



## The Growth of Personality and Belief in J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Hobbit and The Lord of the Rings*

**Gokulapriya. T**

Ph.D. Scholar (English Department)  
Karpagam Academy of Higher Education  
Coimbatore, India  
[gokilakala9@gmail.com](mailto:gokilakala9@gmail.com)

**Dr. S. Selvalakshmi**

Professor & Head (English Department)  
Karpagam Academy of Higher Education  
Coimbatore, India  
[selvalakshmi.s@kahedu.edu.in](mailto:selvalakshmi.s@kahedu.edu.in)

---

### Abstract:

*The attitude of a person and beliefs are reformed by the situation and the people around in society. When a person comes out of his comfort zone and starts to believe himself, he can do anything and complete his works independently. The protagonists of the novels The Hobbit and The Lord of the Rings believe their luck and companions support more than believing themselves. They give more importance to the materialistic things (the ring) for their achievements, making them unaware of their strengths and courage. The paper analyses the hobbits' beliefs, strength, courage, and how they have reformed themselves through the influence of changes and confronting different kinds of folks in The Hobbit and The Lord of the Rings.*

**Keywords:** *J.R.R. Tolkien, The Hobbit, The Lord of the Rings, Personality Development and Credibility*

---

### Introduction

No one observes the beneficial effects in juvenile and fantasy literature; many valuable messages are suggested in the literature that has assisted both the children and the adults. J.R.R. Tolkien is the most outstanding children's fantasy and modern British writer; his classical and fantasy works *The Hobbit and The Lord of the Rings*, are entirely crafted in his creative Middle-earth. The circumstances of the Middle-earth denote the different identities of Tolkien's different races' characteristics.

This research paper aims to discover the real strength and courage of the hobbits that do not believe in themselves and do not see their positive potential and consider them as timid persons in J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Hobbit and The Lord of the Rings*. This study aims to analyze the willpower and managing skills of the hobbits throughout their journey to achieve their quest.

Tolkien answers a letter to the author Rhona Beare, who has doubts on his Middle-earth's invented and fictional creatures;

May I say that all this is 'mythical and not any new religion or vision. As far as I know, it is merely an imaginative invention to express, in the only way I can, some of my (dim) apprehensions of the world. All I can say is that, if it were 'history', it would be difficult to fit the lands and events (or 'cultures') into such evidence as we possess, archaeological or geological, concerning the nearer or remoter part of what is now called Europe; though the Shire, for instance, is expressly stated to have been in this region. (The Letters of Tolkien, 211)

Furthermore, he asserts philosophically, he has written stories produced with or without religious ideas, but they are not allegories. *The Hobbit or There and Back Again* and *The Lord of the Rings* are exclusively written with uniqueness; the concepts of these fictions are common in nature which is based on greediness, friendship, and war between evil and good. The narrative style and languages of Tolkien are filled with a uniqueness that shows himself as a great writer; his creative fantasy world, especially the Middle-earth, gives breath to his fictional characters. The Middle-earth



is abundant with his imaginary creations such as natural features, history, languages, offspring, calendars, and characters.

Tolkien gives more effect to explore the conditions of nature, atmosphere, vegetations, inhabitants, and dialects of the natural world before and after wars in England in his works. The uniqueness of his imaginary characters, languages, settings, places, styles denote that he believes in himself and his creations that let him to be the most excellent fantasy writer.

The environments and situations of Tolkien's hobbits communicate their original features; the hobbits are resembling the people who have lived before the world wars. They are kind, generous, and have no intention or ambitions in their life; but, their only purpose in life is to live a happy life without any kind of troubles. They are sensitive and ancient people who enjoy harmony, tranquillity, and agricultural land cultivation; "A well-ordered and well-farmed countryside was their favorite haunt" (*The Lord of the Rings*, 1).

Even though the hobbits have the skills to use the tools, they do not like machines, a watermill or a handloom. Tolkien describes the hobbits as fairly human figures, not a breed of 'fairy' rabbit, but they are fat in the stomach, have a short leg, round and cheerful face; ears are a little sharp; their hair is short and curling in brown color. They appear as jesters, but they have a great sense of analyzing power that they have not recognized until they come out of their Shire's comfort zone.

Tolkien describes his hobbits like, they are not living in Africa. The fictional characters hobbits live in the Western lands of the "Middle-Earth"; the place where they live is called 'Hobbiton', a town in the Shire. The Shire is a productive and wonderful land that is favorable to all the hobbits who widespread the agriculture system in the land. However, they never like the industrialization of the land. In reality, Shire is a traditional rural culture administrative town or city in the ancient days of England, New Zealand, and most of the English-speaking people where the people give more importance to agriculture.

In the Shire, most people get help from the hobbits; because, they are expert in building houses in wood, bricks, and stone and also, they are also able to build farmhouses, sheds, and workshops so they help to millers, smiths, and robbers. They are gentle in heart and never try to hurt anyone, even with their words. Their intention is to live comfortably without any argument or fight with anyone in the Shire; for that, they have not encountered any cruel things or people of the world. "In a hole in the ground there lived a hobbit. Not a nasty, dirty, wet hole, filled with the ends of worms and an oozy smell, nor yet a dry, bare, sandy hole with nothing in it to sit down on or to eat: it was a hobbit-hole, and that means comfort" (*The Hobbit*, 3) describes and indicates the comfortable lifestyle of the hobbits in the Shire.

The mere appearance of a person does not denote his or her real characteristics; like that the hobbits appear as very short and innocent persons, but they have more potential to do works without delay, but they have not realized their abilities throughout their life. Their world is completed within the Shire, they can do anything perfectly without any interruption and give importance to punctuality and able to manage all the toughest situations and able to be as a leader and guide to anyone, but they are failing to recognize their own self – identity, strength and courage. They think that their only cause for their life span is to live the most cheerful life and enjoy the gardening of the land without hurting anyone.

When believing in oneself, a person can develop himself/herself, find out his self-identity, self-concepts, self-confidence, self-realization, and do anything without depending on others. The hobbits have not given much importance to these ideas in their life; they failed to identify their own personality, courage and strength in the Shire. The protagonists of the novels are the hobbits, Bilbo Baggins and Frodo Baggins, who appear as timid and innocent persons and think that they do not have any abilities, strengths to face challenging works, and their only interest is to watch other races'



walking on their land as children watch new people or animals.

Bilbo spends his time reading books and enjoys the nature of his land without thinking about his future. When the wizard Gandalf asks him to join and be a part of their adventure, Bilbo denies it and said "we are plain quiet folk and have no use for adventures (*The Hobbit*, 7). He feels nervous as most of the hobbits and not have enough courage and confidence within himself, and it shows his lack of belief in himself. "What am I going to get out of it? and am I going to come back alive?" (*The Hobbit*, 27).

Gandalf encourages Bilbo with the stories of his great-great-grand uncle Bandobras Took, who leads the hobbits against the goblins in the Battle of Greenfields to save the Shire. As a result of this gain of trust and his desire to see the Dwarves' treasure, as well as other races and their places, Bilbo agrees to join the adventure. Bilbo believes Gandalf and his magic so that he accepts to be a part of the adventure and thinks that Gandalf can look after him throughout the journey.

Gandalf encourages Bilbo whenever he loses hope and wants to go back to his hole. Gandalf saves the group from the trolls by changing the trolls into stones; and, he never gives up Bilbo and supports him whenever the Dwarves insult him and make him feel inferior. Gandalf's affection lets Bilbo to develop his inner courage and strength; when Gandalf leaves them, he alone takes care of the group as a leader. Gandalf's affection and trust in Bilbo, make him to believe himself.

The Great Eagles help the companions of Bilbo from the encounter of the wolves and the forest fire. Bilbo has never met the terrible situations in his lifetime in the Shire, so he feels nervous and decides to give up the adventure, but the eagles encounter the wolves to save Bilbo and his companions from the place. The Lord of the Eagles advises Bilbo as "You need not be frightened like a rabbit, even if you look rather like one" (*The Hobbit*, 131); then he accepts the advice and go further with courage, and determination and also takes responsibilities for his friends' safety and security.

The Elves help the companions to know about the moon letters on their route map; when the group struggles to understand the map and its letters, the Elvenking reveals the secret behind the map; the Elves save the group from the enormous spiders' Web for that Bilbo starts to believe the Elves till the end. He shares his part of the treasure and gives precious jewels to the Elvenking for saving his friends; through the Elves, Bilbo learns to be generous.

The skin-changer Beorn helps the group by providing food, protection, and ponies. He shows correct decisions and routes to go further though safe places and advises them not to do any harmful activities for nature. While the dwarves speak about their treasures and plans, Beorn does not care about it, and never demand any part of their treasure for himself that humbleness influences Bilbo's personality. That circumstances increase Bilbo's humility and compassion towards others and develop him as a mature person.

The Lake-man Bard saves Bilbo and his companions from the dragon Smaug by using his arrows, but the dragon's fire and a flood of the lake destroys almost of the Lake-town. To recover the place and people, Bard demands a part of the treasure from the Dwarves leader, Thorin; but the dwarf never accepts to share his elders' treasure to any other folks. To demand the treasure from the dwarf, Bilbo gives the Dwarves' precious Arkenstone to Bard. Bilbo is a loyal and honest person to his friends, but when he understands their self-centered nature and greed, he decides to leave them, showing his maturity and true identity.

Apart from believing in himself, Bilbo believes his luck and others support in the beginning of his journey; the foremost luck of Bilbo is Gandalf has chosen him as a burglar to help the group, which helps Bilbo to develop himself as a hero. While the trolls capture the group and try to kill them, Bilbo has tried his level best to save his friends, but he cannot be able to save them, at that time Gandalf arrives suddenly and rescues them from the evil creatures; from this situation, Bilbo has learned to manage any situations.





Bilbo believes his luck helps him to win in the riddles of Gollum by giving the correct answers and asks confusing questions to escape from Gollum and also to find out the magical ring in the dark water without knowing the power of the ring. He thinks that his luck lets him meet the companions within the time and helps them in perilous situations with the help of the magical ring; in their quest, whenever the companionship encounters with the evil creatures, he has used the ring and desired to go back to his home. "This is the dreariest and dullest part of all this wretched, tiresome, uncomfortable adventure! I wish I was back in my hobbit-hole by my warm fireside with the lamp shining" (*The Hobbit*, 203). When they are escaping from goblins, they are caught by wolves, at that time, he says as "'Out of the frying – pan into the fire' in the same sort of uncomfortable situations" (*The Hobbit*, 115); that situation increases his courage and confidence because of the help and advice of the Great Eagles.

He believes his luck helps him to find out the keyhole of the secret gate with the help of the enormous thrush who knocks on the stone where the keyhole is hidden; no one in the group has not noticed it, but Bilbo thinks the bird suggests something and waits near that place until the keyhole is appearing on the ground that helps them to go further in their journey. When the Dwarves' leader Thorin asks him to go alone to see what happened in the dark place, he hesitates to go into the dark. However, they push him suddenly and encourage him to have hope, and he cries as a child for help in the far distance place because he has left alone in the deadly dark place and silent in the perilous situation. With the help of the ring and his sword, he manages the situation and is the group leader; that situation increases his inner confidence.

Apart from belief in luck and others, Bilbo has the courage and confidence which lead him to become a hero of their journey. He helps his friends from the Wood-Elves who have arrested them as prisoners at that time; Bilbo helps them escape from the place by using barrels and his tricks. Thorin, who thinks about Bilbo as a useless burglar, starts to believe him and his pieces of advice throughout their journey; "I wish he could have arranged a more comfortable journey. Still-all very much at your service once more, Mr. Baggins. No doubt, we shall feel properly grateful, when we are fed and recovered" (*The Hobbit*, 226).

Bilbo gives advice, ideas, and plans as the leader of the companionship; he goes alone to meet the dragon Smaug, and he manages the situation with his riddle speech and courage while others are afraid to go near the dragon. Through the circumstances and encounters of the different kinds of folks, Bilbo develops himself as a hero and mature person; he recognizes his courage and abilities through many struggles in various situations of his adventure. He shares the treasure to who help to complete the quest; Thorin does not like to share the treasure with Bard, who helps them and kills the dragon, so Bilbo gives the precious Arkenstone to Bard and leaves the group with a bit of gold and silver from his share of the treasure, to share the gold and silvers to the indigent people and who have supported the group in their adventure.

Like Bilbo, his younger cousin Frodo does not have the courage and feels like a timid person initially, so he denies doing the task because he feels inferior. However, Gandalf advises him to do good for the Shire and save the people by completing the task successfully. To save the people from the evil creatures, he accepts to destroy the enchanted ring in the crack of Mount Doom. Frodo says as he wants to save the Shire; "And I suppose I must go alone if I am to do that and save the Shire. But I feel tiny and very uprooted, and well-desperate. The Enemy is so strong and terrible" (*The Lord of the Rings*, 82); through reading the Bilbo's book which describes everything about his journey, he learns the external situation of the Shire.

Frodo believes Gandalf and Aragorn more than himself; Frodo gives his friends more importance and is conscious of their safety in dangerous situations. When Gandalf has attacked by the Orcs and died in the fire, everyone except Aragorn loses their hope, but Aragorn encourages them to start the adventure again. At first, he has suspected Aragorn, but later through encounters



with many obstacles, he realizes the natural character of Aragorn and believes him to complete the task.

Frodo's courage is revealed when he accepts the task of being the ring bearer to destroy it while the Men, Elves, Dwarves, and wizards do not accept the task. Even knowing about the ring's perilous situations and evil things, he accepts and takes a journey with his friends Sam, Merry, Pippin, two Men who are Aragorn and Boromir, the Elf Legolas, the Dwarf Gimili, and the wizard Gandalf. Bilbo gives his sword and mantle to Frodo, which Gandalf gives to Bilbo that helps him in dangerous places until the quest has been completed. Frodo takes care of the ring from the evil creatures like the Black Riders, Orcs, and Gollum.

When Boromir diverts Frodo's mind and argues with him to possess the ring for saving his people, Frodo does not accept it; they fight for the ring, but Frodo goes along with the ring to complete his quest; that shows his self-confidence and courage. Sam finds him while he is invisible, and then they both go together to complete the task; Sam encourages him whenever he loses his hopes. The encounters of the Black Riders, Gollum, spiders, wolves, or the Orcs in different circumstances, let the hobbits develop their inner courage and strength.

Frodo blindly believes Gollum, who secretly approaches Frodo and Sam to seize the ring from them; he has pretended to help them in their journey to cross the dark places, to collect good food, fetch water, and also show the shortcuts to reach the Mount Doom. Sam suggests that Frodo does not believe Gollum and leaves him. However, Frodo does not bother it and shows mercy on him until the end, but at last, Gollum shows his original character and tries to seize the ring from Frodo that lets Gollum unknowingly fall in the volcano of Mount Doom.

When the hobbits Pippin and Merry leave the companionship to search his friends, Frodo and Sam, they are seized by the Orcs who are insulted and tortured them to find out the ring from their dresses and make them separate from one another; they suffer a lot to go alone in the dark forest, but they manage the situations and escape from the Orcs. They believe the encounter of the Ents is their luck because they help them meet their companionship and provide hospitality, Food, Shelter, and protection. That situation makes them be courageous persons.

The hobbits are courageous people who have not realized their natural features, strength, courage, but believes others and their support. Gandalf says that the hobbits have a tremendous power of recovery; Pippin tries to save king Denethor and his son Faramir from their suicide and advises the king while he loses his hope in life; Merry is being the noblewoman Eowyn' in the battle and helps to kill the Lord of the Nazgûl or Black Riders. Frodo dares to complete the task with Sam even after encountering many struggles. Aragorn praises the four hobbits for their help to save the world from the evil creatures.

Frodo starts his adventure with his friends without recognizing the dangerous situations and the places of his journey. Whenever he struggles with the evil creatures and situations, the Elves, the Ents, Strider, the Men, Gollum, and the wizard help him incorrectly.

Frodo's luck is encountered by the Elves who advise the friends to consult Gandalf before start the quest; they help the hobbits when they are afraid of the dark forest and encounter by the Black Riders; the Elves say about the Black Riders and advice to have the courage to continue the journey. They meet the hobbit Mr. Maggot who gives food and helps them cross the river Brandywine through ferry for their goodness. The River daughter, Goldberry welcomes them and pieces of advice as "For you are still afraid, perhaps, of mist and tree-shadows and deep water, and untamed things. Fear nothing! For tonight you are under the roof of Tom Bombadil" (*The Lord of the Rings*, 161).

Tom Bombadil gives protection, food, Shelter, dagger, good decision, and show the correct path to the Inn in Bree where they meet the Strider Aragorn and Gandalf who are assisting them throughout the adventure. The luck of Frodo and Sam is the Great Eagles gives information about



their journey to Gandalf and watch them till their task is complete and then save them from the Mount Doom fire.

Apart from their luck, the hobbits are clever and courageous persons, but they cannot be realized, their ability till they live in comfortable places of the Shire. They come across and manage the evil creatures and the perilous situations throughout their journey and develop themselves as heroes that help them take action against the new rules of the Shire and against Saruman and his slaves trying to change the Shire into industrial land.

Bilbo realizes his real courage and strength by determining to rescue his friends and is with them in any difficult situations like that Frodo. His friends are determined to be with his friends and complete their task successfully, which help them to understand their real personality. The circumstances of various places and encountering of different kinds of people develop their good personalities, increase their inner courage, strength, and help them be independent persons to take action against evil things.

### **Works Cited**

1. Tolkien, John Ronald Reuel. *The Hobbit or There and Back Again*. London: HarperCollins Publishers, 1991, 5th ed. 1995. Print.
2. Tolkien, John Ronald Reuel. *The Lord of the Rings*. London: HarperCollins Publishers, 1966, 2nd ed. 2007. Print.
3. Tolkien, J.R.R, Humphrey Carpenter, and Christopher Tolkien. *The Letters of J.R.R. Tolkien*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1981. Print.
4. Wiki Contributors. Reception of J.R.R. Tolkien. Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia. 23 April 2021, Web.

Bayan College