

Returning the Ring

A psychological commentary of Tolkien's

The Lord of the Rings

in light of a world in crisis

By Craig Jarman, MA

Preface

Craig Jarman has written a wonderful book about the mythological land of Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*. Archaic language, mythological scenes, fairytale plots are the carriers of some of the most pertinent and telling commentaries on our modern world and the disaster-creativity which faces us. Modern ears are tired of the doom and gloom of so much of our current writing, and news headlines are no better. But in this tale of hobbits and little people and noble bearers of power we have spelled out the chaos which we face and a visionary solution to it.

The story is a new one – perhaps the latest outpouring of mythology in our western world – and it carries great power. To read a myth created by a man still within living memory is to be at the forefront of living mythology. A young man, Craig Jarman, a citizen of the new age, speaks its language eloquently and creates a new vision for us all.

Robert A. Johnson

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1. Hobbits and the Shire

In a small quiet nook of Middle Earth called the Shire there lived a short stocky race of beings known as hobbits. Hobbits were simple folk, their main interests being each other and their non-complicated lives. By nature they did not move about much, tending to live out their lives in much the same place as they were born.

It was rare for a hobbit to journey outside the Shire – the larger world was considered too foreign to be worthy of any real attention. Instead, hobbits preferred to keep to themselves. Dealing with the larger world was considered bothersome and complications were to be avoided wherever possible. In the Shire the hobbits enjoyed a quiet and peaceful life.

Now there was a growing unease. The roads heading west of the Shire had been busier than usual and rumours of strange things happening in the world had begun to filter in. Many seemed to be fleeing from great peril in the east. As they passed they whispered of the enemy and of the land of Mordor. Some great evil was afoot.

“Strange things you do hear these days,” commented the young gardener Sam.

“Ah”, scoffed Ted, “you do if you listen.”

No one knew exactly what was happening until the day Gandalf rode into the Shire with great urgency and immediately met with Frodo. The wise Gandalf brought Frodo dark news and confirmed his suspicions. Gandalf warned Frodo of an oncoming doom. The Dark Lord Sauron had risen again and taken his throne in Mordor. From the heart of Mordor a black tide spewed forth and threatened to engulf the whole of Middle Earth.

Frodo was shocked to hear that the Shire was under threat. Never before had the Shire been threatened by such strange and distant forces. Gandalf's message was convincing but unwelcome news.

"The Enemy is fast becoming very strong. The Dark Lord's plans are far from ripe but they are ripening. You do not know the real peril yet but you shall."

"I wish it need not have happened in my time," said Frodo.

"So do I", said Gandalf, "and so do all who live to see such times. But that is not for them to decide. All we have to decide is what to do with the time that is given us."

The *Lord of the Rings* begins with the greenery of the Shire and the everyday life of the hobbits. The hobbits are in no way unusual. In most respects they mirror our own ordinary existence. Like the hobbits we also live out our lives within a small circle, remaining relatively free from the wider issues present within the world. Rarely do we concern ourselves with society at large. As with the hobbits our main concerns are our lives, homes and families.

This is a starting point which is common to us all, a place at which we may all be found. Symbolically speaking, we are these hobbits and the Shire is our home. Having gathered us in, *The Lord of the Rings* is a mythic account of what is now unfolding within everyone's life. In one way or another, the adventure of the Ring lies before each of us.

The lives of these hobbits are no longer so simple. No more can they live a life separate from the larger world and in ignorance of their distant neighbours. As we too now inhabit a small planet, that once appeared large, it is quickly apparent that *The Lord of the Rings* is the story of our own time.

Just as the peace of the Shire has come under immediate threat from the dark and destructive forces of Mordor, our own lives are now complicated by a broader set of issues collectively termed the world crisis. On the 18th November 1992 the *World Scientists Warning to Humanity* was released.

This document, addressed to us all, and signed by over sixteen hundred scientists from around the world (including half of all Nobel Prize winners), began as follows:

Human beings and the natural world are on a collision course. Human activities inflict harsh and often irreversible damage upon the environment and critical resources.... Fundamental changes are urgent if we are to avoid the collision our present course will bring about.

Today the pace of life continues to accelerate in a direction which is not always positive. If you listen to the 'strange things you hear these days' then you are bound to hear news of such issues as the global warming and the greenhouse effect, the rapid extinction of various species of wildlife, the breakdown of ecosystems, the decimation of forests and the build up of toxins within the food chain. These are all new issues. Never before, in the history of civilisation, have we been faced with such problems.

In our story the hobbit, Sam, is concerned by the strange talk whilst the older Ted would prefer not to listen. Here we come to the first juncture in the journey of the Ring. Does one listen or not? Should one be concerned?

Whilst it is obvious that we should concern ourselves with today's problems, rarely do we take up the challenge which the world crisis presents. Instead we prefer to remain ignorant, seeking to continue along a path free from worldly worries and responsibilities.

This maintenance of ignorance is the first danger. The Swiss psychologist, Carl Gustav Jung, points out that not becoming conscious, when one has the possibility for doing so, is the worst possible sin. For there is a greater psychic energy waiting to be integrated which, if left un-lived, turns sour and destructive.

The world crisis asks that we develop a greater awareness of the intrinsic unity of all life. If we ignore this call to awareness then the world situation will simply worsen to the point where it commands our attention. A global

consciousness lies before us whether we welcome the opportunity or not. This is the challenge of our age – the next step in our evolution as a species. In no way may it be avoided. Either we arrive at a point of global awareness through some disastrous global issue, or we find the capacity to honour the earth as a whole and steer our way clear of ecological catastrophe.

This is the way of Sam. As a gardener, Sam is forever devoted to the earth. He represents that spirit which is open minded, responsible and ready to act. The skeptical Ted is the opposite. Ted's apathy and indifference reflects the first major obstacle in dealing with the world's problems.

Before anything real can be done there must first be that initial concern. The challenge of the world crisis is first met through taking an active interest in the fate of our planet. Once an interest is taken, the urgency and immensity of the world crisis quickly becomes apparent.

In the story Gandalf arrives and confirms Frodo's suspicions. He is the figure of wisdom in our story and that part of us which simply knows. Prior to Gandalf's arrival we remain confused and uncertain. The reality of the world crisis remains open to debate. Is the situation *really* that bad? Gandalf's meeting with Frodo marks that point of no doubt – the world crisis is not an unfounded concept, the world crisis is real.

Frodo laments the fact that this troubled chapter in the history of Middle Earth had chosen to play itself out within his own lifetime. Gandalf responds by stating that whilst we have no control over the fate which befalls us, we are obliged to respond to that fate.

We were bound to arrive at this critical juncture at some point in time. This time is now. We cannot seek an escape from our problems, just as there is no way of leaving this planet. Rather we are required to turn and face the challenge that the world crisis represents.

In accepting the fatefulness of the world crisis we open to its spiritual dimension and the passage of transformation which it represents. The world crisis is an opportunity for consciousness. Jung was acutely aware of

this secret symmetry between our worldly problems and our psychological development. In 1956, two years after *The Lord of the Rings* was first published, Jung, wrote:

... a mood of universal destruction and world renewal has set its mark upon our age. This mood makes itself felt everywhere, politically, socially and philosophically. We are living in what the Greeks called the Kairos - the right time - for a 'metamorphosis of the gods', that is, of the fundamental principles and symbols. This peculiarity, which is certainly not of our own conscious choosing, is the expression of the unconscious man within us who is changing. Coming generations will have to take account of this momentous transformation if humanity is not to destroy itself through the might of its own technology and science.¹

We have now entered the new millennium and it is we who are the 'coming generations'. As foretold we are indeed faced with the prospect of our own self-destruction. Yet, as Jung also noted, our world situation is simply the outward expression of changes taking place deep within the psyche.

We now live at the end of an old and the beginning of a new era of consciousness. This 'metamorphosis of the gods' is especially evident in the current transformation of our religious life, where Christianity has begun to give way to a new age of both worldly and spiritual ideals. The dawn of this new aeon, however, also coincides with the world crisis.

The world crisis and this new era of consciousness are two expressions of the one process. They both question our place and purpose within the whole of life, calling for a new morality regarding how we inhabit the world in which we live. Whilst the new aeon gently invites us to step forward into a greater awareness, the increasing intensity of the world crisis is a stern taskmaster who refuses to allow us to remain ignorant.

¹ Jung, "The Undiscovered Self", *Civilisation in Transition*, CW 10, par 585.

2. The Dark Lord and the One Ring

When the Dark Lord Sauron first wrought the One Ring he did so with the knowledge gained from the elven ring-smiths. Unbeknownst to the elves Sauron forged the ring from deep within the earth. Had they foreseen the outcome of their alliance, the elves would never have befriended Sauron and shared their knowledge. Now their fate also rests with the One Ring.

Sauron designed the Ring to be all-powerful. Whoever wore the One Ring was granted this power in accordance with his stature. At the same time the Ring was inherently evil and would ultimately consume and destroy its wearer.

In a past era Sauron lost the Ring in a battle against Isildur and, in defeat, had faded from memory. Now Sauron had re-gathered his strength and risen again. In the land of Mordor he prepared a great army that appeared unconquerable.

Gandalf explains "Always after a defeat and a respite, the shadow takes another shape and grows again."

Yet there was hope. As Gandalf explained to Frodo, "The enemy still lacks the one thing to give him the strength and knowledge to beat down all resistance. He lacks the One Ring."

To aid him in his conquests the Dark Lord sought this One Ring which would give him the means and knowledge to enslave the whole of Middle Earth.

The One Ring that Gandalf spoke of was the same magical ring that Frodo had inherited from Bilbo.

The story of *The Lord of the Rings* is centred upon this One Ring and its potential abuse. The sheer existence of this ring of power threatens the whole of Middle Earth. If the One Ring were to find its way back to its evil master, Middle Earth would be doomed.

Our own times face a similar dilemma. For today we have the knowledge and power to rule the world like no other time in history. This power is, however, a dangerous power. Modern machinery, weapons of mass destruction, industrialisation, biological and chemical engineering all threaten the delicate balance of life on Earth. As we look out across the world we inhabit, we have already begun to experience the destruction unleashed through the might of our modern-day technology.

So who is to blame? Who is responsible for this creation of our destructive capacity?

When Einstein first discovered the laws of atomic fission he sent an express telegram to the U.S. President informing him of the newfound power now within the reach of man. Einstein was not looking to boast of his achievement, rather he was afraid of our scientific ability. And for good reason. Einstein's discovery forms the underlying principle of all nuclear weaponry.

When Leo Hendrich Bakeland first invented plastic, he could not foresee that his invention would one day create an enormous stockpile of non-biodegradable waste. Similarly the inventor of the combustion engine did not foresee the problem of city smog. Nor did the creator of the first pesticide expect that such chemicals would quickly enter the food chain.

Tolkien once expressed the idea that the elves represent a purely scientific aspect of human nature coupled with a respect and devoted love of the physical world. Yet these elves were deceived by Sauron. Like the elves, our scientists have unknowingly colluded with a darker force. Our technology has not been built with good intentions alone - somewhere the devil has lent his hand.

Jung was especially aware of this unconscious collusion. In 1958, a time marked by the testing of nuclear weaponry, Jung wrote:

No one will maintain that the atomic physicists are a pack of criminals because it is to their efforts that we owe that peculiar flower of human ingenuity, the hydrogen bomb. ...even though the first step along the road to a momentous invention may be the outcome of a conscious decision, here, as everywhere the spontaneous idea – the hunch or intuition – plays an important part. In other words, the unconscious collaborates too and often makes decisive contributions. So it is not the conscious effort alone that is responsible for the result; somewhere or other the unconscious, with its barely discernable goals and intentions, has its finger in the pie. If it puts a weapon in your hand, it is aiming at some kind of violence.²

Since this time the threat of nuclear war has been joined by such issues as global warming and the breakdown of our planet's ecosystem. Only now, long after the making of our modern world, have we begun to see a shadowy force at work within our technology. Today we stand at the mercy of our own creation. We fear what we ourselves have made, we fear our own potential for destruction. As Jung says, "Not nature but the 'genius of mankind' has knotted the hangman's noose which may execute itself at any moment."³

How have we let this happen? How were the elves so easily fooled by the Dark Lord Sauron? Why does our technology contain seeds of evil? What unconscious collusion have we been subject to?

Our destructive technology is an expression of the spiritual condition we

² Jung, "The Undiscovered Self", *Civilisation in Transition*, CW 10

³ Jung, "Answer to Job" (1952), *Psychology and Religion: West and East*, CW 11, par 734.

are in. Spiritually we find ourselves at the culmination of an aeon marked by a tension of two opposing ideologies – Christianity and science. For the past two thousand years Christianity has taught us to be ‘good’. This goodness was equated with a certain civility which meant the restraint of the more savage and base aspects of our being. Christianity taught us to rise above our animal nature. Relative to our predecessors we have become more civil and have a greater respect for the rights of the individual.

The teachings of Christ were an important counter-balance to the more savage and inhumane practices often associated with the rise of the Roman Empire. Subsequently Christianity won through as a superior cultural ethos. The moral principles forwarded by Christianity are now well integrated and form the most significant portion of our modern way of being. Yet, at the same time, we have lost our relationship with the earth.

The problem with Christianity lay in its rejection of the darker and more instinctual substratum of our being. With Christianity the light side of God made an enemy of his darker half. According to the scriptures, Satan was cast out of heaven and fell to earth. Other accounts suggest he left of his own accord. In Milton’s *Paradise Lost* we hear Satan declare that it would be “better to reign in hell, than to serve in heaven.” Satan ‘fell from grace’ - this important god no longer held an honoured place within our religious life.⁴

With Christianity the opposites of light and dark were split with little hope of compromise or a marriage of the two. The now brilliantly good God lived high up in the heavens whilst Satan took up residence deep within the earth. Satan fell into the shadow – that aspect of our being which lies beneath our conscious awareness.

⁴ The dark side of god is acknowledged by most all religions other than Christianity. In the Hindu religion we find images of Kali in the temples, in Taoist theory the dark has an equal place alongside the light, Buddhism has its wrathful deities. Outside of Halloween festivities our own culture has failed to give Satan his due attention.

The split between light and dark found its parallel in the split between heaven and earth. In accordance with the Christian world view, anything that was too close to nature was considered wild and susceptible to the Satanic influences whilst that which was nearer to heaven was gracious and holy. Christianity saw the earth as a place to transcend. Like a church spire one should aim towards heaven.

The Pagan and Alchemic world views stood in stark contrast to this Christian perspective. Had they been allowed a fuller expression they may have healed this split between heaven and earth, light and dark.⁵ To the Pagan the spirit in matter was not the Devil but the *Dragon* – the life force which ran throughout the whole of nature. To the Alchemist it was the spirit *mercurius* – the life of matter. Whilst Christianity explored the mysteries and laws of the heavens it was the alchemists, astrologers and herbalists who respected and studied the mysteries of nature. From this study emerged that body of knowledge known as the natural sciences.

Alchemy, astrology and herb lore were viewed, not as complementary, but as a challenge to the Christian world view. Yet, despite the antagonistic attitude of the church, the more demonstrable discoveries and knowledge the sciences could not be discredited. Alchemists and astrologers, such as Nostradamus, Kepler, Galileo and Isaac Newton, were respected members of the community and their ideas and understanding would not easily be dismissed.

The unholy compromise was to accept the natural sciences in part. Whilst the phenomenal aspects of the natural sciences were accepted, their spiritual dimension was rejected. It was in this way that Alchemy became chemistry, herb lore became pharmacology and astrology evolved into

⁵ Both King Arthur and Merlin are mythic symbols of an attempted union of the opposites alive within the Piscean aeon. Arthur was born of a Christian mother, Igraine and pagan father, Uther Pendragon. Like Christ Merlin was of born of a virgin – his mother being a pious Christian, his father being the devil.

astronomy and eventually physics. In the age of reason the natural sciences were stripped of their metaphysical elements. What remained was a science devoid of any real sensitivity toward nature.

The warring opposites of heaven and earth have now formed a lethal combination. The Christian rejection of nature, coupled with our scientific understanding of nature's mechanics, has found its expression in the destructive technology of our modern day. Whilst the abusive use of our scientific knowledge initially served to elevate the status of man, it now threatens to destroy our society. Nature herself is not truly threatened, our earth has survived ice ages, periods of great volcanic activity and she will certainly survive humankind. What is now threatened is our own place in the world.

In our story the One Ring turns toward evil due to the Dark Lord's part in its creation. Similarly our technological creations are corrupted by our own deep-seated disrespect for the natural world. Our modern technology and industry are an incarnation of our materialistic shadow – a shadow we have carried forward from our Christian heritage.

The Dark Lord has regathered his strength and risen again. Out of sight, within the belly of our own being, Satan has roamed freely and plotted his return to power. Now, after two thousand years of banishment, the dark face of God has reemerged and made its presence felt.

Look at the incredible savagery going on in our so called civilised world: it all comes from human beings and the spiritual condition they are in. Look at the devilish engines of destruction! They are invented by completely innocuous gentlemen, reasonable, respectable citizens who are everything we could wish. And when the whole thing blows up and an indescribable hell of destruction is let loose, nobody

seems responsible. It simply happens, and yet it is all man-made.⁶

Just as we are the hobbits who stand in fear of the Dark Lord, we are also this Dark Lord himself. It is now exceedingly important that we awaken to and acknowledge this darker force inside each of us. Aside from our destructive technology we must also address our inability to honour and respect the Earth.

In no way will this be an easy task. Despite its massive proportions, this deeply unconscious desecration of nature avoids our direct perception. Yet if one were to view the modern world through the eyes of the native Australian, African, North or South American one would see this destructive attitude in all of its monstrosity. Think what these indigenous people saw when European settlers first stole and raped their land. Who was the real barbarian?

Indigenous people are rightfully disturbed by western man's treatment of the environment. The native Cherokee Indian, Sitting Bull, once lamented, "If you knew that the sea was your mother then you wouldn't throw your rubbish in her." To the Amazon native we are known as the 'termite men' since we chew up everything in our path.

Western man has lost all sense of the sanctity of nature. The wayward tendency of our technological power and the resulting world crisis are symptomatic expressions of our unbalanced attitude toward the whole of life. The peril of our times calls for a new consciousness which will only emerge as we seek to live in harmony with all other life forms and recognise ourselves as but humble creatures of the earth. If we are to have a future on this planet we must now overcome our failure to honour nature.

⁶ Jung, "Psychology and Religion" (1938/1940), *Psychology and Religion: West and East*, CW 11, par 85.

While there is much to rally against in outer worldly terms, there is another battle that awaits within. As the previous aeon draws to a close we have been asked to reconcile the opposites of light and dark, heaven and earth, spirit and matter. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* is the mythic representation of this process of reconciliation. This commentary on the myth explores those issues which emerge as we turn and embrace the collective shadow within our culture and within ourselves.

3. Frodo and the Ring

Frodo came to inherit the Ring from Bilbo. At first he looked upon it as his greatest gift but once Gandalf had explained the darker truth of the Ring, he no longer regarded the Ring with such pride. Frodo fell into despair, it seemed that nothing could be done to prevent the Dark Lord's onslaught.

"Why did you let me keep it?" asked Frodo, "Why didn't you make me throw it away or destroy it?"

"Have you ever tried?" asked Gandalf.

"No", replied Frodo, "But I suppose that one could hammer it or melt it."

"Try!" said Gandalf, "Try now!"

When Frodo drew the One Ring from his pocket, so that he might throw it in the hottest part of the fire, he was caught by a sudden admiration for the Ring. How precious it must be, how perfect was its colour and roundness. Soon he found himself putting the ring back in his pocket.

"Yes." thought Gandalf, already the Ring has a grip upon him.

Even if Frodo had succeeded in throwing the Ring into the fire it would have been of no use. The One Ring was much too powerful to be destroyed so simply.

"There is only one way," explained Gandalf. "Find the Cracks of Doom in the depths of Orodruin, the fire mountain, and cast the Ring in there, if you really wish to destroy it, to put it beyond the grasp of the enemy forever."

*Frodo offered the Ring to Gandalf but the wizard refused to accept it.
For now the burden of the Ring was to remain with Frodo.*

In the meantime Gandalf advised that Frodo should also resist all temptations to wear the Ring, as wearing the Ring would increase the Ring's stranglehold upon its keeper. Already Frodo has ceased to grow older – this strange promise of eternal youth masked a corresponding tendency for the Ring's owner to feel inwardly thin and worn.

The One Ring is real. It is the technological power which now threatens our global wellbeing. Whilst this power presents all the advantages of “progress”, its darker and more destructive face has now become apparent as we examine its impact upon the environment.

Just as Frodo inherited the One Ring, we are the heirs of the industrial age. As humankind we have the capacity to rule the world with a godlike power. Unfortunately this technological power far exceeds our capacity for ethical decision and activity.

Previously our position appeared ideal – modern science had provided us with faster transport, comfortable housing, easy access to energy and natural resources as well as all the benefits of economic prosperity. Now, after gaining a deeper insight into the nature of this technology and its impact upon the environment, it has become harder to admire the achievements of our western world. Our technological ability, once our treasured inheritance, has now become our greatest burden.

Western man has no need of more superiority over nature, whether outside or inside. He has both in almost devilish perfection. What he lacks is a conscious recognition of his inferiority to the nature around and within him. He must learn

that he may not do exactly as he wills. If he does not do this, his own nature will destroy him.⁷

According to Gandalf the only safe option is to destroy the One Ring. The world crisis asks that we live a simpler and more balanced life – a life free from the use of destructive technologies. We are to disarm, slow down and curb the extremes of our industrial conquest of nature. The One Ring must be thrown back into the cracks of Mount Doom and thereby destroyed. The power we have acquired must now be sacrificed.

This path of surrender, as opposed to conquest, is a radically new calling for modern man. Typically the hero sets out upon an adventure which culminates in the attainment of some great treasure. With Frodo this theme is reversed. Frodo already has his treasure, his journey is to see to its loss and destruction. This inversion of the hero's myth points towards a radical shift in the evolution of consciousness. Power must be surrendered rather than won. The hero of today is the one who is able to sacrifice that which he has become tremendously attached to. In his exploration of masculine psychology, *He*, Robert Johnson wrote:

In the Tolkien myth the Ring of Power is taken from evil hands and put back into the ground from which it came. Earlier myths often spoke of the discovery of power and its emergence from the earth into human hands. Recent myths speak of returning the source of power to the earth or into the hands of God before we destroy ourselves with it.

We are not prepared yet to hear this change that is required of us, but there are the beginnings of consciousness in this direction. The ring is our modern self-conscious power, our

⁷ Jung, "Yoga and the West" (1936), *Psychology and Religion: West and East*, CW 11, par 870.

science. We must relinquish this power, this brave new world we have around us, or it will destroy us.⁸

To throw back the Ring is to sacrifice all the power and false advantage that is offered by our technology. This may mean going without, avoiding the temptation to dominate and being prepared to live within the confines of nature's laws and limitations. It may mean less profits, slowed or reversed economic growth; it may mean walking instead of driving, poorer yet more sustainable crop yields, less convenience and a slower pace of life. To return the Ring is to swim contrary to a torrid set of currents that race through our modern world. It is a conscious acceptance of a vastly more simple life.

We need to learn how to tread gently upon our Mother Earth. We cannot continue to take from nature in a way that upsets the balance of our environment. This means refraining from the creation and use of that technology which pulls from the Earth and fails to give anything in return.

It is important to note that not all of our technology threatens the balance of life. For example energy derived from natural resources, by such means as wind, solar or tidal power, does not disrupt nature's balance. The burning of fossil fuels and use of nuclear power are disruptive. Similarly the bicycle, itself a modern day invention, is relatively harmless. Recycled paper products do not chew up our forests. Organic farming practices preserve the quality of our soil. Our scientific knowledge may be implemented in harmony with nature. There is much that we may legitimately hold onto – but much more that must be sacrificed.

Returning the Ring is not an easy task. The reversal of attitude required of us is epic in its proportions. Gandalf's test of Frodo's resolve to destroy the Ring highlights our own attachment to our technological power. Over time we have become increasingly dependent upon the power of our technology to the point of addiction – an addiction we suffer yet deny. Despite its

⁸ Johnson, *He: Understanding Masculine Psychology*, (1974) p 75.

destructive tendencies, we continue to use that technology, and participate in a lifestyle, which we know is ecologically unsound. A simple example is that of the combustion engine vehicle. We know its exhausts pollute the skies and contribute to global warming yet that car is still considered necessary to live one's life. Our addiction to our technology has roots which are now hundreds of years deep.

When the Dark Lord made the One Ring it was said that he poured much of his own self into it. As such the Ring was alive with the Dark Lord's energy and sought to obey its master at every opportunity presented. Can the same be said of our technology? Too often we argue that there is nothing inherently evil in our technology and machinery. Being inanimate, the machine has no free will and no capacity toward evil. From another perspective the chain-saw is clearly more destructive and 'evil' than an axe – plastics are darker than paper. Who would argue that there is nothing 'evil' about the hydrogen bomb, chemical weaponry or a nuclear submarine? Our technology calls out to be used and put to its destined purpose. It emits a magnetic temptation to power. On this point Jung warns:

Let man but accumulate sufficient engines of destruction and the devil within him will soon be unable to resist putting them to their fated use. It is well known that fire-arms go off by themselves if only enough of them are together.

In making an enemy of nature, nature has made an enemy of us. Now the dark god, the champion of a furious earth goddess, has grown in strength. Through our self-destructive technology he seeks to wreak havoc and destroy all that we have established. The dark god seeks to tear down our modern society which has failed to honour the natural world. Whether this is a good or a bad thing remains difficult to judge – certainly it is a dangerous path which reeks of an angry and wrathful deity that seeks its vengeance. What is truly frightening is the extent of his preparations - the capacity for our self-destruction is indeed present in the world.

We are now left with no option but to retreat from our desire to dominate nature. If we fail to honour nature, and hold onto the Ring of Power, we will surely deliver this means of destruction into the hands of the Dark Lord. We must rid ourselves of our destructive technology before this shadow erupts and gains control. Can we survive another world war? Can we survive a doubling of the world's population within 50-60 years? How much longer do we have before the Dark Lord captures the power of the Ring and uses it in accordance with his design?

The quest to return the Ring is a race against time. The Dark Lord searches desperately for the Ring and, increasingly, he has the power to draw it to himself. Already he had learnt that the Ring was held by a hobbit who lived in a place called the Shire. Gandalf is certain that the Ring must be destroyed. In the meantime Gandalf warns Frodo to resist the pull and command of the Ring. So too, we must remain constantly vigilant that the devil within is not granted his evil wish. It's important to remain mindful of the dark god within who is hell bent on a path of destruction. One need only witness the increasing degree of terrorist activity within the world to see how easily he may escape our efforts to contain and police him. This terrorist activity is best understood, not yet as a crime, but as a state of demonic possession by the dark God which seeks a human face. As we continue in the destruction of our environment, to a greater or lesser degree, we are all such terrorists.

On a more personal level holding onto and wearing the Ring causes its bearer to remain outwardly young yet inwardly worn and thin. This would suggest that our possession of the Ring arrests our development and taxes us on an inner level. This is a major concern. Whilst the pace of our modern world offers much in the way of activity and entertainment, our time for contemplation and inner-reflection has been stolen away. Now that we are able to move at speed from one place to another, community spirit has faltered. With all the bright lights of today there is little opportunity for that which prospers in peace. Without simplicity we are robbed of our soul life.

4. The Quest Begins

Gandalf also warned that Frodo should prepare to leave the Shire at once. The Dark Lord Sauron had learnt that a hobbit now held the ring and had sent out his nine scouts, the Nazgul, in search of Frodo and his Ring.

Frodo inquired as to what course he should take.

“Towards danger,” advised Gandalf, “but not too rashly, not too straight. If you want my advice, make for Rivendell.”

Although Gandalf could not remain while Frodo made his preparations, the wizard promised to return and serve as an escort to Frodo.

“You ought to go quietly, and you ought to go soon” advised Gandalf. Yet time had passed and still Frodo made no sign of getting ready to begin his journey. Now that the time had come Frodo was reluctant to leave his beloved Shire.

Gandalf had failed to return to escort Frodo on towards Rivendell. Finally Frodo decided he could wait no longer and set off without the wizard as his guide.

How is it that we fail to act when we know we must? The urgency of today's ills are strewn before us but still we lay idle. We continue to put off what cannot wait for tomorrow. What is that holds us back? What great demon stands in our way?

We have all been invited to take up the burden of the One Ring, for there is a Frodo within each of us. Yet there is another part that is reluctant and would rather not be bothered by such an immense task. Often we dismiss

our own responsibility for the Ring and throw it back upon politicians and government officials. Concern without action is not enough.

Dr. Marie Louise von Franz points out that when people try to evade a problem you first have to ask if it is not just laziness. Jung once said that laziness is our greatest passion, even greater than power or sex or anything. How bad does the situation need to get before you are prompted into doing something about it?

Yet our hesitation is understandable. As mentioned, Frodo's quest is not the usual hero's adventure. Most quests begin in search of a treasure. This is the lure that draws the hero out of his home and into the world. Frodo, on the other hand, already has his treasure. He has the precious One Ring, a ring that has now grown dear to him. Frodo's only lure is the loss and destruction of this ring. There is nothing for him to gain personally. In terms of today's world the quest to return the One Ring is to do away with that technology that we have grown so accustomed to. Such a quest can easily appear fruitless. There is nothing to gain except a previous state of simplicity.

This is where Gandalf, representative of our greater vision, is so important. Gandalf explains to Frodo the dangers of keeping the One Ring, making it clear that to relinquish the Ring is really to his advantage. Without the foresight of Gandalf, Frodo would never have contemplated the destruction of the Ring.

Gandalf wears the ring of fire. It was given to him with these words.

"Take this ring for your labours will be heavy, but it will support you in the weariness you have taken upon yourself. For this is the ring of fire, and with it you may rekindle hearts in a world which grows chill."

Gandalf's wisdom lights the way, revealing a possible solution to the trouble that has assailed Middle Earth. He symbolises our intuitive capacity to look beyond our current circumstances and see where we are headed. This capacity to envision an alternate future provides us with the hope and

aspiration which we so desperately need in this darkening age. Without this vision we would probably resign ourselves to some wicked fate.

So where does one begin? Gandalf advised Frodo to head toward danger. For anyone who seeks a solution to our global problems but knows not where to start, herein lies the answer. Head toward danger in whatever form it takes in your own perception. It may be the rainforests that command your attention. It may be the third world or famine. Possibly it is large industry that concerns you most, or the need for a greater awareness amongst our government officials. Everyone must find their own way of penetrating the issue.

Gandalf fails to return as a guide. As such Frodo must make the first, less educated move. There comes a time when one can no longer procrastinate. You have committed to the quest, you are convinced of its necessity but, for some reason, you fail to act. Inspiration fails to strike, you don't know how to begin. The road ahead is a mystery. Even if not sure as to what you should be doing, begin anyway. A clearer understanding may come later.

With Frodo went Merry, Pippin and Sam. Sam, especially, would not leave his master's side. After crossing the stream the Ring party was now outside of Hobbiton. They continued on and were already weary. When they stopped to rest a song came into Frodo's mind. He spoke it aloud.

*The road goes ever on and on
Down from the door where it began.
Now far ahead the road has gone,
And I must follow, if I can,
Pursuing it with weary feet,
Until it joins some larger way
Where many paths and errands meet.
And wether then I cannot say.*

That first night they spent on their own. The next night was more eventful. As the sun set Sam heard a horse coming along the road from behind. Quickly the company hid as a Ring Wraith rounded the

corner. He seemed to be looking for something, sniffing here then there. He drew closer when out of the night came the sound of mingled song and laughter. Immediately the Ring Wraith straightened and retreated. "Elves!" exclaimed Sam.

Soon the elves came upon the hobbits. "Hail Frodo," cried the leader.

The hobbits now had an escort party as the elves were headed in a similar direction. The elves were of great service to Frodo and his companions. They escorted Frodo along their own tracks, steering the hobbits clear of the Ring Wraiths, and speeding them on their journey. Soon the elves delivered the hobbits to the edge of an old forest. There they left the party with food and drink and continued on with their own journey.

It was told that the Ring Wraiths were once great kings who were summoned by Sauron the Great, the now Dark Lord. In an earlier time, Sauron promised the kings great power – giving to each, one of the nine rings to help them rule over their domain. The kings eagerly received these rings and wielded them with great power. In time, however, the balance of power shifted from the king to the ring and the nine rings soon possessed their keepers. Each king had now become a servant of the Dark Lord.

Frodo's song captures the feelings experienced when first setting out on the quest. He feels alone but there is hope of joining with other like-minded individuals. Indeed it was not long before the hobbits came upon the elves. There are others out there.

Frodo's departure from the Shire represents a movement away from the personal and into the collective sphere of social issues and causes. In this larger public realm we encounter not only the forces of destruction but also those efforts and movements which aim to protect our natural world. It may be a bid to save the rainforests from logging, a petition against genetically modified foods, a protest rally against the use of nuclear energy or a community push to prevent over-development.

This is the war between the 'black' and the 'green' – a continuous theme throughout *The Lord of the Rings* and an emerging polarity within our own social system. The Ring Wraiths and the elves are the first expression of this polarity. While the Ring Wraiths hail from Mordor, a poisoned place of scorched earth, the elves live at peace within the heart of the forests.

According to Tolkien the Ring Wraiths were not always evil and destructive. They had only become that way with the seductive and capturing power of the nine lesser rings. A similar history of the entrapping lure of power may be found throughout many of the industries and domains of our own world.

In earlier times we would not have accused the farmer, logger, hunter, builder or medical practitioner of being forces of destruction, but with the aid of new technology their power and impact upon the environment has grown overwhelming and hostile.

Take for example the farmer, who has accepted pesticides, fertilisers and bulldozers to clear the land. These same farmers are now challenged with poisoned or poor quality soil, erosion and the plagues which result from a mono-cultured approach to farming. While modern day farming practices are no longer considered sustainable, the farmer cannot easily return to his old ways. Instead each year he must try yet another additive and pesticide. Our farmers have succumbed to and are now enslaved by a set of technologies that first held the allure of maximised yields.

The logger who was handed the chain saw has now cleared the majority of the world's forests. The greater powers of the hunter now threaten the wildlife of the world. Builders have constructed cities where nature has ceased to exist. And modern pharmacology has begun to disturb our general health with the many drugs now available. These are just some of our Ring Wraiths.

Then we have our elves – those organisations and individuals who fight against the destructive use of our technology. Here we meet the organic farmers and seed savers (who seek to maintain bio-diversity), holistic health

practitioners, alternate energy enthusiasts, ethical investors, non-government organisations, 'green' political parties and those who rally against deforestation.

This black and green polarity may be found throughout such domains as economics and financial management, politics, healthcare, land and resource management, scientific research and development, town planning and the construction industry. The war between black and green is already being fought on several fronts.

Despite their common enemy, Frodo's journey is different to that of the elves - their paths would again cross but Frodo and the elves part company. While the 'green' movement addresses the very real issues before us, the inner dimension also requires our attention. It is this inner journey which is Frodo's destined road.

5. Old Tom Bombadil

In order to avoid the Ring Wraiths, Frodo and his company decided to cut through the Old Forest. The Old Forest was a source of many strange tales. It was said that the trees of the Old Forest would talk to each other, move about and hem in the unwary traveller. Usually the Old Forest was avoided wherever possible but with the Ring Wraiths looking for Frodo on all other roads, cutting through the Old Forest seemed the best option.

Once the hobbits entered the Old Forest they soon discovered that the tales they had heard were true. The paths they chose appeared to shift, and the way forward was not necessarily the way back. Despite their intention to skirt around the edge of the forest, the hobbits now found themselves wandering in circles.

The hobbits had become deeply lost. Eventually they grew tired and stopped to rest under a large tree. That tree was Old Man Willow and as the hobbits slept Old Man Willow began to swallow the hobbits into his roots.

Fortunately for the hobbits, the great Old Tom Bombadil just happened to be out walking in that same part of the forest. Old Tom was collecting flowers for his lady, Goldberry, when he stumbled across the peril of the hobbits. Immediately he spoke stern words to Old Man Willow and the hobbits were released. Seeing that the hobbits were hungry and forlorn Old Tom invited them to dinner and took them back to his home.

Old Tom and Goldberry lived at the very centre of the forest in a small cottage bathed in a golden light. It was in this cottage that the hobbits found rest, dinner and fascinating conversation. Frodo felt

strangely comfortable with Old Tom and after his meal he drew his secret ring out of his pocket so that he might show it to Old Tom. As Frodo handed the One Ring to Tom, he explained the dangers of the ring and the peril of Middle Earth.

Old Tom placed the Ring on his finger and to Frodo's surprise he was not rendered invisible. The Ring appeared to have no effect upon Old Tom. He was neither in awe of it nor worried about the damage it might cause. Frodo then asked Old Tom if he could destroy the Ring on his behalf. But Old Tom could only laugh; he wasn't at all interested and handed the Ring back to Frodo.

The journey into the Old Forest represents the journey into the unknown. Forests are mysterious enchanted places, full of both dangers and untold riches. Forests symbolise that which is uncharted and uncivilised. In psychological terms the Old Forest is the unconscious – that part of our mind not yet penetrated by our conscious awareness.

Typically we will seek to avoid the forests of the unconscious wherever possible for to enter the unconscious is to enter a state of confusion. More often we prefer to travel along well mapped roads where we may maintain a clear sense of purpose and direction. Yet sometimes we come to the end of clarity and have no choice but to enter into this confused state of being.

To be overwhelmed by confusion and lose one's way is the great danger of the unconscious. Here one falls into a psychological slumber and the ability to act in a purposeful and constructive manner is lost.

The Lord of the Rings suggests the way onward requires a passage into this state of confusion. Such a passage opens as one questions and reflects upon the whole mystery of the world crisis. Why has it occurred? What is at the root of the problem? How should it be addressed? For these questions there are no clear answers. The world crisis is a new issue, it is unmapped territory, there is little guidance to be found from previous experience.

To become lost at this point is to lose one's sense of direction and conviction. For many this is the end of the journey – the contemplation of

the world's problems drifts off into a sleep and eternal apathy. One is swallowed into the roots of the unconscious and mystified into inaction. Alternatively the journey on *through* confusion is rewarded with discovery and a renewed sense of clarity. In our story Frodo meets Old Tom Bombadil.

Old Tom and Goldberry live at the heart of the Old Forest. According to the tale of the Ring, Old Tom was the creator of the whole of Middle Earth – he was there at the beginning of time and would be there at the end. Old Tom is Middle Earth's equivalent of God, the Self or whatever one chooses to call this one, central unifying archetype.

Frodo's meeting with Old Tom introduces the religious dimension of the quest to return the Ring. What is interesting is that Old Tom had the capacity to destroy the Ring but showed no interest in doing so. Instead he hands the Ring back to Frodo. At the core of the world crisis one meets the ambivalent face of God.

This ambivalent face of God rarely appears in myth and literature. Other instances of the god-head refusing to assist the hero may be found in Goethe's *Faust*, *The Book of Job* and the story of Christ – where God sacrificed his own son upon the cross. The general theme is for the hero-figure to be abandoned by his god and left to fulfil his quest without assistance. Sometimes the situation is even worse. In both the *Book of Job* and *Faust*, God and Lucifer conspire to test the faith of the hero figure who is then left to his own resources. This world crisis may be one such conspiracy.

Throughout many of the world's creation myths there is a common theme of a lonely god creating the world in image of his own self. To create a world in one's own image is to create a mirror, a tool for self-reflection.

If the world is God's mirror, then we, with our human consciousness, would be its most finely polished facet. Yet we could be even more conscious, offering up an even sharper reflection for our creator.

To ensure that we do not fall into complacency there exists an archetypal force which spurs us on toward greater consciousness. In biblical terms this force is called *Lucifer*, meaning the bringer of the light.

Lucifer's designated role is to cause chaos and disrupt paradise. In the story of Eden there was a tree whose fruit provided one with a knowledge of both good and evil. On the one hand God's instructions to Adam and Eve were specific – do not eat from this tree. On the other his wishes were more ambiguous. In placing the tempting serpent, Lucifer, at the centre of Eden, it was only a matter of time before Adam and Eve ate from the tree of knowledge and were ousted from paradise. If God really did not want Adam and Eve to eat from the tree of knowledge he should have left Lucifer out of the equation. But this was not the case.

The question is, did Adam and Eve bring about their own downfall or was their act of disobedience inevitable? From one perspective it would appear that Adam and Eve were fated to eat from the tree of knowledge (just as every child is destined to lose their innocence). From another perspective, Adam and Eve felt it was they who had wronged and brought God's wrath upon themselves. God did not let on that they had walked into a trap. It seems that the guilt and shame suffered by Adam and Eve is a necessary part God's plan. And it can only be deduced that God wished to see Adam and Eve fail. Paradise was lost but knowledge was gained.

With the world crisis we may ask the same questions. Is this a crisis of our own making or were we in some way fated to reach this point in history? Should we have resisted the temptation of technological power or is there a higher purpose to our loss of innocence? With our ongoing evolution the world crisis was destined to occur at some point in history. And that point just happens to be now.

There are times in the world's history – and our time may be one of them – when good must stand aside, so that anything destined to be better first appears in evil form.⁹

Lucifer is a very dark but necessary part of creation. With unspoken permission he steals into paradise and serves as a catalyst for change. His appearance, together with an ambivalent God, heralds a major shift in consciousness. Today Lucifer wears the face of the world crisis and the light, which he brings, is global consciousness. In our story he is the Dark Lord Sauron. Just as we thought we may have reached a highly civilised state of being, Lucifer has stolen into our paradise and now presents us with the problems of our modern day. Yet this is the challenge which we require to move forward.

No growth comes when we are handed both the riddle and the answer. Welcoming the world crisis as a passage to consciousness allows us to approach it in a deeper and more meaningful way. No longer does the world crisis appear as an unfortunate obstacle that has fallen on our path. Instead the crisis may be viewed as an important stepping stone in our ongoing social evolution.

It is for this reason that Old Tom does not take up the Ring on behalf of Frodo. The burden of the Ring, our world crisis, is divinely appointed and needs to be accepted as such – this troubled time in which we live is a destined chapter in our evolution.

At the beginning of our story Frodo wished that the rise of the Dark Lord had not occurred in his lifetime. In response Gandalf advised that this was not for him to choose and that they best act in response to the challenge before them. Whilst this is the correct attitude it requires no real depth of insight and may thereby lack conviction. In accepting the Ring back from

⁹ Jung, "Development of the Personality" (1934), *The Development of the Personality*, CW 17, par 321.

Old Tom, Frodo takes up the quest with a greater maturity and sense of responsibility.

Soon it was time for the hobbits to be on their way again. Having rested and regained their strength their quest now beckoned for them to leave. On the morning of their departure the air was crisp and clean. The hobbits set off planning to be outside the forest by nightfall. Yet, despite the advice and guidance from Old Tom, the hobbits again fell prey to the trickery of the Old Forest.

This time the hobbits stumbled into the trap of a barrow-wight. The barrow-wight put the hobbits to sleep and adorned them with his vast collection of jewels.

Once again Old Tom rescued the hobbits. After pulling the hobbits out of the barrow-wight's lair he escorted them to the edge of the Old Forest.

The barrow-wight is a demon who hoards his jewels. These jewels are the jewels of insight and understanding. Any journey into the depths of the unconscious will be rewarded with a multitude of these gems. But there is also the danger that the new understanding one has gained may never reach the light of day. If confusion and loss of direction are the dangers of the way into the unconscious, then it is the hoarding of insight that is the danger on the way out. Any newly discovered consciousness must be lived out. It is one thing to be aware and another to act upon that awareness.

6. Towards Rivendell

As soon as the hobbits were clear of the Old Forest they hurried on their journey, hoping to arrive in Bree before nightfall. They planned to spend the night at the Prancing Pony, the leading Inn of Bree and one recommended by Old Tom. The hobbits arrived in Bree well after nightfall and had to be let in by the town's gatekeeper. Once the gate was shut behind them a dark spindly creature with yellow eyes crept over the top of the wall and vanished into the shadows. The hobbits were being followed.

The town of Bree was situated at the cross roads of many old ways. Any travellers who passed this way would normally stay at the Prancing Pony. This made the Prancing Pony a central meeting place for all of the surrounding lands. It was here that Frodo first came upon the dark weatherworn ranger known as Strider. Strider caught Frodo's attention and, with a wave of his hand, invited Frodo over to sit by him.

Strider asked Frodo for a word in private, about a matter which concerned them both. Frodo reluctantly obliged and they organised to meet later in Frodo's room. That evening Strider knocked on Frodo's door and entered. He obviously knew something of the Ring and all but forced himself upon the hobbits.

Strider told Frodo that he must accompany them. He professed to know something of the enemy and warned that, if they wished to make it to Rivendell, he was their only hope.

Frodo was wary and the young Sam did not like Strider at all. Who was this dark and secretive ranger? For all they knew he could be the

enemy. Yet it was true that they were unlikely to make it to Rivendell on their own.

Frodo remained uncertain. At this point Barliman Butterbur, the inn keeper, entered the room with a much belated letter from Gandalf. Barliman was to have sent the letter onto the Shire but had neglected to do so. Only now did Frodo receive Gandalf's letter.

In the letter Gandalf had two things to say. The first was that Frodo should leave the Shire at once! Secondly, Gandalf advised Frodo to look out for an old friend of his, Aragorn. Aragorn was to be recognised by his broken sword. He travelled under the name of Strider!

Now Frodo was no longer suspicious of the hooded ranger. For Strider was Aragorn, the son of king Arathorn, and a leader amongst men. Frodo was glad to have his assistance. Having sorted out all confusion and distrust the hobbits took their rest whilst Aragorn stood guard. Tomorrow they would make for Rivendell.

As a town on the crossroads and a meeting place for travellers, Bree was much busier than the Shire. Frodo, our reluctant hero, had left the private life of the Shire and now entered the wider community. This passage is inevitable. In taking up the challenge of our current world crisis one's point of focus moves away from the personal sphere of life and out into the society in which one lives.

The hobbits were not entirely comfortable amongst this greater activity of Bree and Frodo is wary when he is first approached by the dark hooded ranger, Aragorn. Generally speaking, it is often the more reflective and sensitive individual who is concerned with the issues raised by the world crisis. Be they male or female such individuals tend to have a stronger relationship with the receptive or feminine aspects of their being – shying away from the development of a more directive or masculine set of character traits. The private and personal realm is preferred over public life and activity.

As such, worldly challenges and responsibility are typically avoided, as are positions of power and authority. The individual may be more interested in the arts and healing than in economics and world politics. Whilst more than adept in the ways of the feminine, he or she may not be accustomed to dealing with society at large. In seeking peace and quiet, one often shrinks from the outward challenges and conflict of life. This disinterest in the masculine realm can flow over into a distrust of the masculine.

To compound the problem, this distrust is valid - the masculine desire for power and control does sit at the root of our problems. Frodo's wariness of Aragorn shares in this validity. For Aragorn is the heir of Isildur, a great warrior-king who was seduced by the temptation to power and claimed the One Ring as his own. Had Isildur sacrificed the Ring when he had the chance, Middle Earth would be free of its evil force. The masculine *has* had a long history of claiming and abusing power. Why then should it be trusted now?

With the help of Gandalf's letter Frodo soon discovers that Aragorn is, in fact, a friend and valuable ally. Aragorn is not typical of a masculinity which is estranged from the feminine. He is not hungry for power and though a warrior, he does not abuse his strength. Later in the story we learn that Aragorn is betrothed to Arwen, the elven daughter of Elrond. We also learn that Aragorn has the gift for healing and, unbeknownst to the Hobbits, was a guardian of the Shire. These attributes all point toward a masculine energy which is in positive relationship to the feminine. Aragorn is strong and willful, yet gentle and protective. He embodies all the qualities ascribed to a strong and healthy masculine without being divorced from the sensitivity of the feminine. He is a sacred-warrior who seeks to honour and preserve life.

Aragorn is also a good friend of Gandalf's. In myth and legend the true king would often have a noted figure of wisdom at his side. We see this with King Arthur and Merlin in the grail legend. The two form a pair – the wiseman being responsible for keeping the king in relationship to God and

the king being responsible for the implementation of Gods will on earth. This pairing of king and wiseman represents a balanced psychological state. The individual who has this balance is both inwardly attuned to the demands of the greater Self as well as outwardly focused and active within the world. Such a person has the capacity to actualise the greater potential which exists within us all.

This attunement to the feminine and greater Self is now required of our modern day leaders. We can no longer afford to support strong men or women with little vision and no relationship to the feminine. They may be capable economic managers of our industrial system yet they care little for the earth and soul of life. The issues of the world crisis and the breakdown of our community need to be raised as top priorities. Our past century has witnessed the power of such sacred-warriors as Mahatma Ghandi, Martin-Luther King and Nelson Mandela – all leaders with a strong inner conviction and a vision for a better world. More recently, ecologically sensitive individuals have banded together and formed a number of environmental groups and the political parties. This is a positive development. We would do well to provide these organizations with our continued support. We also need to encourage our own selves to come forward. In a speech given at his inauguration, Nelson Mandela calls for us all to make our presence felt in the world.

Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate, our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure.

It is our light, not our darkness, that frightens us.

We ask ourselves 'Who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented and fabulous?'

Actually, who are you not to be?

You are a child of God, your playing small does not serve the world.

There is nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people will not feel insecure around you.

We were born to manifest the glory of God that is within us.

It is not just in some of us, it is in every one of us.

And as we let our own light shine we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same.

As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others.

In his quest to return the Ring Frodo must overcome his distrust and accept the help of Aragorn. In our story Aragorn plays the role of a warrior, yet he is also a king who is yet to assume his throne. Psychologically speaking, we need to embrace our will and our power. We need to learn to act in the world and battle for what we believe in. The war against those forces which threaten life on Earth cannot be won with insight and high ideals alone.

Prior to his meeting with Aragorn, Frodo had only Gandalf, a figure of wisdom, as his guide. With Aragorn, Frodo embraces an ally who may assist him in a way that Gandalf could not. Whilst Gandalf serves to educate and inspire Frodo, it is Aragorn who helps him to fight. Through harnessing our will and conviction we carry right thought forward into right action. Here is where we begin to make a difference in life.

Early the next morning Aragorn led the Hobbits out of Bree and on towards Rivendell. The Ring Wraiths were sure to be looking for Frodo and his Ring on all of the main roads. It was for this reason that Aragorn led the hobbits off of the roads and onto the hidden tracks. Taking these paths would mean safe but slower progress.

Within a few days the party had reached Weathertop. From there Aragorn spotted three Ring Wraiths who had picked up on their trail. The wraiths were almost upon them. Aragorn and the Hobbits readied themselves for the night and its inevitable conflict. Wood was gathered and a large fire was built. Night fell.

Soon the Ring Wraiths could be felt all around. As they drew near an irresistible urge to wear the Ring grew inside Frodo. He fingered it in his pocket then, so easily, it just slipped on. Immediately Frodo's

vision changed. The wraiths, who were ghosts by day, became hauntingly real whilst his friends disappeared. He was in their world now.

One of the wraiths struck the defenceless Frodo and he fell down wounded. Then, with a last effort, he removed the ring from his finger and reappeared to the world of his friends. There he lay with the Ring clasped tightly in his hand.

Aragorn had only seen Frodo vanish, then a flurry of shadows. Now Frodo lay there with a nasty wound to his shoulder. Beside him was a wicked knife with a thin sliver missing from its tip. The knife vapourised and was gone.

The party pushed on. Every day Frodo grew weaker and weaker. Starting in his shoulder a deadly chill spread out across his body. The Ring Wraiths pulled back and were now waiting. They had delivered Frodo a fatal wound – soon the Ring would be theirs.

Frodo neared his end. The party continued, carrying Frodo on towards Rivendell. As they neared the gates of Rivendell they were met by Glorfindal, an envoy sent out by Elrond. Frodo was placed upon Glorfindal's horse. The Ring Wraiths drew near as they sensed the possibility of Frodo's escape.

The Ring Wraiths charged. Frodo's horse leapt forward and raced for Rivendell. As he entered the stream, at the gates of Rivendell, the wraiths were close behind. Then just as Frodo rode up onto the opposite embankment he turned and cursed the enemy. At that instant a great wall of water came rushing down and washed the Ring Wraiths from their steeds. Frodo passed out and remembered nothing more.

Frodo had begun to fade and was near death. Had he not reached Rivendell in time he would have been beyond all aid. In Rivendell Elrond tended to Frodo's wound. After four nights he found and removed the evil splinter that had worked its way toward Frodo's heart. Soon Frodo returned to consciousness, well set on the way to

recovery. His faith was restored and he now realised how far he had already come.

Frodo must escape the Ring Wraiths who seek to overpower the hobbit, take the Ring and deliver it to their master, the Dark Lord. Aragorn leads the hobbits off of the main roads and onto an alternative set of paths. This 'alternate' way is slowly being mapped out and represents a very real solution to many of our modern day problems. Alternative energy, alternative health practices, alternate modes of transport, housing, farming and economic management all offer a means by which we may live in harmony with nature. From world politics to household consumption, there now exists a significant body of knowledge which addresses the many ways in which we may foster the greater wellbeing of our planet and ourselves.

Escaping the Ring Wraiths means living a holistic lifestyle and remaining true to a new set of ethics. Yet such a radical change in lifestyle can be highly idealistic. The Ring Wraiths willed Frodo to wear the Ring and he soon found himself obeying a command which was not his own. Amidst mainstream society it is enormously difficult, if not impossible, to tread gently upon the earth.

In wearing the Ring Frodo suffered a terrible moral defeat. In his quest to destroy the Ring and place it beyond the grasp of all, Frodo found that he himself had been unable to resist the temptation of the Ring. Frodo is wounded in the shoulder, that part of the body capable of carrying a great load. From there the splinter worked its way in towards his heart and paralysed his body. Frodo neared death.

This is a precarious juncture in the quest to return the Ring. For some it may be the end. In failing to maintain our high ideals we may easily decide that the challenge before us is simply too difficult. We may lose heart and grow skeptical of our previously held aspirations, asking ourselves "what hope is there of changing the ways of the world when I cannot even mend my own ways?"

Yet this attempt and failure is a very necessary, though painful, part of the quest. Previously we were asked to find our strength, now we must discover our weakness. We need to fail. Through failing we are humbled and out of this humility we are drawn into a more honest perception of ourselves. When we live in accordance with a rigidly held set of principles we remain righteous and aloof. From these heights we are unable to acknowledge that which is weak and in need of development within our own being.

Whilst suffered as a defeat, the confrontation with one's own shadow is also an enlightening experience. Frodo's encounter with the Ring Wraiths quickly evolved into a deeper recognition of the enemy. He could now hear their voices where others could not; he could feel their force of will as it conflicted with his own. In failing to live up to our ideals we are introduced to the shadow and the seeds of evil as they exist within our own selves. This is a most important turning point. No longer do we argue with or blame others, as it is ourselves who have become the enemy.

If you imagine someone who is brave enough to withdraw all his projections, then you get an individual who is conscious of a pretty thick shadow. Such a man has saddled himself with new problems and conflicts. He has become a serious problem to himself, as he is now unable to say they do this or they do that, they are wrong, and they must be fought against. He lives in the house of gathering. Such a man knows that whatever is wrong in the world is wrong in himself, and if he only learns to deal with his own shadow he has done something real for the world. He has succeeded in shouldering at least an infinitesimal part of the gigantic, unsolved social problems of our day.¹⁰

¹⁰ Jung, "Psychology and Religion" (1938/1940), *Psychology and Religion: West and East*, CW 11, par 140.

In accepting responsibility we empower our own position, for we are no longer the victim of influences external to ourselves and beyond our control. To a greater or lesser degree we all contribute to the world crisis. What matters most is our response to the recognition of this fact. What saved Frodo from certain defeat was his ability to recognise the error of his ways and remove the Ring.

In Rivendell, Elrond found and removed the evil splinter that had worked its way into Frodo's heart. To 'take it to heart' is to take it personally. The wound Frodo suffers is the wound of shame. Shame paralyses our being and prevents us from acting and speaking out. We may feel unable to preach a new morality when we are unable to live these principles ourselves. In our shame we say and do nothing.

Like Gandalf, Elrond is the keeper of one of the three great elven rings. Whilst Gandalf wears Narya, the ring of fire, Elrond wields Vilya, the ring of air. Where fire relates to the capacity for intuitive understanding, air is allied with the capacity to think and reason. Air is the most impersonal of the four elements, air allows us to stand back and assess a situation objectively.

When we look at the scope of the world crisis objectively it is immediately obvious our problems will not be solved without sustained effort. Idealism, which is predisposed to failure, needs to mature into a more rational appreciation of the challenge before us. Through an objective assessment of world crisis a long term strategy may be devised. In the story this is the purpose of the Council of Elrond.

7. The Council of Elrond

As soon as Frodo was ready a council gathered for the Meeting of Elrond. Representatives from all over Middle Earth had come together to share their concerns and speak their piece. They had gathered to devise a strategy to beat down the Dark Lord.

The history of the Ring was told and various suggestions were made as to how the One Ring should be kept from the Dark Lord. Erestor proposed handing the ring to Old Tom. Glorfindal suggested sending it to another land or tossing it into the depths sea. Borimor argued that the Ring might be used to defeat the Dark Lord. In the end it was agreed that the One Ring must be destroyed. It was to be taken to the very heart of Mordor and thrown back into the cracks of Mount Doom. There it was forged and only there could it be unmade.

Yet who would take the Ring on this most perilous journey? At the Council of Elrond there were many battle hardened warriors but none stepped forward to bear the burden of the Ring.

For a moment Frodo thought that he might have completed his part in the quest to put back the Ring but now he realised that his journey was to continue. A great dread fell upon him. Then at last and with some effort he spoke.

"I will take the Ring," he said, "though I do not know the way."

Elrond raised his eyes and looked keenly at Frodo. "If I understand aright all that I have heard," he said, "then I think that this task is appointed for you, Frodo; and that if you do not find a way, no one will. This is the hour of the Shire-folk, when they arise from their quiet fields to shake the towers of the great."

“But it is a heavy burden,” added Elrond. “So heavy that none could lay it on another. I do not lay it on you. But if you take it freely, I will say your choice is right.”

The world crisis has the capacity to bring together all the nations and warring factions of the world. In 1992 more than 150 nations came together to sign the *United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change* (UNFCCC) at *The Earth Summit* in Rio. In 1997 they met again in Kyoto, Japan. There have been many of these councils, meetings and gatherings which have united people under a common banner. The world crisis threatens equally the west and the east, the developed and undeveloped, capitalist and communist. The nations of the world now face a common enemy – which is ourselves.

As to what action is required there has been much debate. At the Council of Elrond a number of options are presented. These proposed solutions are worth reflecting upon as they mirror our own way of thinking.

The first suggestion was to hand the One Ring to Old Tom Bombadil. Old Tom could keep the Ring from the Dark Lord. Gandalf rejected this suggestion, stating that Old Tom is not concerned by the Ring and would be a most careless custodian.

To hand the ring to Old Tom, the creator of Middle Earth, is akin to leaving our fate to the gods. This is the idea of letting the world crisis resolve itself. Do nothing and hope for the best! This is a completely irresponsible, yet popular, solution to the world crisis.

The next suggestion was to send the Ring to another land. Again this mirrors our desire to disown responsibility for the world crisis. Since the Kyoto summit the nations of the world have been arguing who is more or less responsible for the world crisis. The developed nations ask the undeveloped nations to stop clearing their forests. The undeveloped nations point to the west to curb their industry. The over-populated look for a solution from the under-populated and vice versa. Elrond notes that the One Ring belongs to Middle Earth and that Middle Earth must resolve

its own issues. We cannot hope that another nation or group will relieve us of our burden.

To throw the Ring into the sea is discredited as an option as, eventually, it would again be found. This is the suggestion of leaving the world crisis to be resolved by future generations. This solution is favoured by the nuclear physicists who currently know of no way to deal with the radioactive by-product of nuclear power plants. This 'yellow cake' is stored away in concrete silos and left for future generations. Again this solution absolves ourselves of immediate responsibility, yet is this the fate we wish to leave to our children?

Borimor's suggestion to use the Ring to defeat the Dark Lord was quickly dismissed. Holding onto the Ring of Power would simply set up another Dark Lord in place of Sauron. Borimor is an honourable warrior but his suggestion highlights his lack of understanding of the evil force at work within the Ring. Holding onto our power over nature is the mistake that we have already made. To continue down this path is to refuse to acknowledge the destructive force which resides in our technology.

In the end, and as Gandalf had previously advised, the only real solution was to return the Ring to the cracks of Mount Doom. We are to assume full responsibility for the world crisis. We need a complete and lasting solution that will ensure the safety of ourselves and future generations. We must sacrifice our unwholesome power over nature.

The next question to arise was who should undertake this task. And it was at this point that Frodo stepped forward.

Why is it that a simple hobbit must bear the full burden of the One Ring? Why not Gandalf or Aragorn or someone else of greater stature? It seems that Frodo is destined to bear the burden of the ring. But why a hobbit?

Typically the hero figure of a myth or fairytale is in some way special. Often he is a direct descendant of a god, of royal blood or in possession of magical powers. Frodo is none of these. As the ordinary hobbit he is akin to the

mere mortal. That is you and I. No longer can we look outside of ourselves to some great hero or political figure. No longer can we reach out to some Christ-like saviour – instead we are to become that hero and saviour. There is no greater “other” who may relieve us of our responsibility. Our fate now rests with ourselves.

This newfound responsibility, which has been assigned to the ordinary individual, is in keeping with our ongoing spiritual evolution. Just as man aspires toward God, God seeks man. We see this attraction between God and man in the developments of our mythology throughout the ages. In early mythology the gods were of an elemental or animal form. The first gods were the sun, the wind, the sky, earth and sea. Later the gods took on an animal form. Here we meet the serpent of healing, the trickster coyote, the great mother bear and many of the signs of the zodiac. In Egyptian mythology the gods were depicted as half human and half animal. In Greek myth the gods became fully human whilst their previous animal form became their mascot or alternate state of being. The eagle remained sacred to Zeus, for example.

The most interesting transition to be found within the history of myth is the increasing degree of interaction between God and man. In Greek myth the gods took a sexual interest in man and thereby created a race of heroes and other semi-divine beings. Zeus fathered such heroic figures as Perseus, Theseus and Hercules. Next came the birth of the fully-divine being. The holy spirit came down from heaven and impregnated the blessed Virgin Mary. God became man in the form of Jesus Christ.

Yet Christ was special, he was born free of original sin. The subsequent stage in the ongoing incarnation of God would be for God to become ordinary man, that is, to manifest within all of us. This incarnation of God within each of us is prefigured by Christ. After the death of Christ, the divine incarnation was quickly followed by the descent of the Holy Spirit – where God took residence within us all.

The descent of the Holy Spirit is a metaphysical fact that is only now being consciously acknowledged. With Jung's psychology the Holy Spirit has been rediscovered as the archetype of the Self – the central organising principle at work within the core of the psyche. No longer do we view the gods as living on top Mount Olympus, instead they have been revealed as active forces alive within the unconscious mind. As Edward Edinger says "God has fallen out of containment in religion and into the unconscious of man, i.e., he is incarnating. Our unconscious is in an uproar with the God who wants to know and be known."¹¹

Ordinary man is the new focus for the ongoing incarnation of God. In our story the ordinary man is symbolised by the simple hobbit Frodo. Just as Frodo must bear the burden of the Ring, our current age, with its discovery of the Self and the conscious realisation of the God within, has placed new demands upon the individual.

Our problem is that the God, who has chosen to incarnate and become human, is not simply the benevolent father God of Christianity, but the whole of God, both light and dark, good and evil. In *Answer to Job*, Jung's exploration of the dark and amoral face of God, Jung points out that "God in his oppositeness has taken possession of man"¹² and that man, "has become a vessel filled with divine conflict." Jung continues:

“...God is not only to be loved, but also to be feared. He fills us with evil as well as with good...and because he wants to become man, the uniting of his antimony must take place in man. This involves man in a new responsibility. He can no longer wriggle out of it on the plea of his littleness and nothingness, for the dark God has slipped the atom bomb and chemical weapons into his hands and given him the power to empty out the apocalyptic vials of wrath on his fellow

¹¹ Edinger, *The Creation of Consciousness*

¹² Jung, *Answer to Job*, CW 11, par 659

creatures. Since he has been granted an almost godlike power, he can no longer remain blind and unconscious.”¹³

To contain these opposites, to be a safe ‘vessel’ for the incarnation of God, we must raise ourselves to a new level of consciousness and morality. And to achieve this moral capacity the individual must recognise and suffer the opposites of good and evil as they exist within himself. Just as Christ died for our salvation now “we *all* have to be ‘crucified with Christ,’ i.e., suspended in a moral suffering equivalent to a veritable crucifixion”¹⁴. The world crisis is our modern day crucifix. It is the moral challenge designed to take our spiritual evolution through into a new era.

Previously the burden of the One Ring had been put upon Frodo. To no avail he had wished that Gandalf or Old Tom might have relieved him of the Ring. Just as Christ willingly took up the cross, Frodo now steps forward and accepts the Ring as his own responsibility. This voluntary acceptance of the burden of the Ring is symbolic of the individual’s decision to take up the moral challenge posed by the world crisis.

Jung felt that free will is the ability to do gladly that which one must do anyway. Clearly we have little option but to address the demands of the world crisis, which may easily be viewed as the fate and misfortune of our times. Yet in consciously accepting responsibility for the world crisis, it is no longer thrust upon us. With a shift in attitude the world crisis may be viewed, not as an unwelcome burden, but as the spiritual challenge of our times.

Returning the Ring is the next step in the evolution of consciousness. As we consciously suffer, and address, the issues raised by the world crisis we will raise ourselves into a new level of morality. In our suffering we clear a safe passage for the ongoing incarnation of God. Of this, Jung writes:

¹³ Jung, Answer to Job, CW par 747

¹⁴ Jung, Psychology and Alchemy, CW 12 par 24

Although the divine incarnation is a cosmic and absolute event, it only manifests empirically in those relatively few individuals capable of enough consciousness to make ethical decisions, i.e., to decide for the Good.

Elrond notes that the ethical decision to take up the challenge of the Ring can only be made for and by oneself. It is not something we can ask of another, be they our friend or neighbour. We can only live in accordance with our own conscience and hope that others live in accordance with theirs. But, as Elrond adds, “If you take it freely, I will say your choice is right.”

So it was decided that Frodo must continue on with the quest. He would not, however, be travelling alone. At the meeting of Elrond the Ring party was formed anew.

Gandalf stepped forward to act as a guide for Frodo. Aragorn offered his vast knowledge of Middle Earth. The warrior Borimor offered his service, as did Gimli, the dwarf, and Legolas, the elf. Merry and Pippin also remained with the ring party, as did Sam who, in no way, would be parted from his master Frodo.

With the ring party formed and no further doubt in his mind, Frodo was ready to set out on his journey toward the cracks of Mount Doom.

8. The Ring Party Sets Out

With Gandalf at the helm the ring party set out from Rivendell. They headed south towards Caradhras where they hoped to find a passage which would take them to the other side of the Misty Mountains.

In a few days the snow capped peaks of Caradhras rose up before them. Aragorn and Gandalf had been in long debate as to whether they should go over the mountain or down through the Mines of Moria. Finally, it was decided that they would go over the mountain. Facing the harsh weather of the mountain peak seemed the better option of two evils.

As the party climbed Caradhras they could feel themselves being watched. They climbed on but before long a blizzard was upon them.

Gandalf halted. "This is what I feared."

The blizzard made their passage forward impossible. It was surely the work of the enemy for it seldom snowed so fiercely at this point on the mountain. When the party stopped so did the storm. As soon as they took up again the snow returned with fresh fury. The party turned back. The blizzard was designed specifically for them and would not let them through.

The journey up the mountain is the spiritual journey. As we rise up we gain a more comprehensive perspective on life. In freeing ourselves from the entanglement of our problems we may view our situation with a greater objectivity. The mountaintop is also a chilly and remote place, devoid of any real connection to life.

This passage up the mountain is barred and presents no way forward for the ring party. This would suggest that the upward, spiritual approach to

our worldly problems will be of little service. Philosophical debate and other worldly aspirations do not offer a cure for today's ills. In fact they may be a distraction from the real issue.

The desire to transcend the earth is a primary defining theme of our Christian culture. This psychological attitude lives on in current new age thought as well as western uptake of eastern philosophy. As a result, we now sit too high. In seeking the divine we have removed ourselves from the earth.

In the past our spiritual aspirations served to free us from the bounds of nature and our instinctual being. Now they have taken us to the point where we have lost touch with nature. In our preference for the heavens over the earth western culture has forgotten the importance and divinity of the earth itself.

We are now called upon to embrace the earth, not rise above it. Here we may need to rediscover our pagan heritage or take guidance from the indigenous cultures of this world, where the earth is held as sacred. There is no transcendent solution to our global problems. The spiritual path, over the mountain, is barred by the need to face reality. Any disregard for this reality simply compounds the problem. The Ring party must come down off the mountain heights and enter the world of matter.

The only option now left for the ring party was to go down under the mountain. At the foot of the mountain stood a secret doorway which opened to a passage down through the Mines of Moria. Aragorn feared this passage chiefly because it might prove treacherous for Gandalf.

Gandalf opened the secret door and led the party down into the mines. As they descended the dark paths were lit only by the light of Gandalf's staff. At first the party continued on undetected but slowly something awoke to their presence. They journeyed on.

After a few days of what seemed eternal night the party found themselves in a huge underground hall. It was here that they

discovered that they were not alone. From one of the tunnels leading into the hall a faint rumble could be heard. It grew louder. Aragorn and Borimor rushed to jam the door but the door would not hold. A battalion of orcs were upon them, yet they fought so fiercely the orcs turned and ran.

Soon the orcs returned with even greater force. The party looked for a means of escape and ran for the eastern passage. Gandalf ordered them to go down, taking every turn to the right, while he alone remained to face the black marauders. With a series of incantations Gandalf barred the passage then caught up with the rest of the party.

Deeper and deeper they descended until they came to a narrow stone bridge. At the end of another passage, on the other side of the chasm, there grouped yet another hoard of orcs. Arrows fell like rain, dropping just short of the party.

Gandalf ordered the ring party across the bridge. They had escaped the orcs. Yet in these even greater depths of the Mines they met an even more formidable foe.

It sprang up from behind them, out of the flaming abyss. "What it was could not be seen: it was like a great shadow, in the middle of which was a dark form, of man-shape maybe, yet greater; and a power and terror seemed to be in it and go before it."

It came to the edge and leapt across the fissure. Its black wings spread from wall to wall, as the flames roared up to greet it. In its right hand was a blade like a stabbing tongue of fire; in its left hand, it held a whip of many thongs. Black smoke and blood red fire streamed from its nostrils.

"A Balrog" muttered Gandalf. "Now I understand". He faltered and leaned heavily on his staff. "What an evil fortune! And I am already weary."

The dark figure paced towards as he stood at the middle of the bridge. The Balrog drew near.

“You cannot pass,” said Gandalf. Even the orcs stood still as a dead silence fell. “Go back to the shadows. You cannot pass.” The Balrog made no answer. It stepped forward slowly onto the bridge and drew itself up to a great height. Yet Gandalf stood firm, gray and bent, like a wizened tree before the onset of a storm.

“You cannot pass”, he repeated. And with a bound the Balrog leapt full upon the stony span.

At that moment Gandalf lifted his staff and, crying aloud, he smote the bridge before him. His staff broke and the bridge cracked right at the feet of the Balrog. With a wail it fell forward and vanished into the darkness. As the Balrog fell, its whip lashed out and curled about the wizards knees dragging him to the brink. “Fly you fools!” he cried, and was gone. The passage under the mountain had proved perilous for Gandalf.

Now that Gandalf had been lost, Aragorn stepped forward to assume the leadership of the party.

The Ring party’s descent from the mountain reflects the need to return to the temporal world we live in. Here is where we may confront reality of the world crisis, that is, as it exists in life. In entering the Mines of Moria we continue our descent down into the darkness of our western culture.

The Mines of Moria is the underworld, a place where no light shines. In myth and fairytale the underworld is typically populated by various monsters and demons. In the Christian myth it is the abode of the devil. The underworld harbours all that has remained undeveloped and unconscious. In entering the underworld we begin to explore what Jung termed the shadow, that part of our being that lies beneath our conscious awareness. The underworld is also a place of death and rebirth. A successful passage through the underworld generally results in a renewed and deeper sense of self.

It is in the Mines of Moria that the Ring party must first battle with the orcs. Throughout the story of the Lord of the Rings, Tolkien provides a few

insights into the personality of the orcs. In the story we find the orcs arguing amongst themselves, fighting over possessions, complaining of their lot in life and running out of fear and cowardice. At one point the orcs are described as being of similar origin to hobbits! Whilst orcs seek only to do that which is best for themselves, en masse they blindly serve the wishes of the Dark Lord.

The orcs represent yet another aspect of our own makeup. As we scramble about our everyday lives we knowingly commit numerous sins against the wellbeing of our planet. But we are not concerned - one more car on the road seems not to be too much of a problem. Orcs mirror this small-minded, self-serving attitude. In the quest to return the Ring one inevitably confronts this blind self-centredness within oneself and in the community.

The greater problem is the fact that the personal shadow pools together and forms the collective shadow. Here we meet the Balrog. The haze over a modern city is produced by millions of these 'one more' vehicles. Similarly, while we may enjoy reading the weekend newspaper, our collective consumption of paper products fells great forests. Were one to be held personally responsible for some great trauma being inflicted upon the planet, one would quickly mend one's ways. When we see ourselves as only a small part of the problem we are less inclined to do so. It is in this way that the personal shadow is quickly magnified into the monstrous proportions of the collective shadow. Even the orcs stand still in fear of the Balrog.

It is a frightening thought that man also has a shadow-side to him, consisting not just of little weakness and foibles, but of a positively demonic dynamism. The individual seldom knows anything of this; to him, as an individual, it is incredible that he should ever in any circumstances go beyond himself. But let these harmless creatures form a mass, and there emerges a raging monster; and each individual is only one tiny cell in the monster's body, so that for better or worse he must

accompany it on its bloody rampages and even assist it to the utmost.¹⁵

Gandalf meets his natural enemy in the form of the Balrog. Whilst Gandalf highlights our greater vision, the Balrog is that lowest common denominator which refuses to be transformed. We have been warned about the impending world crisis but still this warning goes largely unheeded. Sometimes the wiseman may guide the flock, at others times he is trampled by the herd.

Gandalf's defeat opens the way for Aragorn. This change in leadership for the Ring party marks another important progression in the quest to return the Ring. With Gandalf at the helm one is motivated by a clear vision and sense of purpose. Yet, at some stage, this vision fails in that it proves to be insufficient. It is at this point that a new driving force must take over.

Unlike the wizard, Aragorn is a leader of men – as the son of King Arathorn he is destined to be king. As a king he is in a position to command whilst the wiseman may only advise. Although wisemen may offer much in the way of guidance it is the kings and leaders who implement their ideas and carry consciousness through into action. We have now heard from a number of leading ecologists and social visionaries. As individuals we may have developed a keen interest in the world crisis and its proposed solutions. The loss of Gandalf, however, marks the end of this visionary approach to the world crisis and a subsequent call to action.

¹⁵ Jung, "On the Psychology of the Unconscious", 1943 Two Essays on Analytical Psychology, CW 7 par 35.

9. Lothlorien

Aragorn led the party on towards Lorien, the great elven forest. At its borders they were greeted by two elves who were aware of the ring party and were expecting them. The elves provided the party with a meal and a bed, high up in the trees. The fellowship of the ring soon fell asleep whilst the elves kept guard.

That night a great hoard of orcs followed the party's trail but the elves led them astray. Later still another creature, on its own, came looking for Frodo and his ring. Since the elves were unsure as to whether this yellow eyed creature was for good or ill they did not shoot as it scampered away.

The next day the party was escorted to the very heart of Lorien. There they met with Lord Celeborn and Lady Galahdrial, the king and queen of the elves. In Lothlorien the ring party found peace and rest for the first time since leaving Rivendell. Everything was provided for and the party reflected upon all that they had come through, taking the time to mourn the loss of Gandalf. Strangely the ring did not feel so heavy to Frodo now that he was in Lorien. Somehow it worried him less.

Whilst in Lothlorien Galahdrial tested each of the members of the ring party. She looked deep into their eyes and inner thoughts. Only Aragorn and Legolas did not look away.

Later Galahdrial invited Frodo and Sam to look into her magical mirror, a bowl filled with stream water, capable of revealing deeper truths that would both inspire and alarm the viewer.

Soon it was time for the party to continue on their way again. Lorien was so beautiful that it proved difficult to leave. As the party prepared to set out they were showered with gifts. Each was given a

new garment, cool yet warm, light but strong, cut from the finest material. Aragorn was given a magical sheath for his sword, Legolias a new bow with arrows. Sam received some of the earth of Lorien to take back to the Shire. For Frodo, Galahdrial brought out a small vial full of bright star light. Such a wonderful gift would only prove useful in the times to come.

Lothlorien is a magical place, a city amongst the trees where civilisation and nature are married in perfect harmony. These are the opposites we have yet to reconcile within our own world. In our own culture civilisation is a place far removed from the natural world. Only in a forest retreat or quiet country town do we find anything that approximates the peace and tranquility of Tolkien's Lothlorien.

Lothlorien is that sanctuary where one may rest in the arms of nature yet still remain within the bounds of the civilised world. In this sanctuary the pace of life is slowed and an emphasis is placed upon allowing rather than striving. Lothlorien is a place of soul growth where we may simply be.

For the city dweller an experience of Lothlorien may come through immersing oneself in the bosom of nature. Camping out under the stars, trekking through the wilderness, a country holiday or walk in the park all serve to quiet the mind. Alternatively Lothlorien may be experienced through a meditative or inwardly reflective spiritual practice.

Lothlorien is a place where we may free ourselves of distraction and lay down the burden of our worldly purpose. Within this stillness a deeper self stirs and comes alive. In taking the time to reflect we arrive at a more balanced and truthful centre within ourselves. And from this centre we are able to question and review the importance of our worldly aspirations and patterns of living. Sometimes we like what we see, more often it is a challenge to our conscience.

A common realisation is how caught one has become in a world that is spinning out of control. We may discover that somehow our lives have been corrupted and taken down an unnatural course. Upon deeper introspection

we realise that it is a gentler, more quiet, set of values which have been missing from our life.

With Lothlorien *The Lord of the Rings* introduces us to the possibility of living in harmony with nature. Yet Lothlorien is not so much a place but a state of being. For Lorien was created out of the magic emanating from Galahdrial, Queen of the Elves.

At the heart of Lothlorien we discover the exquisite figure of Galahdrial; she is described as being bathed in a soft light. Like Gandalf and Elrond, Galahdrial is the bearer of one of the three great elven rings.¹⁶ She wears *Nenya*, the ring of water.

Galahdrial is the first of the powerful feminine figures that we meet in our story. Unlike the masculine desire to achieve and dominate, which has made an enemy of nature, Galahdrial reflects that state of mind which accepts and appreciates the simplicity of life. She is the guardian of the soul. From her perspective, life and the natural world are to be honoured, not conquered. Galahdrial teaches us not to force, but to allow life to unfold. She teaches us how to be at peace with ourselves and the natural world.

¹⁶ The three elven rings of fire, air and water find their fourth in the One Ring of Sauron. The One Ring is made from deep within the earth. It is, however, more powerful than the three elven rings and as such represents a state of psychological imbalance. The elements of fire, air, water and earth relate to Jung's four psychological types. Fire is the intuition which allows us to see the greater potential of all things, air is our thinking function and capacity for reason, water relates to the feeling function and provides us with our sensitivity and capacity for subjective judgement. Earth is the sensate function, that is, the ability to be and do in the world. The One Ring of earth overpowers the rings of fire, air and water. This suggests that our worldly capacity is too strong and out of balance with the remainder of our psychological capacities. It is for this reason that the One Ring must be sacrificed.

During their stay in Lothlorien the Ring party prepares for the more arduous times ahead. Despite being a point of rest in our story this encounter with Galahdrial is an extremely important passage in the quest to return the Ring. As the guardian of the soul life, Galahdrial teaches that there is more to life than outward conquest and achievement. The inner life of the soul has the capacity to fill the gulf created as we sacrifice worldly ambition and looks toward a new mode of being.

It is for this reason that the One Ring does not feel so heavy to Frodo during his stay in Lothlorian. As any artist or hermit will attest, the richness of a well-fostered inner-life allows us to accept and even welcome a slower paced outer-life. If we are happy to walk then there is no need to drive. In taking the time to prepare one's own meals, there's no need to buy it in a packet. The more we open to nature's rhythms the less we seek to free ourselves from her limitations. In the presence of Galahdrial throwing back the One Ring does not seem such a great sacrifice.

Whilst the Ring party would have liked to remain in Lothlorien their quest called them onward. We cannot remain in a state of retreat from life when there is still much work to be done.

10. The Breaking of the Fellowship

For ten days the party journeyed down the river. They were not without company. At one point Sam thought he saw a log with eyes, floating down along with the boats. He voiced his concern to Frodo, who was not surprised. He too had seen those same eyes way back in the elven forest. Aragorn confirmed their suspicions. Gollum had been following them from as far back as Bree, perhaps further.

The enemy was never far off. The Ring Wraiths had taken to the skies and were again searching for Frodo. On the eighth day the party escaped an ambush of orcs, who had hidden themselves along one side of the river. A watch was placed at night.

Now the time came when Aragorn could no longer lead the party. Should they go west with Borimor and fight in the wars of Gondor? Should they turn towards the east to face the fear and the shadow? Or should the fellowship break so that each may go this way and that as each may choose?

"Well Frodo," said Aragorn. "I fear that the burden is laid upon you. You are the bearer appointed by the council. Your own way you alone can choose."

Frodo did not answer at once. He needed time to think and walked off to be alone.

Borimor followed Frodo and asked Frodo to reconsider the need to destroy the Ring. Borimor longed for the Ring and as he continued a madness filled his eyes. He asked Frodo to hand him the Ring so that he might use it in the war against the enemy. When Frodo refused to part with the Ring Borimor grew furious and attempted to take the

Ring by force. By slipping the Ring on his finger Frodo was rendered invisible and escaped Borimor's attack.

Frodo was now certain of what he needed to do. The Ring was far too dangerous to be held onto. He had no choice but to embark upon his sole journey into the black heart of Mordor. There he would throw back the Ring and free Middle Earth of its evil.

Frodo decided to sneak away lest the others try to follow. Their purpose lay elsewhere. By leaving without saying farewell, Frodo would give the others no choice but to continue on in their own direction.

While Frodo prepared to leave, the rest of the party had begun to worry about him. A hoard of orcs attacked. Borimor fought valiantly but was overcome. When Aragorn reached him, Borimor, with his last breath, explained what had happened and how sorry he was. He recognised that he had become overpowered by the temptation of the Ring.

In their search for Frodo only Sam read his master's mind correctly, turning and running back to the boats. There Sam found Frodo slinking off in one of the canoes. Jumping into the water, Sam caught the tail of the boat and Frodo pulled him aboard. In no way would Sam leave the side of his master.

The warrior Borimor stands in contrast to Aragorn. Aragorn would not take nor accept the Ring. Yet, with honour and good intention, Borimor would hold onto the Ring and use its power. Borimor's desire for the Ring ran more deeply than he himself was aware of. When Borimor approached Frodo and asked for the Ring this madness was revealed. Only later, once it was too late, did he realise his error.

Borimor is another masculine energy at work within the drama of the world crisis. His is the attitude which feels that, with sufficient integrity, we may safely hold onto our technological power and worldly ambitions. This attitude fails to recognise that we already have more power and control than we are capable of managing in an ethical manner. Our ethical

capacity, to act as the safe custodians of power, is already far outstripped by the power which we currently have at our disposal. For proof of this we need only look at the escalated state of the world crisis.

Borimor can be seen in that aspect of ourselves which seeks to do good, but remains captured by the temptation of worldly progress. We are caught by Borimor's madness whenever we seek an even greater degree of control over life – despite the intention of putting this power to good use. What is required is less of this ambition and masculine drive. We need to honour the slower rhythm of nature. We cannot force nature. We need to stop, slow down and relinquish power.

All too often, upon review of our life goals and ambitions, we find them sorely lacking in any real depth. In our progress we have left so much behind. Our sense of community, time for our children and our inner life have all been lost amidst the fast pace of our modern world. Borimor is this blind ambition. He is that ambition which has no soul at its heart. These are the ambitions of the individual, companies and countries that are cut off from the deeper Self. There is no inner consultation as to what is truly worthwhile.

When Frodo recognises this madness and temptation to power in even the honourable Borimor, he is convinced that the only way forward is to see to the destruction of the Ring. The individual who is able to recognise blind ambition within himself, is ready to turn and serve the deeper purpose of the whole of life.

Frodo had to begin his sole journey. He could not wait any longer. Aragorn and the others were needed to fight the more worldly battle against Mordor. So begins the inner dimension of the quest. One turns to face the Dark Lord within, that great western shadow at the root of our troubles.

Typically we see the shadow as it is projected out onto other people, groups and cultures. Unfortunately battling the shadow outwardly does little to loosen the grip it holds upon us inwardly. It has been told that when

Jung was asked about whether or not we would survive our times he replied that we would, so long as enough people did their own inner work.

This inner work begins with this honest examination of ones own self. It is no longer a matter of attending rallies, signing petitions or voting for the Greens. At some point one stops and asks oneself, "What have I *really* achieved?" You may question whether you have actually made any real and functional changes within your own life. Like Middle Earth's dependence on Frodo, the fate of the world rests with the individual. If we cannot change ourselves, then we cannot change the world around us.

11. The Way to Mordor

It had been three days since Frodo and Sam split from the rest of the party and already they grew despondent.

"Well master, we're in a fix and no mistake," said Sam. There was no easy path for the hobbits to follow. They found themselves scaling barren slopes only to retrace their steps. Sometimes they would trek for hours only to discover that they had come a full circle. There was need of haste. Their slow progress would only profit the enemy.

As night fell on the third day, Frodo spotted some strange creature crawling down the cliff towards them. As it neared the bottom of the sheer cliff wall it slipped and fell. Sam sprang upon it in an instant.

It was Gollum. He had been trailing the hobbits, now he was their captive.

Gollum was drawn not by Frodo but by the ring which he carried. A long time ago Gollum was also a hobbit. His name then was Smeagol. As Smeagol he came upon the ring and wore it freely. Soon Smeagol was completely possessed by the One Ring. This was how Smeagol became the twisted and tormented creature now known as Gollum.

Bilbo stole the ring from Gollum and passed it on to Frodo. But Gollum sorely missed the Ring and was still drawn by its magnetic pull. Gollum could not stand light of any kind. He moved about only in the dark, where neither the sun nor the moon could shine upon him.

Yet Gollum had a secret value – he knew the way in and out of Mordor. Previously he had been captured by the Dark Lord but had now escaped and come looking for the One Ring. Gollum would be Frodo's guide into the dark heart of Mordor.

"Yesss, yes indeed," said Gollum sitting up. "Nice hobbits! We will come with them. Find them safe paths in the dark, yes we will."

To return the Ring to the cracks of doom Frodo must first enter the land of Mordor. Mordor is the kingdom of the Dark Lord, a barren and treeless place where life struggled and failed. The land of Mordor is a picture of our own industrialised world and the social system we have established over the past two hundred years. The blackened Mordor stands in stark contrast to the greenery of the Shire and the elven cities of Rivendell and Lothlorien. It is a world where nature has been downtrodden, raped and abused. Frodo's journey toward Mordor reflects the struggle to bring a new consciousness into the barren culture in which we live.

For Frodo there is no clear path to follow. There is no path just as there is no established moral code which may guide us. If we wish to live an ecologically conscious lifestyle then we are to pioneer a new way. In these early days, an ecological code of ethics is yet to be formulated let alone enforced. This lack of a moral code is common to the beginning of a new era.

In the pre-Christian era the Ten Commandments of the Old Testament were offered as a new moral code by which one should live. The Ten Commandments dictated such rules as one should not steal, kill, lie or commit adultery. For many centuries these Ten Commandments served well but there came a point where Mosaic Law failed to remain a suitable moral challenge for the prevailing culture. It was in the *Book of Job* that Mosaic Law first showed its age and impotence.

The Book of Job tells the story of God's most faithful servant, Job. Job was an outstanding citizen and could not be faulted. As God looked proudly upon Job, Satan raised the question as to whether Job obeyed God's laws out of fear and respect or out of his love for God. With God's permission, Job was to be put to the test. Satan wreaked the greatest havoc upon Job's life, stopping short of taking his life. His stocks were destroyed, his children

were killed and Job was cursed with foul disease. Ultimately there was nothing left for Job to fear from God. Yet still Job remained true.

Jung felt that Job's greater moral stand cleared the way and inspired the birth of Christ. Christ brought with him a new moral code. Where Mosaic Law outlined what one should not do ("Thou shalt not...") the teachings of Christ asked that we act out of a love of God, our neighbour and the whole of creation. Edinger points out that where "Mosaic Law recognized only the reality of deeds, Jesus recognized the reality of inner psychic states."¹⁷ Edinger quotes the following two extracts from the New Testament.

You have heard that it was said to men of old, "You shall not kill; and whoever kills shall be liable to judgement." But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be liable to judgment....¹⁸

And:

You have heard that it was said, "You shall not commit adultery." But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.¹⁹

The New Testament brought forth a new morality, not to replace that of the Old Testament, but to enhance and supersede it. And for the past two thousand years these teachings of Christianity have served us well. We are now a more humane society now than we were previously. Yet, as we enter a new era, the moral challenge posed by Christ's teachings has also grown old and insufficient. The German philosopher, Frederick Nietzsche, was amongst the first to recognise this need for a new morality. In his *Thus spoke Zarathustra*, Nietzsche wrote:

¹⁷ Edinger, *Ego and Archetype*.

¹⁸ Mathew 5:21-22

¹⁹ Ibid. 5:27-28

Once the sin against God was the greatest sin; but God died and these sinners died with him. To sin against the earth is now the most dreadful thing.

Just as Mosaic Law offered little or no challenge for Job, the New Testament fails to serve us to the same extent as it did two thousand years ago. The ongoing evolution of consciousness requires a new moral challenge to further our growth and development. And we have this challenge. It is the world crisis - the quest to return the Ring.

Christianity has little to say about how we should manage our waterways, forests and the earth beneath us. There is no code of ethics regarding economic management or the use of our technology. We have nothing to call to attention our modern day sins. So we flounder in the dark, committing a new breed of ecological crimes. This is the immediate problem for Sam and Frodo. They have no map to guide them through the dark lands of Mordor. In 1956 Jung wrote:

As at the beginning of the Christian Era, so again today we are faced with the problem of the moral backwardness which has failed to keep pace with our scientific, technical and social developments.²⁰

Jung felt that the greatest sin was ignorance, and that redemption from ignorance came only through the creation of consciousness. In Jung's psychology the creation of consciousness begins with an exploration of the shadow. For out of the darkness a new light is born.

Of the many shadow figures in the story of the Lord of the Rings, it is Gollum who presents the most human (or hobbit like) face. In the story Gandalf tells us that Gollum was once himself a hobbit who stumbled upon the Ring and became horribly possessed by his 'precious' discovery. When he talked of Gollum, Gandalf expressed some hope that Gollum may be

²⁰ Jung, "The Undiscovered Self," *Civilization in Transition*, CW 10, par 586.

cured before he died. He also instructed Frodo and the elves to look upon Gollum with some sympathy and sense of importance. Gandalf felt that for good or ill, Gollum still had some part to play in the fate of the Ring. Remembering this, Frodo, who had originally wished Gollum dead, stayed the hand of Sam when Gollum was first captured.

Gollum may be recognized as that part of ourselves which enjoys the convenience and comfort provided by our modern day technology. Despite the darker face of this technology we all enjoy the benefits of fast travel, abundant energy supplies, personal wealth and easy living. Yet we must also ask ourselves how much we value clean air, clean water and the peace and accord of life. For these are just a few of nature's treasures that we have traded for our modern world.

Whilst we would rather not see our world in crisis, we continue to live a lifestyle which is not sustainable. Gollum has not the capacity to see through to the evil heart of the Ring. He wants it only for himself. Just as we have become terribly accustomed to our modern lifestyle, Gollum is possessed by the Ring. There is no way Gollum would allow the Ring to be sacrificed and destroyed; he thereby acts as an agent of the Dark Lord.

Marie Louise von Franz points out that the collective shadow reaches us through our personal shadow. In our own small way we all contribute to the collective destruction of this planet. Yet, just as the collective shadow comes up through our personal shadow, the reverse is also true. Through working upon our personal shadow we may find our way through to, and transform the collective shadow.

Gollum knows the way in and out of Mordor; he is to be Frodo's guide. To transform the collective shadow we must start simply with ourselves. In admitting and addressing ones own contribution to the world crisis one works toward a greater solution - ultimately freeing us all from the collective shadow which plagues us now.

Unlike the Dark Lord, Gollum does not seek destruction, he seeks only his precious Ring. He is an ambiguous figure neither wholly good nor evil, and in this way serves as a bridge between the two. To follow Gollum is to struggle with the problem which is ourselves. This is done through an acceptance, not denial, of our desires. Jung argues that “it is no easy matter to live a life modelled on Christ, but unspeakably harder to live one’s own life as truly as Christ lived his.” In wrestling with our darkness we create a deeper morality, a morality which is more like what one would call a conscience which leads to an ethical way of being.

12. Shelob's Lair

Gollum led the Hobbits through dead marshes, over arid planes and in and out of dark tunnels. For many nights he served as a faithful guide but he still could not be trusted. As they neared Mordor, Gollum grew more and more tormented. He could not bear to think that Frodo might throw away his precious ring.

At last they stood before the iron gates of Mordor. But they would not be entering this way. No, Gollum knew another way, a secret way-down through Shelob's lair. The Dark Lord had left this one passage unguarded – it seemed that Shelob was deterrent enough.

Following Gollum, Sam and Frodo entered into a tunnel from which issued the most putrid stench, the stench of rotting carcasses. Down they went as Gollum sped off in front. Now he was nowhere to be seen. Sam and Frodo got an eerie feeling they had walked into some kind of trap. They found themselves in a cave full of spiderweb as thick as rope. And then they saw her. Two clusters, of a thousand eyes each, moved slowly towards them. At first the hobbits ran, but then she ran, so they turned and stood their ground. What was it? They could see nothing in this dark.

At that point Frodo remembered the vial of light given to him by Galahdrial. As he drew it out, the star-glass lit up the whole cave. There she was - Shelob, a great spider, the size of ten men or more. Whilst Frodo held the star glass Shelob came no closer. The hobbits backed away slowly, cutting through the webbed tunnels. When they had clear passage Frodo handed Sam the light and ran on ahead.

But Shelob was too quick- she knew her own lair better than they. While the hobbits groped through the tunnel she had come around its other end. Frodo now ran straight towards her.

"Look out, master!" cried Sam, but it was too late. Shelob pounced upon Frodo and there was nothing more to be heard.

Sam was distraught, a rage brewed up within him. With the star glass in one hand and a sword in the other he charged at Shelob, who now stood hovering over his master. With the first stroke he severed a leg, with a second he sliced her belly. Now he was beneath her. Sam was trapped, Shelob prepared herself to squash him.

Shelob dropped on him but this time it was Sam who was too quick. He had placed his sword on the ground with its tip pointing directly up. Shelob came down upon the sword and shrieked. The elven blade pierced her with a strength that no hobbit could ever muster.

It was a crippling wound and Shelob crawled away. She could no longer bear the light held by this little hobbit. Sam ran to his master. There he was, cocooned in lashings of Shelob's web. Quickly Sam cut him free but Frodo lay still.

Leaving his master for dead, Sam took up the Ring just as some orcs came and took Frodo away. From the discussion of the orcs Sam learnt that Frodo was not dead, only paralysed.

After the orcs had imprisoned Frodo, Sam came looking for his master. Together they escaped the orcs and were now within the bounds of Mordor.

Galahdrial's Lothlorian brought to light the positive and supportive face of Mother Nature. With Shelob, the spider, we meet her dark face. In Hindu myth the spider spins the web of *maya* - the illusion of reality. One falls into the web of *maya* when one is caught up by the material world. Shelob is this binding and restrictive aspect of nature.

The Dark Lord had left Shelob's lair unguarded as he believed no one would willfully enter her tunnels. This is, however, the only way forward. To enter Shelob's lair is to accept the limitations of nature. Frodo's confrontation

with Shelob reminds us that the return to nature and a simpler existence will not be without pain.

Returning the Ring means living a life with less power and control over nature. In returning all that we have wrongfully taken from nature we may well be left with the feeling that we are unable to act or function in the world. Like Frodo we will most likely feel bound and paralysed as we meet the dark face of Mother Nature. We may not be able to move about so freely, progress may be slowed and more effort may be required to achieve the same outcome.

The return to nature will be a challenging transition. Our technology offered us an escape from nature's laws and restrictions, but this was an unholy gift, which we should not have accepted. In abiding by the laws of nature we will lose the false freedom that our technology has provided.

The only defence the hobbits have against Shelob is the star-glass given to Frodo by Galahdrial. With the star-glass they remain safe; without it Frodo is captured by Shelob and then imprisoned by the orcs. A positive appreciation of nature's rhythms makes it easier to accept nature's restrictions. Similarly a slower pace of life is more easily accepted when one has a rich inner life. Without this consciousness the restrictions of the simple life can be tortuous.

Without the aid of Sam, Frodo would not have survived this passage. Where Frodo is captured by Shelob, Sam manages to slay the monster and free Frodo from imprisonment. Sam has been with Frodo since the beginning. He is more humble and well-meaning than most hobbits. His loyalty to Frodo and the quest could never be questioned. Also, up until this point, Sam has never held the Ring.

When Frodo is captured it is Sam who becomes the new Ring bearer. Sam personifies our simplicity. Just as one culture is built on top of another we, as individuals, are made up several psychological layers that stretch back even to the Stone Age. Beneath our modern mind and attitude the simple

man lives on. As a figure in our story Sam, the gardener, has a strong relationship to this past heritage. It is not long ago that we lived a life much closer to nature. Sam is always there for Frodo. We do not have to reach too far back to revive this capacity.

13. On the Edge of Mount Doom

Now that the Hobbits were inside Mordor, they no longer needed Gollum as a guide. For, in the distance, they could see Orodruin- the fire mountain and the goal of their journey. They now traveled disguised as orcs. Sam had managed to find some orc garb and helmets which fitted almost perfectly. Soon they would be standing at the cracks of Mount Doom.

With each day the burden of the Ring grew heavier for Frodo. He had held the Ring for so long now that, he too, had begun to succumb to its spell. With every small step Frodo took towards Mount Doom he also had to fight back an overwhelming desire to keep the One Ring.

Frodo was near exhaustion. He often thought his task was too great and would fall into despair. Yet, as always, Sam was there to help him, at times carrying Frodo when he could no longer walk.

Frodo no longer required Gollum as his guide. They now travelled as orcs. In the process of integrating the shadow we reach a point where our failings become obvious. We no longer need to seek out our darkness, instead it is fully apparent and experienced as an all too real element of our being. In taking on the garb of the orcs, the hobbits were barely distinguishable from the enemy. When we realise the shadow we no longer see ourselves as so different from the enemy.

At times Frodo felt his hand reaching out for Ring and he would have to fight to hold it back. Having held the Ring for so long, Frodo had now developed a strong attachment to the Ring – he had become like Gollum. Frodo was torn between opposite desires. On the one hand he sought the destruction of the Ring, on the other he wished to keep it for himself. Frodo

was now at war with himself. The battle between green and black now raged within his very being.

In our modern world we may easily feel that it is impossible to lead an ethical lifestyle. One may start by using public transport and recycling household waste. But the more one explores the issue the more it is revealed that our ecologically destructive technology has penetrated every facet of our existence. It is there in the food we eat, in our investments, in the materials we use to build and power our homes. As we continue with our lives we knowingly live in sin, all the time wrestling with our emerging conscience.

Like Christ carrying the cross, Frodo's journey toward Mount Doom is a slow and tormented passage. The closer Frodo came to the fire mountain the heavier the Ring felt as it hung on its chain about his neck. The weight of the Ring is the weight of the guilt, which wells up out of the conscious recognition of ones own crimes against nature.

At this stage the correct attitude is to feel guilty – to fully experience one's personal contribution to the world crisis. Though it may appear otherwise, the experience of guilt is a positive development. For guilt is a conscious suffering of the opposites of good and evil as they exist within oneself.

Our guilt marks a coming to consciousness. As Jung says, "Only unconsciousness makes no difference between good and evil."²¹ In his warning to humanity, *Answer to Job*, Jung writes:

The guilty man is eminently suitable and is therefore chosen to become the vessel for the continuing incarnation, not the guiltless one who holds aloof from the world and refuses to pay his tribute to life, for in him the dark God would find no room.

²¹ Jung, *Aion*, CW9 par 97.

Guiltlessness is a lack of awareness, the 'guilty man' is the one who is no longer ignorant. In our guilt we take full ownership of our shadow. We realise the dark God within, giving him the human face and body, which he so much desires. Ultimately, our guilt is the womb of a new morality.

Throughout the story of the *Lord of the Rings*, the Dark Lord Sauron is depicted as an energy which seeks to be embodied. He appears only as a fiery eye in the distance whose gaze is felt most strongly whenever Frodo wears the Ring. To be seen by this dark face of God is to be singled out as a point of incarnation. The more conscious one becomes the more interest this dark God takes - and the heavier one feels.

Sam pushed Frodo on towards the fire mountain, at times carrying his master. When he lifted Frodo he did not feel the weight of the Ring. Sam had remained unattached to the Ring. Having held it once, he freely returned it to Frodo's possession. The Ring held no control over Sam. As the simple man, Sam is akin to an aspect of ourselves which refuses to take up the offerings of modern day technology. Our simplicity has no desire for the power of technology. Time and time again we may need to fall back upon this simplicity as we battle with our conscience and seek to live a holistic life.

Up the mountain they climbed until at last they stood at the cracks of Mount Doom. The fires belched before them. Frodo stepped nearer to the edge and drew the Ring out from beneath his garments. Then he turned to Sam and spoke with a clear voice.

"I have come," he said. "But I do not choose now to do what I came to do. I will not do this deed. The Ring is mine!" Then suddenly, as he set the Ring upon his finger, he vanished from sight.

At that very instant Gollum sprang from behind the rocks and knocked Sam to the ground. When Sam next looked up he saw Gollum, on the edge of the abyss, fighting like mad with an unseen foe. Gollum's hands drew up towards his mouth, his fangs gleamed

then snapped. Frodo gave a cry and reappeared there, at the chasm's edge.

The crazed Gollum danced, holding aloft the Ring with Frodo's severed finger still in its circle. But he danced too far. Gollum wavered on the edge then fell, Ring and all, into the fires of Mount Doom.

There was a roar, the earth shook, towers fell and mountains slid. The fire mountain flared up and the sky broke with lightning. Frodo turned to his friend, as the world about them collapsed, "Well this is the end Sam."

Frodo now felt light and relieved. The burden of the Ring had lifted from his being. Then Sam noticed Frodo's maimed and bleeding hand and cursed Gollum. But Frodo advised that they forgive Gollum.

"But for him, Sam, I could not have destroyed the Ring. Gandalf was right when he said that even Gollum may have something yet to do."

The fact that Frodo reneged after coming so far is a frightening end to our story. To see the Ring destroyed by accident and madness presents an ill omen for the fate of our own world. Our only solace is that the Ring is ultimately sacrificed.

It seems that Gollum is destined to be the last of the Ring bearers. Frodo's efforts brought the Ring to the edge but it was Gollum who returned it to the cracks of Mount Doom. Frodo tried but failed to sacrifice the One Ring. It had to be taken from him. At that very point where Frodo claims the Ring as his own, it is snatched back by Gollum.

Frodo is overcome by Gollum. When we claim the Ring we fall into a self-destructive madness. We become Gollum. There will always be that within us which shall seek to hold onto the One Ring. Such stupidity shall bring about its own destruction. This is, of course, a very grim fate for, not only the individual, but any culture, society, company or group which is possessed by the Ring. In holding onto the Ring we ultimately annihilate ourselves.

Holding onto our destructive technology is a madness destined to failure. The farmer who continues to use pesticides will soon poison his own soil. The country which allows its forests to be logged will simply have no more forests. The car manufacturer who fails to design a pollution free vehicle will, one day, lose business. As individuals, holding onto the Ring may mean having no time for ones creative life, children, inner work or personal health. Such individual fails to grow beyond themselves and make an impact on life.

There are so many ways in which we may prove to be our own undoing – we need to become conscious of them all. Will we weaken our genetics or render ourselves infertile through the use of drugs or from poisons in our diet? Will we suffocate ourselves with our own exhausts? Maybe our social systems will collapse with the loss of community spirit. Or shall we will fight amongst ourselves over a growing scarcity of natural resources. How far can we remove ourselves from a central point of balance without suffering the terrible consequences?

Gollum, the last of the Ring bearers, falls along with the Ring. We should remember that Gollum was also once a hobbit who became possessed by the Ring. That is, Gollum represents our human selves. With Christ, the angry and righteous God of the Old Testament sacrificed his only begotten son. Now it is Gollum who must fall along with the Ring.

The whole of humanity has now been hung upon the cross of the world crisis. With the impending realisation of God within, modern man has become the new point of sacrifice. It is a vain hope that we might sneak through into the future unscathed. Like Gollum, we too have been corrupted by the power of our technology. We have been caught in a divine yet destructive drama.

Jung felt that “there is no coming to consciousness without suffering”²² and it is likely that the world crisis will need to get worse before we are shocked

²² Jung, TBD

into the consciousness that is required of us. The only question that remains is *how much* of our destructive capacity will we need to act out before we stand back and recognise what we have become?

What saved Middle Earth from complete destruction was the fact that Frodo had already come so far. Were the Ring to be snatched away by Gollum at any earlier point, it would have certainly found its way back to the Dark Lord.

Frodo's efforts allowed Gollum's madness to burst through without dire consequences. We can only hope to offer the same service. Frodo took on the burden of the Ring for the whole of Middle Earth. Similarly when we, as individuals, acknowledge the dark God within, we reduce the need for him to force his way into consciousness through some catastrophic event. What we meet inwardly has no need to manifest outwardly as our fate.²³ Through suffering the opposites within, we relieve the world of the need to serve as a stage for this divine drama that has beset our time.

²³ This principle is especially apparent to anyone experienced in working with the unconscious by the way of the dream. In working with dreams, the eruptions of the unconscious are lived on a psychological level. As a result of dream work the individual will often suffer a greater degree of inner torment, whilst outwardly the individual is a picture of peace and calm. What has happened is that the dreamer has managed to contain and integrate the dynamics of the unconscious. Dreams that pass by unresolved typically spill over into life and manifest as a physical event. If we then fail to learn from the event, the next target becomes the body and its various states of disease. Above all the deeper Self seeks to be made conscious. When this consciousness is not available, the Self will manifest as an actual event or circumstance which aims to bring about the desired awareness. For example, the world crisis is simply the dark and unacknowledged face of a global consciousness.

It is believed that Christ died on the cross for all our sins. In offering up himself as a sacrifice, he served as a buffer against a direct confrontation with the dark side of God. With Christ the vengeful Yahweh of the Old Testament was transformed into the loving father God of the new era.

Two thousand years later we have now been called upon to play a similar role. In raising our awareness we may yet avert complete disaster.²⁴ Our psychological health and our capacity for consciousness now plays a key role in our survival as a species. The rejected divinity of nature must now be appeased. The world crisis needs to be transformed into a global awareness. In regard to this need for consciousness Jung writes:

We therefore need more light, more goodness and moral strength, and must wash off as much of the obnoxious blackness as possible, otherwise we shall not be able to assimilate the dark God who wants to become man, and at the same time endure him without perishing.²⁵

Frodo's attachment to the Ring left him wounded. Frodo lost the finger which previously wore the One Ring. Sam, however, comes through the whole ordeal without injury or regret. In the end it is a matter of degree. That which is possessed by the Ring, as is Gollum, is fated toward self-destruction and has no future. The semi-attached, like Frodo, is left

²⁴ The book of Revelations tells the story of the second coming of God. With the Apocalypse those who grieved were to be spared from the wrath of God. Gods instructions were:

“Go all through the city, all through Jerusalem, and mark a cross on the foreheads of all who grieve and lament over all of the loathsome practices in it....Follow him through the city and strike. Not once glance of pity; show no mercy; old men, young men, girls, children, women, kill and exterminate them all. But do not touch anyone with a cross on his forehead.” (9:2-6)

²⁵ Ibid.

wounded. The unattached, like Sam, survives and moves on to form a new world.

14. The War is Won

When Frodo split from the ring party and turned toward Mordor, Aragorn continued on and gathered great armies which now held back the forces of the Dark Lords. A great war was being fought and although their position looked weak, Aragorn readied his army for one last attempt to beat down the might of Mordor.

Gandalf was with him. He had not perished in the Mines of Moria but had risen again as Gandalf the White. At the precise moment when Frodo drew the ring out at the lip of Mount Doom, Gandalf called out in a loud clear voice:

"Stand, men of the West! Stand and wait! This is the hour of doom."

Within a moment there was a great rumbling in the earth. The towers of Mordor could be seen falling in the distance and the great black gates before them were rent from their hinges.

"The realm of Sauron is ended!" declared Gandalf, "The ring bearer has fulfilled his quest."

Once the Ring had been destroyed the power of Mordor was sapped at its roots. As Aragorn looked up he saw Mordor scattered like dust in the wind. The war was won!

Gandalf did not remain to dwell upon the glory of victory. He called the great eagle, Gwaihir, and rode off to rescue Frodo and Sam from their certain exhaustion.

Whilst Frodo's journey represents the inner battle to return the Ring, Aragorn's war against Mordor relates to the outer struggle. This is the war between the green and the black. It is the war being fought by ecologists, naturalists, green political parties and non-government organisations.

According to the story Aragorn's army had little chance of victory over Mordor unless the One Ring was destroyed. Once the Ring was destroyed this war was already won. This suggests that there is no outer solution to the world crisis without the required inner transformation. So long as we seek to maintain our diabolical power over nature we shall remain in conflict with the natural world. The championing of green causes is of little use if we ourselves remain unchanged.

With the returning of the Ring, Mordor is doomed. That which has failed to evolve will die out with the change of time. Ours is a civilisation built around the power of the Ring. Like the Roman Empire it is destined to collapse in upon itself.

With a raised consciousness and morality we allow a new social structure to develop. As we opt for organically grown produce we support a new breed of farmers who respect the land and environment. At the same time we weaken the market for pesticides. By using recycled paper products we curb the deforestation of the planet. In our request for renewable energy sources we encourage research and innovation in this area and, ultimately, challenge the profitability of the oil companies and force them to amend their business strategies. When we place our vote we elect an individual who cares for the whole and not our own self interests. Through our everyday choices we may support the alternative culture as it seeks to establish itself as mainstream. It was not that long ago that a health food store was difficult to find. Now there is one to be found in every town. In living the new, the old shall fall into the past.

Aragorn's army cannot beat down the forces of Mordor so long as the Ring remains in existence. No amount of rallies, political restrictions, recycling policies or economic sanctions will prevent the destruction of this planet so long as there remains a demand for the unholy products and practices of our western world. Cut the demand, relinquish the Ring and the war is soon won. Again we return to the moral capacity of the individual. Jung writes:

So much is at stake and so much depends on the psychological constitution of modern man. Is he capable of resisting the temptation to use his power for the purpose of staging a world conflagration? Is he conscious of the path he is treading, and what the conclusions are that must be drawn from the present world situation and his own psychic situation? Does he know that he is on the point of losing the life-preserving myth of the inner man which Christianity has treasured upon him? Does he realise what lies in store should this catastrophe ever befall him? Is he even capable at all of realising that this would be a catastrophe? And finally, does the individual know that he is the makeweight that tips the scales? ²⁶

All we can ask of ourselves is to honour a global awareness. The answer is simple, the execution, arduous. We must live true to a greater conscience. Live it and let it resonate out into the world. Everything comes down to the ethical decisions made by you and I. While thinking globally, we must act locally. The fate of the world rests with the individual.

Frodo's time had now come to an end. He had completed his task and passed over the sea with Gandalf, Galahdrial, Elrond and Bilbo. For their time had also finished.

Aragorn's era, however, had just begun. He was crowned as King and took his throne as one of the true rulers of Middle Earth. In a great celebration Aragorn was married to the elven princess Arwen. King Aragorn's next task would be to rebuild a new world.

As for Sam, he returned home only to find the land scorched and barren. The black tide had spread far and wide and the Shire had been overrun. Yet Sam was a gardener, forever devoted to the earth. With the help of Galahdrial's magical soil Hobbiton was back in full bloom the very next spring. And this simple hobbit was made the Mayor of the Shire.

²⁶ Jung, "The Undiscovered Self," *Civilization in Transition*, CW 10, par 586.