The Lord of the Rings has all the three types of archetypal, situational and symbolic characters entrenched in it. The Lord of the Rings was apprehended and written during the World Wars. It says much of the war’s gloom, fear and anxiety with its archetypal characters. These characters are strongly connected with the **Theory of Symbols and Archetypes** written by Jung. This implication of psychoanalysis and ontology was adopted by many scholars like Tolkien to investigate different exemplifications in art and mythology. It is a well known fact that Tolkien had a lot of influence from Norse, German and Greek mythology. The Pagan mythologies of the Norse, the language spoken in Dale and Esgaroth, equivalent to Old Norse, which is the language of the epic sagas and poems of the Norse. The finding of the Ring, and the reforging of Narsil all have parallels in Germanic Mythology. The invisibility of the Ring is from Greek Mythologies which influenced Tolkien a lot.

MYSTERIES IN THE LORD OF THE RINGS:



The outstanding mania about Tolkien's world is how mysterious it can seem. Wonder pervades the storyline. We can become skilled at about a mysterious veracity comprehending ahead of the Shire, Middle earth, and even the cosmos. There is much mystery bound up in the forests of Middle-earth. Tolkien loved trees, and he adored in a special way. They also must flee and fight Orcs and the Dark Riders. Tolkien's legendary work, originates thus in a mysterious interplay between human and celestial forces. This is the reason why Tolkien always considered literary creation as a 'mystery'. LOTR is work of fiction because it does not make the readers deem that it depicts true historical events of our world. It contain an irreducible element of the supernatural represented by the setting (imaginary land) as well as the characters (elves, wizards, dwarfs).

SUMMING UP:

Tolkien has created a unswerving universe, a new mythology with lots of characters and conventions of their own. And there is a large audience and readership which acknowledge them and be in awe of them. In my outlook, this proves the eminence of both, the author and the story. As for the readers of modern fantasy they convey a valuable forfeit to the story their time. And they find out that the real world also consists of stories ultimately and then live happily ever after. Tolkien made up a very intricate historical and mythological backdrop for his novels, and that unerringly gives his work a unique value among his readers and critics. Placing the action in the imaginary world allows Tolkien to make his statements about authenticity more dynamic. As there are many interpretations of the message of The Lord of the Rings, some critics claim that Tolkien's work is "above all else a moral erect".



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