

Adam Shields

English 270

Fellowship of the Rings

A common theme in Tolkien's Fellowship of the Rings is the loss of innocence and the maturity of a man's soul. Much of the story deals with Frodo's journey through his world with a weight upon his back he never chose to carry. The ultimate responsibility is his and it is to save the world. The story starts us off with the notion that an innocent person or group must sometimes lose themselves in order to save themselves and those around them.

Interestingly enough, Tolkien takes this to many different levels. In some cases, we find our characters literally losing themselves in wooded areas and other geographical mazes where escape seems nearly impossible, if not at least improbable. One such situation occurs as they are wandering about the Old Forest. Trees of malicious intent bent on destroying hobbitdom and seek vengeance for crimes committed ages and ages past. The quartet must make their way through such a forest and in many ways are diverted from their true goal and in the process find many things worth the stay. Unfortunately, they must continue on their cumbersome adventure and realize that even a small stay could cause them serious delay and perhaps the destruction of their precious Shire and all the hobbits therein.

The loss of one's self also appears in the emotional feeling that Frodo himself expresses. Much of the time Frodo allows his feelings to get the best of him, in one fashion or another. Logic and knowledge get the best of him and although Gandalf had made it expressly clear NOT to place the ring upon his finger, very early on Frodo in fact does place it on his finger. The knowledge of the Ring's danger did not hinder his childlike fascination with the splendor of the Ring. Interestingly enough, it is often times these ponderings of whether or not to have the Ring

consume him that he in turn proves himself a courageous character within the story. Frodo is a very adventurous hobbit although he would prefer himself not to be at times. His debating over himself, although not nearly as awful as Bilbo's, proves how he grows as the reader progresses through the story and how the reader can expect more complex decisions to come from his personality as the story advances forth.

The search for oneself directly relates to the loss of innocence through the decisions that are made through either the actions or the emotions of the characters. Intertwined as they are, the outcome is that of a duty to others above and beyond your own needs. Many occasions will we see and are expected to see Frodo save his travel companions in one fashion or another. This loss of innocence allows him to protect those he loves the most, and even some he would rather not protect at all while trying his hardest to keep his world in a single piece.