"UPON THE HEARTH THE FIRE IS RED":

THE SEARCH FOR HOME IN THE LORD OF THE RINGS

A Thesis

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree Master of Arts

by

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'...It comes home to you, as they say; because it is home, and you remember it before it was all ruined.'

--Sam Gamgee
I

INTRODUCTION: "DOWN FROM THE DOOR WHERE IT BEGAN"

In *The Lord of the Rings*, J.R.R. Tolkien provides a symbolic representation of the human path through life by using a common literary device, a journey. Tolkien's use of the journey pattern, is often overlooked by critics even though it provides an essential means of understanding the work.¹

*The Lord of the Rings* does not appear to be a complex work, which may explain why many critics have overlooked the mythical pattern present and the resulting implications of the tale. The work is, of course, a fantasy, which thus provides a barrier between the world of the characters and the real world of the reader. The enchantment one feels in reading a fantasy such as this one can also prevent the reader from recognizing the similarities between the fantasy world and the real world it is based on and subsequently can cause a reader to take the message of a fantasy lightly.

The most important issue that has been overlooked, however, is Tolkien's consistent use of the concept of home as the journey center, the place where the journey begins and ends, or the focal point of the narrative. Tolkien's method of organizing the trilogy indicates that the use of the journey pattern was not haphazard, but probably intentional. The organization fits the model of the mythical hero's journey, ¹
particularly as it is discussed by Joseph Campbell in *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*.² The *Fellowship of the Ring*, the first book of the trilogy, explains the separation of the hero from his home, the second book, *The Two Towers*, reveals the hero's reactions to his separation from home and initiates him into the acceptance of separation and into the new world he must face as a result of the presence of the ring, a symbol of the evil that exists in the world. Tolkien's intention to follow this mythical pattern appears most obvious in the title and the subject of the third book, *The Return of the King*, which tells of the hero's completion of the task and of his return to home and to the new reality home represents as a result of the successful completion of the task.³

Beyond the titles, Tolkien's pattern of implanting the idea of home into the work is also consistent. Because its meaning is familiar and seemingly requires no immediate inspection for its symbolism, home is a concept which is easily taken for granted in the tale. Moreover, the hobbit home, the home most mentioned, is a comfortable place, even a cute one. Often, at least in *The Hobbit* and in the early sections of *The Fellowship of the Ring*, when Tolkien mentions Bag-End, or the Shire, the language he uses and the events that occur there evoke a sense of the pleasantness of the days of childhood, and thus, the meaning of home is not taken seriously. However, the Shire and the other homes are mentioned again and again in strategic places, thus implying that home holds a special meaning. Tolkien's allusions to or mentionings of home always occur consistently within a series of similar events throughout the tale and his method of using the concept of home as a
significant part of the journey will be the major focus of this thesis.

Many authors have found the journey pattern a valuable method of
telling a story and making a point about life. In order to understand
the ways of the world, the hero often must travel away from home to
observe life in its many forms, its many moods. As such a journey pro-
gresses, the hero learns about life, and that knowledge helps him deal
with the world more effectively. For example, journeys which take
humans into the unknown to search for a fountain of youth or for some
religious talisman may teach lessons about old age, or the powers of
faith. and journeys in which the hero goes away from his home and learns
about or comes to an understanding of the presence of evil, or of death,
teach about the need for the acceptance of the human condition.

Herman Melville's *Moby Dick*, Jonathon Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*,
and Edgar Allan Poe's *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket*,
all revolve around the journey pattern method and teach many separate
lessons about life. Even Mark Twain's *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*
tells of life through a journey down the Mississippi, where Huck finds
not only evil and death, but more importantly friendship and human
moral understanding in Jim.

Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales* also provides messages
about life through story, for as each of the pilgrims on their way to
Canterbury tells a tale, he or she reveals a particular interpretation
of life. In "The Pardoner's Tale," for example, the Pardoner weaves a
tale which reveals that avarice often brings suffering, sorrow, and
sometimes even death to those who acquire wealth dishonestly.
A more poignant example of this pattern is Marlow's journey in Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, which is a symbolic search into the darkness of one man's soul; what the tale reveals is the evil in the heart of every man. When Marlow embarks on his journey to the dark continent of Africa, he recognizes evil, but he does not understand the real depth or seriousness of it. In his innocence, Marlow chooses the evil man, Kurtz, before he meets him and he remains "loyal to the nightmare of his choice" even after he realizes Kurtz's demonlike nature is destroying his image of Mankind. Marlow's faithfulness to Kurtz leads him to learn about evil, a knowledge of which all men should be aware, and thus his experience is worthwhile. Hence, Marlow learns his lesson by completing the journey. The success of any journey, or any life for that matter, depends on its completion, but the completion is not always known, for as Conrad indicates, "This is the common fate of mankind, whose most positive achievements are born from dreams and visions followed loyally to an unknown destination."  

Like Marlow, Frodo, the hero of *The Lord of the Rings* does not know the outcome of his journey from the start and even though he learns many things along the journey path, it is not until the return that the realization of all that has come before is put into proper perspective, and is finally accepted as truth.

*The Lord of the Rings*, like the other works mentioned above, is based on a journey, but even though the journeys in each of these follow a similar pattern, the separate journeys are not the same. And since Tolkien's work is a fantasy, the journey pattern of *The Lord of the Rings* differs from that portrayed in literature with more realistic
characters and settings. Certainly, the events in the magical world of the fairy-like creatures could not happen in real life, yet the occurrences can resemble those things which exist in real life and in realistic works of fiction. The experiences of these fairy creatures do not differ in essence from those of any fictional character. Thus, the message of The Lord of the Rings can be taken as seriously as that of other well-written works of fiction.

C.S. Lewis explains why some authors choose fairy-tales or fantasy to convey a message:

'But why,' some ask, 'why, if you have a serious comment to make on the life of Man, must you do it by talking about a never-never land of your own?' Because, I take it, the real life of men is of that mythical and heroic quality. One can see that the principle at work is his characterization. Much that in realistic work would be done by 'character delineation' is here done simply by making the character an elf, a dwarf, or a hobbit. The imagined beings have their insides, on the outside; they are visible souls. And Man as a whole, pitted against the Universe, have we seen him at all till we see that he is like a hero in a fairy-tale?

Lewis continues, to explain exactly how the fairy-tale maker puts a magical spell on his work to make his message more potent; he explains that it is the use of the familiar that actually enhances the reader's understanding and enriches the story:

The value of myth is that it takes all the things we know and restores to them the rich significance which has been hidden by the 'veil of familiarity.' The child enjoys his cold meat, otherwise dull to him, by pretending it is buffalo, just killed with his own bow and arrow. And the child is wise. The real meat comes back to him more savory for having been dipped in a story; you might say that only then is it real meat. If you are tired of the real landscape, look at it in a mirror. By putting bread, gold, horse, apple, or the very roads into a myth, we do not retreat from reality, we rediscover it. As long as the story lingers in our mind, the real things are more themselves. The Lord of the Rings applied the
treatment not only to bread or apple but to good and evil, to our endless perils, our anguish and our joys. By dipping them in myth, we see them more clearly.

Critics often concern themselves with the fact that fairy-tale journeys and journeys of mythical heroes follow the same pattern and deal with the same themes. The repetition of the journey pattern may occur to portray Man's constant search for answers to the problems of life and to portray his inability to find a solution to a problem; ultimately, then, the problem is replaced with a new one and so, the quest begins anew. Some essential guides to an understanding of the journey pattern are Vladimir Propp, Arnold van Gennep, Victor Turner, and Joseph Campbell.

Vladimir Propp in *Morphology of the Folktale*, provides a description of thirty-one actions that tend to follow one another in typical fairy-tales. The basic structure of the hero's journey revolves around a departure from home which results from a lack or misfortune of the hero, the hero then seeks to liquidate that lack, and is tested, interrogated, or attacked. Along each step of the journey, a villain is introduced or reintroduced to try to prevent the hero from attaining his ultimate goal of resolving his lack or misfortune. After the problem is solved, the hero returns home, often with a new appearance, and is either married or receives some other reward for his part in a successful journey.

A Proppian analysis could provide critics with a list of identifying characteristics of *The Lord of the Rings* which might help to classify the work. However, my interest is more specifically centered in interpreting the meaning of the work according to the actions rather
than listing the actions and classifying the work. Thus, I will consider more closely scholars who focus on an analysis of the actions of myth.

In *The Rites of Passage*, Arnold van Gennep lays the groundwork for later critics who interpret mythical patterns in literature. Van Gennep divides all rites of passage into three parts: rites of separation, rites of transition, and rites of incorporation. The ritual subject is first separated from his previous condition; he then encounters some form of transforming experience so that he may pass into the final phase and be incorporated into a new condition or situation or into his previous situation in some new way. Van Gennep adds that the interpretation of the meaning of the rites is more important than the classification of the phase where the ritual occurs; he also discusses the likelihood of overlapping classifications and interpretations for many rites. In order to successfully complete the journey, the hero must move from one social world to another by accepting certain changes in his concept of the social structure of the world.  

Victor Turner follows van Gennep's lead to discuss the social changes of the ritual passenger, but Turner focuses his work, *The Ritual Process*, on the transition rite, or the liminal phase, of rites of passage. It is during this liminal phase that the ritual passenger finds himself "betwixt and between" home and the world, or separation and return. During this phase, the hero must reevaluate his current world-view, and in the end, must change to accommodate his new self, his new found world in order to be able to return to and to fit into the newly discovered structure of the world.
But far more significant to my study is Joseph Campbell's description of the mythical hero's journey. According to Campbell, the typical path of the mythical hero's journey involves a separation or departure from home or the familiar; an initiation through various trials into a new home or a new understanding of something which was previously unfamiliar to the traveler, who carries with him the knowledge of the new, the message of the unfamiliar. The journey pattern, thus, is a form of ritual passage for the journey of the hero corresponds precisely to the passage of any individual from one phase of life to another.  

These studies of myths and rituals help to explain the journeys of Bilbo and more importantly Frodo, the Ringbearers, because their journeys follow the basic patterns of rites of passage and the journey of the mythical hero, most specifically Campbell's model: Separation, Initiation, and Return.  

And, as in the ancient myths, such as the journey of Odysseus, and the more modern works such as Joseph Andrews, that incorporate the journey pattern, the quest of Tolkien's heroes in The Hobbit and The Lord of the Rings centers around their leaving home and their longing to adequately complete the journey in order to return home.

In The Lord of the Rings Separation involves leaving the homeland which may be considered a type of Eden. Once the Ringbearer leaves his homeland, he cannot return to his Eden without first completing his journey. During the separation phase he begins to understand the reasons why he had to leave home, and why he cannot truly find shelter from the real world.
Campbell's second phase, Initiation, involves the trials and tribulations of the hero who is attacked, interrogated, and tempted. One of the greatest temptations is for the Ringbearer to return either to home or to one of the Edenic homes visited along the journey path so that he can find shelter both from the world and from the responsibilities of the journey. In initiation, evil and death are constants which exist as a result of something like Original Sin; the hero must learn to deal with and to accept evil and death and the loss of their Eden as parts of life during his journey. Along the initiation path, the hero also learns about the element of choice; if he chooses the right path, makes the right decision, and has the right motives or values, then there is hope that he will also be able to open the right door and be admitted to home, either in the form of a new Eden or Heaven. Any misstep during initiation including falling to the temptation to return home before the journey is completed, may mean that the journey is doomed. The Ringbearer must pass the trials of initiation in order to complete his journey successfully and in order to move to the next phase, return, which may then lead him home.

Return involves the return to homeland, or Eden, or to a new homeland, or a new Eden or Paradise. Along the Ringbearer's path and during the return phase, constant reminders of home are given because each home visited represents not only what has been lost, Eden, but also what could be gained, a return to a Paradisial home or immortal life in Heaven, if the hero leads a good life or follows the path of goodness, and if he successfully completes the quest for forgiveness from the sins of the past. By the time the hero actually returns home,
he has completed his quest for repentance and for understanding of the structure of the world and has finally come to a thorough understanding of the reasons why he had to leave home.

One of the most important revelations that Frodo has during the return phase but before he actually returns home to the Shire is that home will never be the same. Frodo’s expectations about his home are met, for his home is greatly changed when he returns and so is the way in which he views his home. Thus, the return phase is the culmination of all the other phases—for Frodo finally understands the message of separation, the reasons for his trials during initiation, and the total message of the journey: the true home, the Eden that Frodo searches for in the Shire does not exist in his world and thus, he cannot truly return to home but instead must once again leave his homeland in order to accept and to regret its loss.

Although Frodo does not come home to find Paradise in the Shire, his actions during the journey phase befit those of a human hero who realizes his limitations and still does his best so that others may find Paradise. The return, thus, represents hope for readmittance into Eden, or into Heaven for everlasting life. That hope is the "...glimpse of Joy, Joy beyond the walls of the world, poignant as grief..." that Tolkien speaks of as the ultimate goal of the fairy-tale maker; when *The Lord of the Rings* comes to a close, that joy, almost a painful yet wonderful feeling of nostalgia, brings the return phase to an end.¹²

Through the use of the journey pattern as the structural organization for *The Lord of the Rings*, Tolkien connects the desire for Eden and the longing for immortal life in the hereafter through his use of
the concept of home. Tolkien links the fall and the loss of Eden to human thoughts of home:

...Genesis is separated by we do not know how many sad genera-
tions from the Fall, but certainly there was an Eden on this unhappy earth. We all long for it, and we are constantly glimpsing it: our whole nature at its best and least corrupted, its gentlest and most humane, is still soaked with the sense of 'exile' .... Your obstinate memory of this 'home' of yours in an idyllic hour (when often there is an illusion of the stay of time and decay and a sense of gentle peace)--... 'stands the clock at ten to three, and is there honey still for tea'-- is derived from Eden. As far as we can go back the nobler part of the human mind is filled with the thoughts of sibb, peace and goodwill, and with the thought of its loss. We shall never recover it, for that is not the way of repen-
tance, which works spirally and not in a closed circle; we may recover something like it, but on a higher plane.13

Apparently conscious of the use of home as a symbol of Eden and conscious of the continual quest for repentance, Tolkien conveys the sense of longing for Eden by continually reminding the travelers of their exile from home through descriptions of home and through the constant reminder of the journey which tells the travelers that they are away from home.

Tolkien also conveys the message that as a result of his journey away from home, or out of Eden, Man, represented by the Ringbearer heroes, must realize that the idea of a safe home on earth is a fan-
tasy, something that is attainable only in the Paradise of the future, for evil is real and unavoidable in this world as a result of the fall and the untimely loss of Eden. The constant reminder of home, or the loss of Eden, also suffices to help Tolkien remind the reader of the common bond of humanity and to explain human nature and the human condition.
Tolkien quite appropriately calls the fairy story a "Mirour de l'Homme" since the journey of the Ringbearers in *The Lord of the Rings* is reminiscent of the pattern of the life of Man, easily thought about in terms of a journey: Tolkien's human characters are similar to men in that they ultimately must learn to accept evil and in the end, the hero must die. Tolkien explains the connection between death and immortality, and home:

The real theme of *The Lord of the Rings* for me is about something much more permanent and difficult: Death and Immortality; the mystery of the love of the world in the hearts of a race 'doomed' to leave and seemingly lose it; the anguish in the hearts of a race 'doomed' not to leave it, until its whole evil-aroused story is complete. The immortals must leave Rivendell and Lothlorien behind even as Man once left Eden and as Arwen, Aragorn, Sam, and Frodo must leave their home when they die. According to Tolkien, however, the men of Middle-earth should accept death as a 'gift' since upon death the memory of the past homeland may be erased by Paradise, the epitome of home:

...a divine 'punishment' is also a divine 'gift' if accepted since its object is ultimate blessing and the supreme inventiveness of the Creator will make 'punishments' (that is changes of design) produce a good not otherwise to be attained....

Concerns for shelter from death and from the world at large are thus connected to the desire for Paradise, which manifests itself in the love of the home and homeland. Gaston Bachelard explains this occurrence:

Being reigns in a sort of earthly paradise of matter, dissolved in the comforts of an adequate matter. It is as though in this material paradise, the human being were bathed in this nourishment, as though he were gratified with all of the essential benefits.
However to think of a home of this world in these terms would be to contradict, or to bathe ourselves in thoughts of comfort that do not really exist. Thus, thoughts of being at home may bring thoughts of safety, albeit a false sense of security which nonetheless may help humans deal with life while they are in the world.

Tolkien, by not evading the subject of death and the discussion of the human desire for immortality in Paradise, does not contradict the ways of the world and does not give a misleading message that one can find true comfort in a home of this world. Tolkien, instead explains the home as a place that consoles people in times of need and aids them in making decisions that may help them to enter Heaven in the future, after they have left this world. Here, Bachelard's statement helps to explain Tolkien's method of using the concept of home to reveal the effect the memory of home has on the inhabitant who must travel away from home and face the tempestuous world:

And so, faced with the bestial hostility of the storm and the hurricane, the house's virtues of protection and resistance are transposed into human virtues. The house acquires the physical and moral energy of a human body. It braces itself to receive the downpour, it girds its loins. When forced to do so it bends with the blast, confident that it will right itself in time, while continuing to deny any temporary defeats. Such a house as this invites mankind to heroism of cosmic proportions. It is an instrument with which to confront the cosmos. And the metaphysical systems according to which man is cast into the hurricane, defying the anger of heaven itself. Come what may the house helps us to say: I will be an inhabitant of the world, in spite of the world.  

To be realistic, Tolkien explains the home as a place that one continually thinks about, and tries to return to, but a place one never reaches because of the evil that has come into the world as result of
the fall; thus, the quest in search of home becomes one that continues throughout Man's life.

Even though Tolkien's work is a fantasy, he does not change the major premises of reality to suit his story, and as a result, his story and his message are believable. The quest explains the need to accept the reality of the human condition, of death and of exile, caused by the fall in Eden. Home cannot be and Paradise cannot be reached until the quest for repentance is complete. Thus, the journey of the Ringbearers represents only a small part of the continuous human quest for forgiveness of the sins of the past and for admittance to Paradise. The final message that Tolkien gives to humanity through The Lord of the Rings is that because of the loss of that perfect home, the individual must go away from home to discover that "the wide world is all about [him] [he] can fence [himself] in, but [he] cannot for ever fence it out" (FR, p. 93). Perhaps it is true that "you can't go home again."
'It is best to love first what you are fitted to love, I suppose; you must start somewhere and have some roots, and the soil of the Shire is deep. Still there are things deeper and higher: and not a gaffer could tend his garden in what he calls peace but for them, whether he knows about them or not. I am glad that I know about them, a little. But I don't know why I am talking like this. Where is that leaf? And get my pipe out of my pack, if it isn't broken.' (PR, pp. 146-147)

During the separation phase of the journey, Frodo begins to accept not only the journey but also his separation from home. When he visits Tom Bombadil's house, Rivendell, and Lothlorien, he discovers that although he feels content in these Edenic lands, he misses his own home in the Shire more. That longing for home causes Frodo to accept the journey with more vigor, for during the separation phase he is inspired to complete the journey so that he may return home and be happy once again. It is not until he enters the initiation phase of the journey that Frodo discovers that his separation from home is more permanent than he had thought, and he discovers that in actuality, he will never truly be reunited with his home in the way that he had first imagined. Thus, during the separation phase, Frodo finds himself naively believing that his separation from home is temporary, a fact which he gradually comes to realize as a misconception as he later contemplates his role in the journey and his separation from home.
In contemplation, Frodo continually thinks of his home, a concept which Tolkien uses to discuss two of the most potent of human desires: the desire for immortality and the longing for a permanent home in Paradise, both desires which have resulted from the loss of that perfect home, Eden. Tolkien also used the concept of home to juxtapose good and evil, heaven and hell, and to explain the human propensity to sin.

As presented in The Silmarillion and explained in Tolkien's letters, Original Sin occurs with the Numenorean's acceptance of the temptation to sail to the forbidden land to try to steal immortality for themselves, and is further evidenced by Bilbo's and his ancestors' taking of and use of the forbidden power of evil, the One Ring that rules them all.19 This original sin becomes the reason for Frodo's long journey into the tunnels of hell: redemption and the opportunity to find the stairway to heaven is the hoped for reward. Thus, separation from home serves to remind the hero of his quest to return home and to relive the Edenic days in his Paradise in the Shire.

Eden and Paradise are almost interchangeable terms, but as in the Biblical sense in which Eden is that primeval place of perfection and Paradise is the perfect place reached in afterlife, Tolkien provides homes for his travelers which are Edenic and Paradisial. Bag End begins as as Eden and with each stop the travelers reach a new Paradise and, in comparative terms, the home previously visited becomes, an Eden. Finally, when the journey is complete and the travelers return to Bag End, they return not to Eden but to Paradise. As Eden was the home of innocent man and Paradise becomes the home of the worldly experienced man, so Bag End began as the hobbits' Eden, but then becomes their
Paradise. Frodo, however, is not satisfied with his Paradise in Bag End, when he returns there, and thus must leave it, and so Bag End once again becomes the lost Eden. When Frodo leaves, he once again begins a journey in search of true Paradise, a place that will truly replace Eden. Thoughts of home during the journey by the hobbits, thus, are similar to human thoughts of Eden, for Eden is also a home that may never be retrieved but will never be completely forgotten or lost in the past; thoughts of home then are easily transformed into thoughts of the hope of reaching Paradise and of finally finding rest from the constant search for home.

Humanity feels a sense of nostalgia for the past, for the perfect joy and the freedom that was lost as a result of transgression:

These marks are immortality, spontaneity, freedom; the possibility of ascension into Heaven and easily meeting with the gods; friendship and abilities have been lost as a result of the primordial event—the "fall of man" expressed as an ontological mutation of his own condition, as well as a cosmic schism.20

The history of Middle-earth, as presented by Tolkien in The Silmarillion describes how both Men and Elves, the two primary races on Middle-earth fall, and as a result are exiled from Paradise, and are separated from their home.

The fall of the Elves occurs first, and cataclysmically causes the fall of the Numenoreans, who are men, later on. In the First Age, or the beginning of time in Tolkien's fictional world, men ally themselves with the Elves, who are involved with an evil enemy who steals the Silmarilli, three beautiful jewels made out of the light of two trees in Valinor, or Paradise. The elves, who lived in Paradise, are tempted by the enemy and fall to his evil when they follow the enemy to
Middle-earth, an action unallowable by the One, their God, to retrieve the jewels. The Elves who played a part in the war with the enemy are exiled to the Lonely Isle of Eressea, an island close to Valinor, but are not permitted to dwell permanently in Valinor again.

After the evil of the First Age is thwarted, Men who had aided the Elves are rewarded for their valor by being given Numenor, an island in sight of Eressea, as a dwelling place; they are also rewarded with a triple life-span, which is as much extra time that the gods are permitted to give to men. But, this reward is a temptation that offers the Numenoreans a taste of the forbidden fruit:

Their reward is their undoing— or the means of their temptation. Their long life aids their achievements in art and wisdom, but breeds a possessive attitude to these things, and desire awakes for more time for their enjoyment. Foreseeing this in part, the gods laid a ban on the Numenoreans from the beginning: they must never sail to Eressea...21

The Numenorean's desire to be immortal is very strong due to this temptation, but they do not break the ban right away. First, they obey the ruling of the Valar, secondly they "obey unwillingly," and "finally they rebel."22

Even though Middle-earth is not Eden, it is similar for the actions of the Numenoreans parallel those of Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden, for first they are forbidden something that is desirable, then they question God's right to forbid them, and finally they fall to the temptation. And, just as occurs in the garden of Eden, it is the devil in disguise who causes Man to fall to temptation, yet, instead of disguising himself as a snake, the evil comes as the wizard Sauron. Sauron seduces the Numenoreans into believing that by visiting Eressea, Man would get his long awaited immortality. As fate would have it, things do not go as
planned, for the Numenorean's attack on Eressea is blocked by the Valar, the gods, who are forced to call on the One, God, to help them bring order back into the world.

As a result of the breaking of the ban, Numenor, and Eressea, the Blessed Realm or Paradise, disappear as did Eden once the lure was taken. As a result of this fall the Numenoreans lose their freedom to communicate with the gods, as well as many other freedoms that had previously brought them happiness:

"...the old world is broken and changed. A chasm is opened and changed. A chasm is opened in the sea and Tar Calion and his armada is engulfed. Numenor itself on the rift topples and vanishes forever with all its glory in the abyss. Thereafter there is no visible dwelling of the divine or immortal on earth. Men may sail now West, if they will, as far as they may, and still come no nearer to Valinor or the Blessed Realm, but return only into the east and so back again, for the world is round, and finite, and a circle inescapable—save by death. Only the 'immortals', the lingering Elves, may still if they will, wearying of the circle of the world, take ship and find the 'straight way', and come to the ancient or True West, and be at peace."[23]

Numenor, or in the terms of our world, Eden, is thus lost forever and it is because of this loss that the Numenoreans, who symbolically represents humanity, must constantly search for home and the joy that has been taken from them as a result of its loss.[24]

Tolkien uses the journey of the hobbits to convey the idea of pain at the separation from home, and to show the constant desire to return home. He primarily shows this longing for home through Bilbo and Frodo's longing for their home in the Shire, which to them is a Paradise, and to Tolkien is Edenic. Bilbo and Frodo's longing for their home in the Shire symbolizes the longing for Eden. Bag End, their hobbit-home in the Shire, first described in the opening paragraph of The Hobbit, is a
reminder of the comforts and happiness once found in Eden:

In a hole in the ground there lived a hobbit. Not a nasty dirty wet hole, filled with the ends of worms and an oozy smell, nor yet a dry, bare, sandy hole with nothing in it to sit down on or to eat; it was a hobbit hole, and that means comfort.

It had a perfectly round door like a porthole, painted green, with a shiny yellow brass knob in the exact middle. The door opened on to a tube-shaped hall like a tunnel without smoke, with panelled walls, and floors tiled and carpeted, provided with polished chairs, and lots and lots of pegs for hats and coats—the hobbit was fond of visitors. The tunnel wound on and on, going fairly but not quite straight into the side of the hill—The Hill, as all the people for many miles round called it—had many little round doors opened out of it, first on one side and then on another. No going upstairs for the hobbit: bedrooms, bathrooms, cellars, pantries (lots of these), wardrobes (he had whole rooms devoted to clothes), kitchens, dining-rooms, all were on the same floor, and indeed on the same passage. The best rooms were all on the left-hand side (going in), for these were the only ones to have windows, deep-set round windows looking over his garden, and meadows beyond, sloping down to the river. (H. p. 9)

Bilbo and Frodo's home is paradisial in many ways, but more importantly, it is a false paradise, which through the power of suggestion connects their world with a real Paradise.

Tolkien subtly suggests Eden through the images he selects to describe Bag End. First of all, the "perfectly round" door to the hobbit home suggests the circularity of the world, as if the entrance leads to some form of the world, perhaps that which would be the ideal of the hobbit whose home is inside. Moreover, the roundness may suggest a journey in a circular path, one which begins and ends at one point, regardless of whether the door serves as as entrance to the hobbit home or as an exit to the world outside. Furthermore, that the door is "painted green" hints that something of nature is present within or excluded without. Gaston Bachelard explains the significance
of the symbol of the door:

...the door is an entire cosmos of the Half-open. In fact, it is one of its primal images, the very origin of a daydream that accumulates desires and temptations; the temptation to open up the ultimate depths of being, and the desire to conquer all reticent beings. The door schematizes two strong possibilities, which sharply classify two types of daydream. At times, it is closed, bolted, padlocked. At others, it is open, that is to say, wide open.25

The door of the home in Tolkien's work is sometimes open, sometimes closed; it is open to let in the world and the knowledge of the world, but closed because it is a place one would like to stay in forever and a place one would like to remain the same.

Because of his physical surroundings, Bilbo's lifestyle can be likened to that of Adam and Eve, who lived in similar environment until evil was introduced into the garden of Eden. That the tunnel of his home is "not quite straight" suggests the presence of evil, or the imperfection of this world. The importance hobbits place on material possessions also reveals that Bilbo no longer lives naked and naive in his garden of Eden. Furthermore, that the best rooms are on the left hand suggests that at the beginning of the story Middle-earth is not "sitting on the right hand side of God," for evil and sin have already been introduced into this world.

That the windows look out upon a "garden and meadows" is also reminiscent of Eden, but Bag End is not the garden of Eden; instead it is an earthly paradise which will often serve as a reminder to Bilbo, and later to Frodo, of the innocence they have left behind by leaving what they though was the garden of Eden and traveling out into the "real" world.
It is because of the ever-growing presence of evil that Bilbo and Frodo must leave their little Eden in the Shire—thus they leave for much the same reasons Adam and Eve left their garden. Ultimately the hobbits must leave Bag End so that life in the Shire, no longer the same because of the ever-growing shadow of evil and because of their possession of the evil ring, can return to Eden-like conditions in the future.

The desire for immortality and the longing to return to home, symbolically to Eden, becomes most apparent in Tom Bombadil's house, and in the elvenhomes of Rivendell and Lothlorien. Tolkien uses an interesting inner journey pattern in the separation phase: before reaching each Edenic home, the travelers must first pass through a hellish land, next they find comfort and rest in a perfect, or paradisial land, and finally, they recommit themselves to the journey, and simultaneously accept the need to leave home in order to complete their task.

An explanation of the travelers' visiting of these homes helps to connect the total journey; the description of each homeland helps to explain the effect the separation from Eden, or from home has on the travelers; what is learned about life in each homeland is a part of the initiation segment; and the actual stay in these lands is part of recovery, or return. Thus, during the separation phase, a mini-journey takes place, for the travelers are separated from home and initiated into various cultures, even while they are in a sense temporarily returned to home.

Such a combination of these rites of passage together is in
keeping with van Gennep's idea that a series of rites may occur within
one phase of a broader series of rites, for "almost any rite can be
interpreted in several ways, whether it occurs within a complete system
or in isolation."26 Although each visit to a particular home along the
journey may be considered a series of rites with a separation from a
home, an initiation into new experiences, and a return to a new home,
each visit also occurs during a particular phase of the journey as a
whole. Thus, some homes are visited to help bring about separation,
some to perform initiation or transition, and some to bring about a
more effective return to the true home, The Shire.

Rivendell is the first Edenic home that is visited in the course
of the journey. Although The Hobbit is not a part of The Lord of the
Rings, the history of Frodo's coming into possession of the ring, and
the first descriptions Tolkien gives of Rivendell when Bilbo goes there,
can add to an understanding of Frodo's experience. Especially, Bilbo's
visit to Rivendell in The Hobbit lays the groundwork for the later
journey of Frodo in that Bilbo's experiences are essentially the same as
Frodo's. Before Bilbo visits Rivendell he must pass through a hellish
land:

They came on unexpected valleys, narrow with steep sides, that
opened suddenly at their feet, and they looked down surprised
to see trees below them and running water at the bottom. There
were dark ravines that one could neither jump nor climb into.
there were bogs, some of them green, pleasant places to look
at, with flowers growing bright and tall; but a pony that
walked there with a pack on its back would never have come
out again.... They came to the edge of a steep fall in the
ground so suddenly that Gandalf's horse nearly slipped down
the slope.... (H, pp. 56-57)

After traveling through a wasteland where at any moment a terrible
tragedy could befall any member of the company, it is not surprising
that Rivendell is a welcome sight; in fact, the feeling that the travelers receive when they near Rivendell is completely opposite of the above description, for Rivendell is a perfect vision of safety, and of peace:

Bilbo never forgot the way they slithered and slipped in the dusk down the steep zig-zag path into the secret valley of Rivendell. The air grew warmer as they got lower, and the smell of the pine trees made him drowsy so that every now and again he nodded and nearly fell off, or bumped his nose on the pony's neck. Their spirits rose as they went down and down. The trees changed to beech and oak, and there was a comfortable feeling in the twilight. (H, p. 57)

Besides the feelings of comfort and peace, the presence of religious guidance is also felt through Tolkien's use of the images of paths, bridges, and doors, which reveal an unmistakable religious parallel. Immediately before reaching Rivendell this type of religious suggestion becomes apparent. On the journey toward Rivendell, traveling elves greet the party and offer advice to help Bilbo and company reach their destination safely; one elf says: "We will set you right, but you had best get on foot, until you are over the bridge.... Will you go straight on?" (H, pp. 59-60) Shortly after this piece of advice is given, the narrator adds:

On they all went, leading their ponies, till they were brought to a good path.... There was only a narrow bridge of stone without a parapet, as narrow as a pony could walk on; and careful, one by one... (H, p. 60)

The path of God is represented in the "good path"; this path is also a narrow one, one which the travelers must tread carefully and righteously, and "one by one"; in the end, the bridge that crosses over into Paradise, or to the supreme home, remains the hoped for reward upon completion of this journey.
When the travelers finally reach the paradisial land of Rivendell, they find "its doors flung wide" (H, p. 60), a description reminiscent of the opening of the gates and doors of the real Paradise of the spiritual world:

Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? Or who shall stand in his high place. Lift up your heads, 0 ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors...?

Rivendell constantly serves as a reminder to the travelers of what lies behind those golden gates of Paradise for those who take the right paths, and open the right doors on the journey through life, and more specifically, on this journey toward home.

Frodo's experiences in the episodes leading up to and including the stops at homes along the path function as forms of isolated rituals—the very journeys themselves, the fellowship and communion occurring there—and function as a segment of the complete ritual of separation within the ritual system of the entire journey. Each segment of the journey further separates the hobbit from his home in the Shire, not only in physical space but also in mental recognition of differences, and from the memories of home, a recognition made more poignant in each "return" to a home along the road. Thus, what Frodo learns on his quest is not something he could discover at home, and he thus experiences a type of culture shock when he leaves home.

When Frodo begins his journey in The Fellowship of the Ring, the lands he first finds after leaving the Shire are quite unlike his home, thus serving as a type of rite of separation. His experiences quickly begin to resemble those of his uncle on his earlier journey; by the time Frodo and company reach Tom Bombadil's land, Frodo's journey has
followed the same pattern and renewed the same desires that Rivendell revived in Bilbo. Frodo first travels through the evil forest which is reminiscent of the hell that many people imagine and that often is suggested in fairy-tale descriptions of evil:

Not far from this tunnel there is, or was for a long time, the beginning of quite a broad path leading to the Bonfire Glade... (FR. p. 121)

The fairy-tale tradition of showing evil as existing in a forest, such as in "Little Red Riding Hood" and "Hansel and Gretel," is also an effective means of suggesting the presence of a devil and his ability to turn natural beauty into evil:

But after a while the air began to get hot and stuffy. The trees grew close again on either side, and they could no longer see far ahead. Now stronger than ever they felt again the ill will of the wood pressing on them. (FR. p. 123)

"...A sound of faint and far-off laughter" (FR. p. 129) also suggests that an evil being is nearby laughing a sinister and triumphant laugh at having trapped the travelers in this evil place.

However, as always in fairy-tales, and even in real life, there is a light at the end of the tunnel, and good to oppose evil. And, as is traditional in fairy-tales, the hero, if deserving, finds an aid or a guide to help him to continue his journey on the right path. Joseph Campbell speaks of the presence of such a "protective figure" who provides the hero with "amulets" to overcome the evils he is about to meet. 28 Although the travelers have more than one such guardian, Tom Bombadil certainly protects the sojourners from evil while they are in his land. Just when the travelers have begun to lose all hope of finding rest from the journey, Tom Bombadil, a god-like figure, called the
"Eldest" (FR, p. 142) and the "Master of wood, water, and hill"
(FR, p. 135) comes to their aid and renews hope so that they can con-
tinue on the journey that has been chosen for them. This renewal also
provides hope for a future in Paradise once the journey toward their
goal and finally through life is complete.

Certainly, visions of Paradise dance through the travelers' heads
while they are in Tom Bombadil's house, for this home is a veritable
Paradise. Even before they arrive at the house of the master, Tom
Bombadil, hope and energy are revived through thoughts of a beautiful
feast that will be waiting for them:

"You shall come with me! The table is all laden with yellow
cream, honeycomb, and white bread and butter." (FR, p. 132)

When the travelers finally arrive, the beauty of the land and the home
is beyond compare; its light and welcome is reminiscent of the light and
welcome of Paradise:

The path was now plain before them, well-tended and bordered
with stone. It wound up on to the top of a grassy knoll, now
grey under the pale starry night; and there, still high above
them on a further slope, they saw the twinklings of a house.
Down again the path went, and then up again, up a long smooth
hillside of turf, towards the light. Suddenly a wide yellow
beam flowed out brightly from a door that was opened.
(FR, p. 133)

The hobbits are welcomed into this beautiful land--"... the hobbits
stood upon the threshold, and a golden light was all about them"
(FR, p. 133)--and thus, hope and confidence are almost immediately
revived.

Tom Bombadil's house is described more vividly than Rivendell, and
the images presented are religious in nature. The most repeated is that
of light. Not only is there light from lamps, but "on the table...stood
many candles, tall and yellow, burning brightly" (FR, p. 134). The light of the lamp and the light of the candles suggest a waiting and hoping for the coming of the Lord which in turn symbolizes the time of judgment and the possibility of reaching paradise, or the true home, once again. These lights are also symbols of the past as well as the future glory of those who remain constant, as the lamp, in their love for God:

The Lord said to Moses, 'Command the people of Israel to bring you pure oil from beaten olives for the lamp, that a light may be kept burning continually. Outside the veil of the testimony, in the tent of meeting, Aaron shall keep it in order from evening to morning before the Lord continually; it shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations.'

And, as might be expected since Tolkien is so consistent with his images of "the promised land", the lamp and the two candles are kept forever burning in the House of Tom Bombadil—"When everything was set in order, all the lights in the room were put out, except one lamp and a pair of candles..." (FR, p. 136).

In the House of Tom Bombadil, the hobbits are given a feast like the eucharist, and their strength of body and of will are revived. The bread and drink given at this feast has strange properties of rejuvenation:

Though the hobbits ate, as only famished hobbits can eat, there was no lack. The drink in their drinking-bowls seemed to be clear cold water, yet it went to their hearts like wine and set free their voices. The guests became suddenly aware that they were singing merrily, as if it was easier and more natural than talking. (FR, p. 136)

The food would hold them for long periods of time and time passed quickly in this house:

The hobbits under the spell of Tom's words may have missed one meal or many, but when the food was before them it seemed at
least a week since they had eaten.... But after a time their hearts and spirits rose high again, and their voices rang out in mirth and laughter. (FR, p. 143)

The ritual of communion taken here prepares the hobbits for further adventures, for they have managed to feel "at home" as Bilbo did in Rivendell.

Not only has their energy been renewed through food and fellowship, but also the knowledge that they are safe from the evils of the outside world helps to renew the strength and hope of the travelers. Goldberry, Tom's golden-haired companion, tells them that although they may hear the noises of evil outside the windows, to fear not, for nothing evil could pass through Tom's heavenly fortress:

"Have peace now," she said, "until the morning! Heed no nightly noises! For nothing passes door and window here save moonlight and starlight and the wind off the hill-top." (FR, p. 136)

Tom Bombadil's power to keep evil away from his home is a complicated issue—apparently Tom's power over evil is due to his lack of fear and his confidence in his own goodness. Although Tom appears to be somewhat simple due to his casual attitude toward the world outside his paradisial abode, he is aware of the evil that exists in the real world outside, for he tells the hobbits stories about the evil in the forest (FR, pp. 140-141), and seems to understand the power of the Ring even though he is unaffected by it. Bombadil is the only character in The Lord of the Rings who is able to touch the evil ring of power and not have any desire to possess it (FR, p. 144). The visit at Bombadil's house is thus, in part, separation, for his ability to live and to glorify the past, a time "...when the dark under the stars...was fearless—before the Dark Lord came from outside!" (FR, p. 142) reminds them of the
importance of the past, and of the past they have left behind at home, and of their need to return there to relive and to glorify their own past. The visit is also initiation because the travelers must realize they can not remain forever in Bombadil's home if they are ever to return to their own home again, and thus they are further initiated into the meaning of their separation from home and into the need for the journey to continue.

Visiting Tom Bombadil's house, and being "filled with wonder" at "the silence of the heavens" (FR, p. 142) was part of the journey plan. The travelers were expected to relax in the beauty of this heavenly abode, to begin to accept the presence of evil in the outside world although remain untouched by it temporarily, and to be reminded of the need to continue their quest toward home.

The travelers, through the new knowledge of the world they have gained from Tom Bombadil's perspective on life, also begin to understand that, although they would have loved to remain in the house of Tom Bombadil forever, they are not at home, and they realize that staying there would mean remaining in the past, rather than facing the world and the journey at hand. They come to a revelation that they are not at home and thus have begun to seriously contemplate, even if they do not fully understand the full meaning of their thoughts, their separation from home:

As they listened, they began to understand the lives of the Forest, apart from themselves, indeed to feel themselves as the strangers where all other things were at home. (FR, p. 141)

In this way, the stop at Tom Bombadil's house serves as a rite of separation, one which separates the hobbits from their home by mental space rather than just physical. They now are prepared to continue on their
journey which will further separate them from home and further initiate them into life away from home.

So, the visit to Tom Bombadil's house serves to give the travelers new knowledge, a pleasant recovery in a land that reminds them of home and of their journey toward home, hope for the success of the journey, and ultimately, it brings them from fantasy back to reality when they realize the need to leave this Paradise. They leave refreshed and totally committed to the journey, even though what lies ahead is unknown--it is "no more than a guess of blue and a remote white glimmer" (FR, p. 147):

They took a deep draught of the air, and felt that a skip and a few stout strides would bear them wherever they wished. It seemed faint-hearted to go jogging aside over the crumpled skirts of the downs towards the Road, when they should be leaping, as lusty as Tom, over the stepping stones of the hills straight towards the Mountains. (FR, p. 147)

The travelers have many miles to go before they sleep as sweetly as they did in the House of Tom Bombadil. During this period between homes, Frodo is further brought into an understanding of his separation from home. No longer sheltered by the roof of a paradisial home, Frodo finds himself regretting the journey that is keeping him away from his home:

He wished bitterly that his fortune had left him in the quiet and beloved Shire. He stared down at the hateful road, leading back westward--to his home. (FR, p. 200)

The fact that Frodo does not turn back at this point is evidence of his firm commitment to the journey as well as his ability to put his home behind him, in a sense, in order to continue the journey, which in Frodo's mind will lead him back home, although by the long road.
Instead of being able to return home as Frodo might like, he and the others must take another path, one which takes them once again toward hellish lands. Before Frodo finds rest in Rivendell, he must pass through a dark land that resembles hell, a land much like the one he and the others had passed through before reaching Tom Bombadil’s house:

In the late afternoon, they came to a place where the Road went suddenly under the dark shadow of tall pine trees, and then plunged into a deep cutting with steep moist walls of red stone. Echoes ran along as they hurried forward; and there seemed to be a sound of many footfalls following their own. All at once, as if through a gate of light, the Road ran out again from the end of the tunnel into the open. There at the bottom of a sharp incline they saw before them a long flat mile, and beyond that the Ford of Rivendell. On the further side was a steep brown bank, threaded by a winding path... (*FR*, pp. 224-225)

As might be expected, Frodo finds evil waiting to tempt him on this hellish path; he is twice attacked and tempted to evil by the nine evil riders, servants of the enemy, Sauron, the same being who had tempted the Numenoreans to sail to Eressëa and thus had helped to cause the fall that started the journey in search of home in the first place. During one attack Frodo reveals himself to the riders by putting on the Ring. Normally invisible to others once the evil ring of power is on his finger, Frodo can be seen more clearly by the Ringwraiths once he falls to their temptation, since use of the ring brings him closer to their world and because “he is already on the threshold of their world” (*FR*, p. 235) since he possesses the Ring, a symbol and instrument of evil.

Immediately before crossing the Ford which leads to Rivendell, Frodo is again attacked by the Riders of Sauron. (*FR*, p. 208) The river becomes the fiery core of hell during the attack:
At that moment there came a roaring and a rushing, a noise of loud waters rolling many stones. Dimly Frodo saw the river below him rise, and down along its course came a plumed cavalry of waves. White flames seemed to Frodo to flicker on their crests and he fancied that he saw amid the water white riders upon white horses with frothing manes. The three Riders that were still in the midst of the Ford were overwhelmed; they disappeared suddenly under the angry foam. (FR, p. 227)

Frodo, however, having taken off the Ring and strong enough not to fall to the temptation to put it on again, passes over into Rivendell and temporarily replaces this hell with Paradise.

Once Frodo reaches Rivendell he finds what Bilbo found there, a kind of Paradise which one both needs and desires after an arduous journey. Frodo and company, like Bilbo, receive the "red carpet" treatment by the Elves who feel that every guest should be treated like a king. This house is appropriately called the "Last Homely House east of the sea" (H, p. 60; FR, p. 237) by all who know about her hospitality; Frodo calls it the perfect house because of its pleasant atmosphere:

That house was, as Bilbo had long ago reported, 'a perfect house, whether you like sleep or story-telling or singing, or just sitting and thinking best, or a pleasant mixture of them all.' Merely to be there was a cure for weariness, fear, and sadness. (FR, p. 237)

Paradise is also expected to be a place where there is no pain, or sorrow, and is the perfect resting place; The Bible describes Heaven thus:

And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away.30

Within a world full of evil beings, and in the midst of a war, a home like Rivendell is a necessary stop for the travelers to regain their composure. And, even though Rivendell, like the previous homes, is not truly
Paradise, it is a comfortable and safe place that resembles Paradise, and as a result helps them better handle being away from their earthly homes, as well as the loss of home, symbolically Eden, which ultimately brought about the condition of the world and brought them on this journey.

There are many aspects of Rivendell that make this house the perfect home, and remind the travelers of their Eden, and their Paradise, Bag End. One of the main attractions is the feasting. The Elves provide their guests with many magnificent dishes for them to feast upon: the food appears as if by magic. For the Elves, feasting is a ritual much like communion—the food of the elves has a special sort of substance to it that causes the hobbits and the rest of the company not to remember having eaten, but nonetheless to feel satisfied. The ritual of feasting is thus similar to the Rites of Communion; the special food is similar to the 'body and blood' of Christ which is given during Communion.

The drink possesses remarkable properties of rejuvenation:

'Drink this!' said Glorfindel to them, pouring for each in turn a little liquor from his silver-studded flask of leather. It was clear as spring water and had no taste, and it did not feel either cool or warm in the mouth; but strength and vigour seemed to flow into all their limbs as they drank it. Eaten after that draught the stale bread and dried fruit (which was now all that they had left) seemed to satisfy their hunger better than many a good breakfast in the Shire had done. (FR, p. 224)

Thus, communion with the elves reminds the hobbits of the happiness and satisfaction they had felt at home, in their little Paradise in the Shire.

Besides feasting, singing and dancing is another pleasure of the elves that is paradisial. The beautiful songs that the elves sing to while away the time have an enchanting effect on all who hear them:
At first the beauty of the melodies and the interwoven words in the Elven-tongue, even though he understood them little, held him in a spell, as soon as he began to attend to them. Almost it seemed that the words took shape, and visions of far lands and bright things that he had never yet imagined opened out before him; and the fire-lit hall became like a golden mist above seas of foam that sighed upon the margins of the world. Then the enchantment became more and more dreamlike, until he felt an endless river of swelling gold and silver was flowing over him, too multitudinous for its pattern to be comprehended; it became part of the throbbing air about him. Swiftly he sank under its weight into a deep realm of sleep. (FR, pp. 245-246)

The songs are strangely otherworldly—the words of the songs bring "visions of far lands" to Frodo's mind. They may represent pleasant dreams of heavenly places and the singing that will be heard in Paradise:

And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder; and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps: And they sung as it were a new song before the throne. and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth. 31

Although the travelers do not yet understand the words of the songs, or the meaning of their separation, the songs bring to the hobbits' minds the past, or their Eden in the Shire, and their quest to preserve or restore their Eden in the future when they finally return home.

The words of the songs cause the travelers to think about the past, present, and future of their quest. Tolkien says that Elrond's house "...represents Lore—the preservation in reverent memory of all tradition concerning the good, and beautiful. 32 So, the songs remind those on the quest of all that has been lost as a result of their separation from their Edenic past. The Elves are also dwelling in the past, and the songs they sing are evidence of their nostalgia:
The poems often celebrate persons and places of long ago when Middle-Earth was very different from its state at the time of the Quest. The favorite images in elvish poetry are light and brightness, especially starlight; the favorite themes are romantic love and physical beauty. Although the Elves are fading toward their eventual extinction at the end of the story, their poetry reveals their attempts to cling to past achievements and to glorify the light which they yet bear and bring to other creatures of Middle-Earth. Their songs most often function as contrasts to surrounding gloom and give the dejected, spiritually darkened listeners a new insight, a fresh glimpse of themselves and their roles in the great quest.33

The songs of the Elves are primarily about the Paradise that they have lost as a result of their own fall—-they sing many songs of the Blessed Realm (FR, p. 250). Through watching the Elves experience pain as a result of their need to cling to the past, the travelers are able to see what could happen to them if they were to hold onto the past as the Elves do.

By observing the Elves attempting to hold onto the past, the travelers are better able to accept their journey and, at the same time, understand the reasons why they cannot return home until the journey is complete. Earlier in the journey, Frodo was surprised to hear Sam's wise assessment of the Elves and their way of dwelling in the past:

'They seem a bit above my likes and dislikes, so to speak,' ....'It don't seem to matter what I think about them. They are quite different from what I expected—so old and young, and so gay and sad, as it were.'...

'Do you feel any need to leave the Shire now—now that your wish to see them has come true already?' /Frodo asked.

'Yes sir. I don't know how to say it, but after last night I feel different. I seem to see ahead, in a kind of a way. I know we are going to take a very long road, into darkness; but I have something to do before the end, and it lies ahead, not in the Shire. I must see it through, sir, if you understand me.' (FR, p. 96)

Even after watching the lifestyle of the Elves with wonder and amazement, Sam had long ago decided that he would rather accept a journey that presents many unknown obstacles with some hope for a worthwhile reward in
the future, than accept the pain that comes from enduring immortality, a journey that always remains in the same place, the past. Like Sisyphus, the Elves have no hope of bettering themselves for the future, a problem that the Elves must contemplate and endure again and again during their long lives.

Although the home of the Elves at first appears to be the "perfect home", in reality, the perfect happiness is not even attainable in Rivendell. The Elves may be immortal, the valley may be beautiful and pleasant, time may seem to stand still, and the travelers may seem never to grow old there, but in the end the hobbits must realize that staying in a land like this forever will only make their quest of returning home more difficult when they finally return to the real world outside. And, in their hearts, the sojourners know that staying in Rivendell is not part of the plan. When Bilbo was there, he was reminded of his home in the Shire, yet he was misled to believe that any wish could come true in Rivendell. But there is no real adventure in this fairy-tale land where time stands still, and so Bilbo makes the decision to carry on with the journey rather than to return to home or to stay in the past by remaining in Rivendell:

Now it is a strange thing, but things that are good to have and days that are good to spend are soon told about, and not much to listen to; while things that are uncomfortable palpitating, and even gruesome, may make a good talk, and take a deal of telling anyway. They stayed long in that good house, fourteen days at least, and they found it hard to leave. Bilbo would gladly have stopped there for ever and ever—even supposing a wish would have taken him right back to his hobbit-hole without trouble. Yet there is little to tell about their stay. (H, p. 61)

Frodo also needed to come to the same conclusion before the journey could continue.
In the end, the hobbits know that they must go and face the danger that awaits them in the outside world, and so they cannot stay in this "perfect house." Although the sojourners cannot stay in this vision of Paradise, they are able to rest and gain energy in Rivendell for the next segment of the journey. While in Rivendell, the travelers are also reminded of the need to journey away from home, and of what could be gained from a successful journey. The travelers will return to Rivendell in between other segments of the journey so Rivendell could thus appropriately be termed the story's journey center. The thinking time that is available to the members of the party during this and subsequent visits to Rivendell serve to produce time for decision-making about the course of the journey, decisions that will set the course of the journey and inspire the travelers to continue:

It is not a scene of action but of reflection. Thus it is a place visited on the way to all deeds or 'adventures'. It may prove to be on the direct road (as in The Hobbit), but it may be necessary to go from there in a totally unexpected course. So necessarily in The Lord of the Rings, having escaped to Elrond from the imminent pursuit of present evil, the hero departs in a wholly new direction: to go and face it at its source.35

Ultimately, the travelers are given inspiration at Rivendell to try to face the world head on and to carry the burden to the desired end in hopes that the reward for a successful journey will be a place much like Rivendell, or much like home.

An essential part of separation is return, not to "home," or to Eden, but to a place that reminds the travelers of home, symbolically of Eden, so fully that it brings pain of its loss. That pain is reflected in the eyes of the inhabitants of Rivendell, who remain in a state of
what could be called permanent childhood as they attempt to maintain a sense of their glorious past which existed before their fall and the loss of the Blessed Realm. But, like Paradise, that pain is not something that one can describe, for Paradise, and the memory of a Paradise lost, are feelings, not a physical reality. And like Paradise, Rivendell also is not described as though it were a physical reality—the rooms, the halls, the doors, the landscape are not described in any detail to make them memorable. Gaston Bachelard explains this idea:

For the real houses of memory, the houses to which we return in dreams, the houses that are rich in unalterable oneirism, do not readily lend themselves to description....All we communicate to others is an orientation towards what is secret without ever being able to tell the secret objectively. What is secret never has total objectivity. In this respect, we orient oneirism but we do not accomplish it.36

Instead of trying to see Rivendell, or describe Eden or Paradise, one should "let the image float inside you; pass lightly" so that "the slightest idea of it will suffice for you."37

Eden and Paradise must suffice in idea and thought only until the final day arrives when Man is allowed back into that kingdom. It is for this reason that, like Tom Bombadil's house and Bag End, Rivendell, and Lothlorien which will be discussed later, are not described fully but instead serve to remind the travelers of the beauty and peace that once existed in their Eden and now belong to Paradise and those who are able to return home, symbolically those who are admitted to the final home, Paradise.

From the journey center of Rivendell where the overall journey plan is once again set, the sojourners must then travel through even darker and more evil lands than they had passed through in earlier parts
of the journey, before they are once again allowed to pass into the
recovery, or return phase, symbolically representing Paradise. After
leaving Rivendell, they journey to Lothlorien. It is before the company
reaches Lothlorien that they must pass one of the most rigorous tests of
skill and resolve. The travelers are forced to journey through the
legendary Mines of Moria, a series of caves through which hardly a man
has ever passed alive. The decision to travel through Moria as an
extremely difficult one, for every member of the party is afraid of the
outcome. However, in the end, the company must choose the dangerous path
of Moria if they want the journey to continue at all. Courage and firm-
ness of resolve to the journey at hand finally help the party make the
decision to carry on with the journey even in the face of almost certain
death.

Once in Moria, the travelers find that Moria is even more terrri-
fying than they had imagined. The path to the fire of hell is a twisted
one, marked by many passages which might become bottomless pits at a
moment's notice:

The passage twisted round a few turns, and then began to de-
scend. It went steadily down for a long while before it be-
came level once again. The air grew hot and stifling, but it
was not foul, and at times they felt currents of cooler air
upon their faces, issuing from half-guessed openings in the
walls. There were many of these. In the pale ray of the wiz-
ard's staff, Frodo caught glimpses of stairs and arches, and
of other passages and tunnels, sloping up, or running steeply
down, or opening blankly dark on either side. It was bewild-
ering beyond hope of remembering. (FR, p. 324)

A fiery furnace like that of hell also exists in the Mines of Moria,

further emphasizing the connection between Moria and Hell:
Down the centre stalked a double line of towering pillars. They were carved like boles of mighty trees whose boughs upheld the roof with a branching tracery of stone. Their stems were smooth and black, but a red glow was darkly mirrored in their sides. Right across the floor, close to the feet of two huge pillars a great fissure had opened. Out of it a fierce red light came, and now and again flames licked at the brink and curled about the bases of the columns. (FR, pp. 343-344)

This image is similar to the image of hell as illustrated in The Bible:

The son of Man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. So shall it be at the end of the world....

Regardless of, or perhaps in spite of, the forceful presence of evil in Moria, the fellowship of travelers remains strong enough to temporarily hold off the evil of this hellish abode. In fact, the fellowship is perhaps given more strength of resolve from the challenge:

To Gandalf the far-off memories of a journey long before were now of little help, but even in the gloom and despite all windings of the road he knew whither he wished to go, and he did not falter, as long as there was a path that led towards his goal. (FR, p. 324)

Even after the company believes Gandalf dead, they must realize that the journey must continue despite the odds against them; Aragorn echoes the sentiments of the company:

'Farewell, Gandalf!' he cried. 'Did I not say to you: if you pass the doors of Moria, beware! Alas that I spoke true! What hope have we without you?'

He turned to the Company. 'We must do without hope,' he said. 'At least we may yet be avenged. Let us gird ourselves and weep no more! Come! We have a long road, and much to do.' (FR, p. 347)

Frodo, who realized he was wishing himself back home again (FR, pp. 331-332) during their brief visit to the very depths of hell, also must realize that going home before the journey is completed can no longer be a
reality; in fact, Frodo had accepted the journey and whatever it might bring in Rivendell, and had reiterated his promise to carry out his task to its rightful end before entering the Mines of Moria:

'I wish I was back there,' he said. 'But how can I return without shame--unless there is indeed no other way, and we are already defeated?' (FR, p. 308)

Because of the fellowship's fierce sense of resolve, their fear of shame, and because together they have passed the difficult task of journeying through hell and not succumbing to evil, the company is rewarded with a recovery in the beautiful elvenhome, Lothlorien. Lothlorien is another home that reminds the travelers of home, and of Eden and Paradise. It is the final Paradise that the travellers visit before they head toward the Cracks of Doom. Lothlorien is the most beautiful of the elvenhomes; the land is laden with gold, just as "the city [of God] was pure gold":

'There lie the woods of Lothlorien!" said Legolas. That is the fairest of all the dwellings of my people. There are no trees like the trees of that land. For in the autumn their leaves fall not, but turn to gold. Not till the spring comes and the new green opens do they fall, and then the boughs are laden with yellow flowers; and the floor of the wood is golden, and golden is the roof, and its pillars are of silver, for the bark of the trees is smooth and grey. So still our songs in Mirkwood say. My heart would be glad if I were beneath the eaves of that wood, and it were springtime!' (FR, p. 349)

The travelers who have never before seen Lothlorien also find an almost unspeakable sense of glory at the immortal beauty and perfection of Lorien:

Frodo stood awhile still lost in wonder. It seemed to him that he had stepped through a high window that looked on a vanished world. A light was upon it for which his language had no name. All that he saw was shapely, but the shapes seemed at once clear cut, as if they had been first conceived and drawn at the uncovering of his eyes, and ancient as if they had endured for ever. He saw no colour but those he knew, gold and white and blue and green, but they were fresh and poignant, as if he
had at that moment first perceived them and made for them names new and wonderful. In winter here no heart could mourn for summer or for spring. No blemish or sickness or deformity could be seen in anything that grew upon the earth. On the land of Lorien there was no stain. (FR, p. 365)

The past, present, and future of the world are all a part of the mystery of Lothlorien. The paradise of both the past and the present, and a glorious hint of what the real Paradise might be like for those who carry their dreams faithfully to the end, exists in Lorien, for Lothlorien and its people are immortal, having dwelt both during the times of Numenor, or of Eden, the "vanished world," and in the Paradise of the future, where a mysterious "light" surrounds its natural beauty, upon which there is "no blemish or sickness or deformity...no stain."

Lothlorien is more profoundly reminiscent of Eden than the other homes had been, thus it is in Lothlorien that the hobbits are most reminded of their own homes, and of what they must do before they can ever return to the Shire, the Eden of the hobbits, and attempt to remove the stain that may be a part of it by the time they return. It is in Lothlorien that the hobbits also begin to realize that their beloved land, their Eden, may no longer be the same when and if they ever return, for they know that evil has penetrated their homeland as a result of the growing power of the Dark Lord, and as a result of their connection with the evil Ring of power. Thus, it is in Lothlorien that the hobbits truly begin to realize that their Eden may be gone forever, and so they must begin to live for the future, rather than cling to the past any longer.

The Elves of Lothlorien show the hobbits the miseries that come from clinging to the past, and help them to learn to live for the future.
The Elves of Lothlorien are more influenced by their past glories than the Elves of Rivendell, and all about their land is a certain sorrow amidst bliss; here Frodo is compelled to nostalgia for the loss of a Paradise:

As soon as he set foot upon the far bank of Silverlode a strange feeling had come upon him, and it deepened as he walked on into the Naïty; it seemed to him that he had stepped over a bridge of time into a corner of the Elder Days, and was now walking in a world that was no more. In Rivendell there was memory of ancient things; in Lorien the ancient things still lived on in the waking world. Evil had been seen and heard there, sorrow had been known; the Elves feared and distrusted the world outside; wolves were howling on the wood's borders; but on the land of Lorien no shadow lay. (FR, p. 364)

For Frodo, nostalgia means more than homesickness—here he finally understands that he has been wishing he were a part of a golden age that "was no more," and that he has been contemplating the impossible—"stepping over a bridge of time" in order to stay in a Paradise of the past.

Holding onto the past might seem to be a pleasant pastime for those who dwell in Lothlorien, but by clinging to the past, these elves are avoiding both the present and the future for they live in hope that the past and the present will remain forever entwined, and that the future will never come:

'Do you not see wherefore your coming is to us as the footstep of Doom? For if you fail, then we are laid bare to the Enemy. Yet if you succeed, then our power is diminished, and Lothlorien will fade, and the tides of Time will sweep it away. We must depart into the West, or dwindle to a rustic folk of dells and caves, slowly to forget and to be forgotten.' (FR, p. 380)

Yet even through their own misery, and their own fears, the Elves of Lothlorien are able to see clearly that in the end they will have only one decent choice that can be made—they will fade rather than submit
to Sauron's evil:

The love of the Elves for their land and their works is deeper than the deeps of the Sea, and their regret is undying and cannot ever wholly be assuaged. Yet they will cast all away rather than submit to Sauron: for they know now. (PR, p. 380)

The almost unspoken, but nonetheless understood, fear of the future that the Elves carry with them helps Sam and Frodo deal more effectively with the present, and ultimately the future, for it is in Lothlorien that Sam and Frodo finally realize the importance of the task before them, and realize the importance of learning to deal with the present.

It is Sam who most strongly shows the influence of the experience. He dotes on the Elves and their blessed realm, but after observing these Elves more closely, he discovers that they are avoiding change through their magic:

'They're all elvish enough, but they're not all the same. Now these folk aren't wanderers or homeless, and seem a bit nearer to the likes of us: they seem to belong here, more even than Hobbits do in the Shire. Whether they've made the land, or the land's made them, it's hard to say, if you take my meaning. It's wonderfully quiet here. Nothing seems to be going on, and nobody seems to want it to. If there's any magic about, it's right down deep, where I can't lay my hands on it, in a manner of speaking.' (FR, p. 376)

Immediately after making this comment, Sam makes up his mind that he must go on, rather than look back at the Shire and the past:

I've often wanted to see a bit of magic like what it tells of in the old tales, but I've never heard of a better land than this. It's like being at home and on a holiday at the same time, if you understand me. I don't want to leave. All the same, I'm beginning to feel that if we've got to go on, then we'd best get it over.

'It's the job that's never started as takes longest to finish, as my old gaffer used to say. And I don't reckon that these folk can do much more to help us, magic or no. (FR, p. 376)
Tests of the firmness of resolve are given to the company while they are in Lothlorien. When the fellowship is first greeted in Lothlorien, they are each met with the stare of the Lady Galadriel who appears to be able to see right through them and to discover their innermost secrets; all of them believe that she has offered them some sort of false hope that they may be able to return home and thus accept the quest as a failure:

All of them had fared alike: each had felt that he was offered a choice between a shadow full of fear that lay ahead, and something that he greatly desired: clear before his mind it lay, and to get it he had only to turn aside from the road and leave the Quest and the war against Sauron to others. (FR, p. 373)

Sam is again tested when he chooses to look into the Mirror of Galadriel; in the mirror he sees the evil that has taken over the Shire, and as a result, feels a strong desire to rush back and save the Shire. But, reminded of his quest, Sam chooses to stay by Frodo and to "go home by the long road...or not at all (FR, p. 378).

By being able to leave Lothlorien behind, the travelers are symbolically leaving the past, and Eden behind, and accepting life, and the condition of the journey in the process. As Frodo leaves Galadriel, he comes to a truer understanding of Galadriel and of the mystery of the past in the present:

Already she seemed to him, as by men of later days Elves are seen: present and yet remote, a living vision of that which has already been left far behind by the flowing streams of Time. (FR, p. 389)

In a sense, Lothlorien is Eden, and thus, being in Eden can only be part of a dream. But reliving Eden, and realizing that Eden is lost forever in reality is an important lesson to learn, for only by
accepting the present can the travelers begin to live for the future of
Mankind, or begin to live in any real sense at all. So, the travelers
learn to accept one of the tragic dichotomies of life—"for such is the
way of it; to find and lose, as it seems to those whose boat is on the
running stream" (FR, p. 395) -- and, in doing so, gain the essence of
life, for "the Elves of Lorien...thrust them out into the flowing
stream" (FR, p. 393).
III

INITIATION: "THRUST OUT INTO THE FLOWING STREAM"

Home is behind, the world ahead,
And there are many paths to tread
Through shadows to the edge of night,
Until the stars are all alight.
Then the world behind and home ahead,
We'll wander back to home and bed.
(FR, p. 87)

Having finally begun to accept that they are vagabonds due to their separation from home and their inability to remain permanently in any home because of the nature of their journey, Frodo and Sam move on to a new phase in the journey: Initiation. During this phase the two travelers learn that evil is real, and through the acceptance of this concept, they reestablish what they had learned in the Separation phase—that home, symbolically Eden, is lost forever. Consequently, during this phase, Frodo and Sam find themselves searching; they find themselves in a phase between innocence and understanding of the structure of the world, and also in a phase possibly between one home, the Shire, or Eden, and the next, Paradise.

Understanding, discovery, awareness, and acceptance are concepts for comprehending initiation. During this phase of the journey, Frodo and Sam are confused, but as they pass each initiatory test, they realize something important either about themselves or about the journey as a whole. Some of the most important revelations that Frodo and Sam have
result from their comparisons of the ways of the world, to their concept of home, and help to bring about their gradual understanding of the reasons for their separation from home.

At first, Frodo and Sam accept their separation from home because they believe it is only temporary. Because they are never able to completely forget about their home in the Shire, they find themselves using the rules they had learned at home to aid them in making decisions which help them to pass various trials and temptations on the road. In fact, even simple thoughts of their home in the Shire can help the two make decisions and confront obstacles. In the end, Frodo and Sam must choose good over evil in these tests in order for the quest to continue. Frodo and Sam, of course, also discover things and go through tests where the rules from home are not so easily transferred; in these more difficult situations, they must then use the moral judgement they have learned both from home and from the journey to do what they believe is the right thing.

The clear view of the world that the two gain as a result of their initiation culminates in Sam's throwing away of the articles brought from home, symbolically ridding both travelers of the past, and of the memories of home that have kept them from experiencing the world and from completing the task. Shortly after Sam's action, Frodo makes the exclamation that "there could be no return," (RK, p. 211) symbolically revealing his true acknowledgment of the separation from home. Only then can the ring be returned to the fire, and only then can the initiation phase end and the return phase begin.
According to Propp and Campbell, the phase in which the hero is separated from his home is followed by a phase of initiation into the adventure of life. It is a phase in which the hero is often interrogated, and tempted before he finally returns from the journey by liquidating the misfortune of lack which has separated him from his home. 39 Campbell explains, in part, the significance of the pattern of the initiation phase:

Once having traversed the threshold, the hero moves in a dream landscape of curiously fluid, ambiguous forms, where he must survive a succession of trials. This is a favorite phase of the myth-adventure. It has produced a world literature of miraculous tests and ordeals. The hero is covertly aided by the advice, amulets, and secret agents of the supernatural helper whom he met before his entrance into this region. Or it may be that he here discovers for the first time that there is a benign power everywhere supporting him in his superhuman passage.

Campbell subtitles his chapter on initiation "The Road of Trials", which is an appropriate description of the initiation phase, for it is a transition period in which every action, reflection, and epiphany counts for something. 40

Furthermore, van Gennep's statement that "almost any rite can be interpreted in several ways" helps to explain how each phase of the journey may contain some type of initiation. 41 To truly understand the meaning of the separation phase, the hero must first pass through initiation, and to truly complete his initiation, he must experience the return phase.

Frodo and Sam's experience of gazing into the mirror of Galadriel (FR. pp. 377-381), for example, could serve as either part of the separation or the initiation phase. It is a separation in that Frodo and Sam
both feel the pain of being separated from home, and the threat of the more permanent loss of their home to evil foes as result of the terrifying vision in the mirror. It is initiation in that Frodo and Sam are both forced to change their vision of the world, since they must recognize the existence of evil in the real world, even in their own home in the Shire. The mirror itself is "symbolic of the world, the field of the 'reflected image,' and so is an aid which helps the two become initiated into the world.\textsuperscript{42} Thus, the ritual of looking into Galadriel's mirror separates Frodo and Sam from one world, the world of Shirely innocence, and also provides a transition of the two into a different social or cosmic world, a world where evil exists, Eden is no longer recognizable, and there is no place like home. Furthermore, by looking into the mirror they are able to be incorporated into a new realm of understanding, a return to a reality, albeit a new reality recognized by them for the first time.

The difficulty of placing given rites into a definitive category is in keeping with the usual ambiguity present in initiation rites. Victor Turner in \textit{The Ritual Process} focuses on the transition rite, the liminal phase as he calls it, of rites of passage, which deals mainly with the process of initiation. During this phase, the ritual passenger encounters new, and sometimes completely opposite, worldviews that confuse him, and so "he passed through a cultural realm that has few or none of the attributes of the past or coming state." During this phase, the ritual passenger must evaluate and reevaluate his current worldview; consequently, this period may be described as "potentially a period of scrutinization of the central values and axioms of the culture in which
it occurs." Turner also discusses the change that the heroes must pass through in terms of the structure of society. The separation phase corresponds with the separation from structure, initiation symbolizes anti-structure, or a period in which the individual is outside of the social structure, and the return indicates a reincorporation into the structure of society. Turner's explanation of the pattern is similar to Campbell's and van Gennep's in that all three phases of the journey ritual must occur in order for the heroes to completely experience the meaning of their existence in the real world.

Confusion about the meaning of the world and of their own existence often confront Frodo and Sam as they find themselves alone in the wilderness. These two heroes must learn to face obstacles, and to make moral decisions that may either help or hinder them to establish a higher social status in the world. They slowly progress into a land in which they cannot find any real shelter from the outside world and a land which has no resemblance to the Shire, or any of the beautiful homes they had visited during the Separation phase, but instead resembles Hell. Frodo and Sam had previously experienced the essence of Hell on the road to Tom Bombadil's house, Rivendell, and Lothlorien, but never before had they been forced to endure the temptations of Hell for any length of time. Thus, the structure and value system of the new world Sam and Frodo must face is completely different from the world that they are used to and they are forced to continuously compare the two opposing worlds.

During the initiation phase, the two must learn to use the rules they have been taught at home in order to pass the various temptations
and tests delegated to them. Ultimately, the two must choose the values of home, which have been learned not only in the Shire, but in the other Edenic homes visited, over the temptations of evil in order for the heroes to pass through the initiation phase, and ultimately, to achieve a higher social status in the return phase.

Again, the initiation process, or the process of coming to terms with reality is not limited to the initiation phase, for learning occurs all the way through the journey, from the point of separation from home, to the final completion of the appointed task and the return to home.

Once Frodo and Sam are thrust out into the real world, where they can no longer quickly return to Rivendell, or to one of the other Edenic homelands, the two must almost immediately learn to trust the moral instincts they have learned from home in order to make appropriate decisions so that they may possibly open the door to a Paradise on the other side of the world. During this time, Sam and Frodo are continually confronted with choices which cause them to gradually, even subconsciously reevaluate their view of the world, for they realize step by step that their choices along the path may help or hinder them in their quest.

Feelings of confusion, typical of the initiation phase, and a fear of the unknown confront the travelers immediately upon their departure from one of the home bases, Lothlorien:

For so it seemed to them: Lorien was floating backward, like a bright ship masted with enchanted trees, sailing on to forgotten shores, while they sat helpless upon the margin of the grey and leafless world. (FR, p. 303)

And, it is not until after Frodo has truly experienced life in its
multifaceted complexity, until he has made the transition from innocence to experience, that he can interpret Galadriel's parting song which sings of conquering obstacles and finding hope along a road of darkness. Confusion of the unknown, along with the willingness to confront that confusion in order to pass through the initiation phase is an asset, however, for strong decision-making is necessary in order for the quest to continue and finally be successful.

By stepping out into the unknown, and away from the securities of the home, Sam and Frodo find themselves in a world that goes beyond all previous conventions that they might have once found true in the world. The initiation period revolves around the comparison of the old and new, structure and anti-structure, past and present, known and unknown, or familiar and unfamiliar. The message that Sam and Frodo must ultimately receive is that home is no longer near. In symbol, home is lost in the past, and so, in turn, the heroes must search during initiation not only for a clear view of the world but also for a new place they can call home.

At home, the two had structure. In a sense they had structured themselves in, not allowing the outside world into the Shire, into their spotless hobbit holes. Their world had primarily been made up of good: good food, good friends, good fences, good neighbors: not evil. Yet during the initiation stage, Frodo and Sam's only home is the road: a path full of tricks and deceptions and no real shelter from its dangers: and thus they are not sheltered from the world as they were sheltered by the Shire, Tom Bombadil's house, Rivendell, or Lothlorien. During the initiation phase, these small-town heroes must learn to survive without the security of a roof over their heads or even an unbolted door as they had in the
Shire. Out in the wild they find that there is no structure, no security; they find nothing but wide open spaces filled with riddles and deceit, and have only thoughts, daydreams, and values of home to help them deal with it.

The idea of the home, extends itself outward into the world and goes with the traveler on his journey. Frodo and Sam are thus initiated, in part, by reliving the separation from home, and by learning to pit values of the home against values of this new and unfamiliar world. Bachelard explains how the home, although only an "illusion" during the initiation phase and in reality, helps Frodo and Sam confront the world by understanding and remembering the values learned during happier days spent at home:

We live fixations, fixations of happiness. We comfort ourselves by reliving memories of protection. Something closed must retain our memories, while leaving them their original values as images. Memories of the outside world will never have the same tonality as those of home.44

Thoughts of home, or of reaching home once again are essential to the initiation phase of Sam and Frodo because thoughts of home, whether they occur while the hero is at home or not, help the hobbits integrate the past, present, and future, and in essence, to begin to understand the structure of the world. Bachelard explains the connection of the home to the past, present, and future, and explains that the learning that revolves around thoughts of the home is as important as the learning that results from experience:

Thought and experience are not the only things that sanction human values. The values that belong to daydreaming mark humanity in its depths....Therefore, the places in which we have experienced daydreaming reconstitute themselves in a new daydream, and it is because our memories of former
dwellings-places are relived as daydreams that those dwelling-places of the past remain in us for all time. Experience gained from the knowledge of the values of home, thoughts and daydreams of home, memories of the separation from or loss of home or of Eden, the triumph of the hopeful return to home in the future, are all entwined with the concept of home, something that remains forever part of the initiate's world.

Yet the two hobbits' concept of home has actually been a falsehood. To them home has been an actual place where they felt safe and secure because of the physical surroundings, their fences and their doors. But once the hobbits are out in the world they begin to think of home as a safe place, to imagine that they are in the physical surroundings of their home and thus they find as much security as they would have in their little hobbit holes.

To be truly initiated into real life, the characters must learn to exist without structure, without boundaries or limits, without doors to lock out the evil that exists in the world. Sam and Frodo do learn to live without all of these extras during initiation for the most part, yet, as a survival tactic, they learn to build shelters in their minds much like the ones they had at home and they constantly compare their ideas of shelter with the unsheltered existence they must now lead. Frodo and Sam are also constantly reminded of the people and the rules of the old society that they had once taken for granted. It is through these flashbacks of home which revive the desire to return home, that they are spurred on to survive the series of tests.
Bachelard explains the strong connection that exists between human beings and their thoughts of home:

All really inhabited space bears the essence of the notion of home. The imagination functions in this direction whenever the human being has found the slightest shelter.

"The imagination," he continues, "builds walls of impalpable shadows" and "comforts itself" with the "illusion of protection." In fact, thoughts of the home are so close to the surface that the "virtues of shelter...may be recaptured through mere mention, rather than through minute description."46

Thoughts of home, although it is not mentioned as much nor directly thought about as often by Sam and Frodo because danger and keeping up the spirit of the journey take precedence now, bring temporary comfort. Indeed, thoughts of home "...greet [them] every day of [their] lives in order to give [them] confidence in life."47 Often, before a passage must be crossed, a door opened, an important decision made, Frodo or Sam will be found daydreaming or reminiscing about the Shire or another home that has become a guiding part of their lives.

Thoughts of home help Frodo and Sam confront obstacles and gain a fresh clear view of the journey ahead. For example, after many nights without any real shelter, Frodo, Sam, and Gollum come close to the Black Gate of Mordor, but Frodo has trouble deciding which path to take, and whether he should trust Gollum to lead them to the gate. However, after a good night's rest without the shelter of the outside world, but with the shelter of his own hobbit-hole in his mind through dream, Frodo is finally able to choose which way the journey will lead:
Strangely enough, Frodo felt refreshed. He had been dreaming. The dark shadow had passed, and a fair vision had visited him in this land of disease. Nothing remained of it in his memory, yet because of it he felt glad and lighter of heart. His burden was less heavy on him. Gollum welcomed him with dog-like delight. He checkered and chattered, cracking his long fingers, and pawing at Frodo's knees. Frodo smiled at him.

'Come!' he said. 'You have guided us well and faithfully. This is the last stage. Bring us to the Gate, and then I will not ask you to go further. Bring us to the Gate, and you may go where you wish—but not to our enemies.'  (TT, p. 242)

Frodo, previously undecided about the path to choose, is now very decisive after he has experienced a comforting dream, one which may have had something to do with home, and thoughts of shelter.

The pattern throughout is always the same: home is mentioned and some sort of action which previously could not be undertaken is made. Here, the pattern is again the same: Sam tells an old tale from back home in the Shire, Frodo laughs, is 'released from... hesitation,' and makes a decision to take a step to further the journey:

Frodo stood up. He had laughed in the midst of all his cares when Sam trotted out the old fireside rhyme of Oliphant, and the laugh had released him from hesitation. 'I wish we had a thousand oliphants with Gandalf on a white one at their head,' he said. 'Then we'd break a way into this evil land, perhaps. But we're not; just our own tired legs, that's all. Well, Sméagol, the third turn may turn the best. I will come with you.'  (TT, p. 255)

Thoughts of home, to Tolkien thoughts of Eden, also allow Frodo and Sam to confront the dichotomy of good and evil, or heaven and hell, for they have something to compare their values, and experiences with.

Virtually at the gate of hell, Sam worries about what his father, the old Gaffer, would think about his actions since he left home and was no longer guided by his father's wisdom and rules:
'Well, here we are!' said Sam. 'Here's the Gate, and it looks to me as if that's about as far as we are ever going to get. My word, but the Gaffer would have a thing or two to say, if he saw me now! Often said I'd come to a bad end, if I didn't watch my step, he did. But now I don't suppose I'll ever see the old fellow again. He'll miss his chance of I told 'ee so, Sam; more's the pity. He could go on telling me as long as he'd got breath, if only I could see his old face again. But I'd have to get a wash first, or he wouldn't know me.  

(TT, p. 245)

In thinking about his father, Sam is actually reminding himself that he must follow the rules of home especially while he is away from home; in essence, Sam is also conscious of his need for his father's approval when he finally reaches home, a place that he would willingly "wash," or cleanse himself for so that he might find his way back again.

Certainly, Sam has changed during the time he has been separated from home, and the Gaffer "wouldn't know" [him]," nor would he recognize Frodo, who has also changed immensely, for Sam and Frodo have learned, sometimes the hard way, that the rules of home are not meant to be broken. Often in a work that uses the journey pattern, the journey-hero learns rules at home, but once he is away from home, and away from the guidance of home, he breaks those rules. However, the breaking of the rules taught at home is where much of the learning during initiation occurs, for the ritual passenger will often make a better next step, and thus learn from his mistake. A classic example of this is The Tale of Peter Rabbit. In this story, Peter Rabbit is warned at home not to venture into Mr. MacGregor's garden, but when he is away from home he does not heed his mother's warning, and he breaks the rules by venturing into the forbidden garden. When he finally escapes from the garden, he is lucky to be alive and it is clear that Peter has learned his lesson and
will try to follow the rules he has learned at home from then on.

Frodo and Sam learn many lessons about the meaning of home and begin to understand the importance of adhering to the rules they followed at home, while they are on a road that leads them further and further away from home. Many types of knowledge, however, must be gained, and many mistakes must be made before the two come to an understanding of the strength of the bond that exists between their concept of the value of home and their method of dealing with the world once they are away from home. One of the first lessons that Frodo learns is that he must bear the pain of loss, a pain often more perilous on the mind than the threat of danger, as Frodo indicates:

'Tell me Legolas, why did I come on this Quest? Little did I know where the chief peril lay? Truly Elrond spoke, saying that we could not foresee what we might meet upon our road. Torment in the dark was the danger that I reared, and it did not hold me back. But I would not have come, had I known the danger of light and joy. Now I have taken my worst wound in this parting, even if I were to go this night straight to the Dark Lord....'  (FR, p. 395)

The "light and joy" Frodo speaks of is the light and joy of the realm of Paradise of Lothlorien. Again, in this comment, Tolkien subtly implies that Frodo's quest is linked to the past and to Man's ever-present sense of the loss of that perfect home, Eden.

Light and joy, darkness and sadness, "to find and to lose" (FR, p. 395) are only a few of the seemingly simple dichotomies of life that Frodo must learn about on his journey. Joseph Campbell explains the importance of understanding the dualities of life during the initiation phase and the connection of those dichotomies to Man's fall in the garden of Eden. Campbell names the major "contradictions" as "good and
evil, death and life, pain and pleasure, boons and deprivation."

Frodo and Sam must contemplate all these dichotomies during the initiation phase. And it is the understanding of these dualities of life that the two must come to realize during the initiation phase in order for the journey to progress into the return phase, and ultimately, for the journey not to fail.

Out of the recognition of the tragic dichotomies of life, which Frodo and Sam have begun to understand as a result of their acceptance of being separated from home, the two heroes must learn to continuously make the correct choices between these opposites and to adhere to their choices out of respect for human moral decency and for the good that their home in the Shire represents to them. Frodo's first test comes soon after the company leaves Lorien when Boromir, one of the men chosen to help carry the Ring to the fire, confronts the Ringbearer and tries to trick Frodo into giving him the Ring, supposedly for the good of Mankind; Boromir gives Frodo some seemingly wise counsel about how the Ring might be put to better use if it were in better hands, preferably his own:

'...you seem to think only of its power in the hands of the enemy; of its evil uses not of its good....True-hearted men, they will not be corrupted. We of Minas Tirith have been staunch through long years of trial. We do not desire the power of wizard-lords, only strength to defend ourselves, strength in a just cause. And behold! in our need chance brings to light the Ring of Power. It is a gift, I say; a gift to the foes of Mordor. It is mad not to use it, to use the power of the Enemy against him. The fearless, the ruthless, these alone will achieve victory...." (FR, p. 414)

Frodo, however, sees through Boromir's rhetoric and is convinced of the man's thirst for power, and his inability to understand the evil that
comes with that kind of power.

Frodo must listen to his heart, which reminds him of the lessons he has learned at home, rather than Boromir's words to come to a decision about the man; he makes the decision not to listen to Boromir, quickly and with conviction when he says, "And it would seem like wisdom except for the warning of my heart" (FR, p. 413). The lesson that Frodo uses is that all men are not trustworthy and that he must be wary of evil in disguise of good, a lesson that Frodo may have heard but never practiced at home. Although Frodo had never met with true evil in the Shire, and had only had a far-off glimpse of it on the road, he uses his natural instinct for good that he has learned at home to help him expose Boromir for the evil man he is deep down underneath his seemingly good intentions.

Frodo chooses rightly, for he chooses to deny Boromir's request in the name of the task that he has promised to carry to the end, in essence, in the name of the Shire, Rivendell, Lorien, and everything that is right in the world; Frodo explains the message his heart warns him against:

'Against delay. Against the way that seems easier. Against refusal of the burden that is laid on me. Against---well, if it must be said, against trust in the strength and truth of Men.' (FR, p. 413)

Frodo chooses the path that is not easy, nor the path that many would choose, but the right path for it allows the journey of the Ring to the fire to continue. The continuance of the journey is essential, for if it is successful it will bring the shadow of evil down, at least temporarily, and will restore peace and goodwill among men. Frodo's ability to choose such a noble route brings hope for a successful journey and hope for a
cleansing from evil that may lead him back home, and possibly even to
Paradise.

Hope for attaining Paradise, the epitome of home, is really the
purpose of this journey, although that is never clear to Frodo and Sam.
Tolkien and the reader are aware, however, that the hobbits' journey is
a worthy one and one that symbolizes the human journey through life and
the search for home and happiness in this world and hopefully in another.
Regardless of the difficulty of ridding themselves of the instinct to
fall to temptation which is part of their heritage due to the fall which
lost Eden and produced the rings, Frodo and Sam must still make a valid
attempt to gain back the unattainable by behaving rightly and with the
right motives in hope for a second chance for their ancestors. So, Frodo
and Sam continue in their quest to restore innocence and good without
realizing that while they are trying to remember and to follow the wisdom
and rules of home they are simultaneously restoring hope for the future
of humanity in Paradise.

Frodo's ability to adhere to the rules of home, however, is not
always so easy, and although he always comes to an understanding of the
choice he should make, he does make some missteps. Frodo's first major
decisions result from innocent instinct, and some of his choices cause
him difficulty during the rest of the journey—yet part of initiation
involves learning through testing of certain skills, and since, as Camp-
bell indicates, there is only one true way to complete any rite, until
that way is found, the journey hesitates. Thus, it is not surprising
that Frodo should often fail before finally finding how to reach his
goal. Each failure causes Frodo to contemplate his decision to go on the
journey and each additional stage of it more deeply than he otherwise might have done. Also involved in this initiation is the idea of the reaffirming of commitment, a Christian principle, which could symbolize in each step of faith the coming closer to Christian perfection and a return to the perfect state of Eden, which in the future will be Paradise. 50

One of Frodo’s missteps comes after he is accosted by Boromir. The Ringbearer runs away from Boromir, a cowardly choice, to the summit of Amon Hen where he sits on the ancient throne of the mountain king, a place which holds the key to many hidden secrets, and a place which has a magical way of causing the enthroned to be able to see mysterious events of the past, present, and future. While sitting on the throne of Amon Hen, Frodo puts on the One Ring that rules them all and envisions the terror and darkness being created by the ongoing war of the Ring; on Amon Hen, Frodo also senses another more powerful danger, when he for the first time feels the gaze and “fierce eager will” (FR, p. 417) of the evil eye of Sauron “searching for him” (FR, p. 417).

Knowing of the evil that encompasses the Ring and all who had worn it, Frodo should have known better than to have fallen to the temptation to put it on. Frodo almost falls to the power of the Ring through his folly, and thus nearly causes the journey to fail almost before it has begun, for by using the Ring the evil of Mordor is drawn closer and also Sauron discovers for certain that the One Ring was not destroyed but lies within his grasp in the feeble hold of a man who may be tempted to fall to evil. The temptation to fall to evil is typical for one in the initiation phase of a ritual journey. The initiate undergoes many tests during his quest and how he responds to the tests will
bring about his completion of or failure of the quest.

Although still innocent of the ways of evil, Frodo does recognize his fall to temptation, and, in consequence, realizes that he has been called upon to make an important choice:

He heard himself crying out! Never, never! Or was it: Verily I come, come to you? He could not tell. Then as a flash from some other point of power, there came to his mind another thought: Take it off! Take it off! Fool, take it off! Take off the Ring! (FR, p. 417)

Frodo wavers before making a commitment to take off the Ring, but he finally fights the evil will of the Ring and Sauron, and makes the difficult choice between good and evil:

The two powers strove in him. For a moment, perfectly balanced between their piercing points, he withed, tormented. Suddenly he was aware of himself again. Frodo, neither the voice nor the Eye; free to choose, and with one remaining instant in which to do so. He took the Ring off his finger. (FR, p. 417)

Frodo thus passes another initiation test, and more specifically, moves closer to an understanding of the dichotomy of good and evil by making a step toward the transition from innocence to experience through his ability to recognize, but not fall to temptation.

Although Frodo first makes the mistake of putting the Ring on, something he has been told by his mentors, Gandalf, Elrond, and Aragorn, he must never do, good does come out of his transgression. As a result of his new vision of the world as seen through the Eye of Amon Hen and the Eye of Sauron, Frodo realizes that he has put the company and the journey in jeopardy by his temporary fall to the evil power of the Ring, and he chooses to take the burden of his decisions, and his propensity to sin on himself. In essence, Frodo becomes Christ-like, a scapegoat who sets out on a journey--alone--to combat the evil present in Man.
Frodo rose to his feet. A great weariness was on him, but his will was firm and his heart lighter. He spoke aloud to himself: 'I will do now what I must,' he said. 'This at least is plain: the evil of the Ring is already at work, even in the Company, and the Ring must leave them before it does any more harm. I will go alone. Some I cannot trust, and those I can trust are too dear to me: poor old Sam and Merry and Pippin--Strider, too: there, now Boromir has fallen into evil. I will go alone. At once.' (FR, pp. 417-418)

Frodo's decision, although painful, turns out to be a proper one, for the Ringbearer recommit himself to his task and at the same time gains the sort of confidence he needs to carry out the journey without fail.

Out of fear of doing the wrong thing, and out of the need to do the right thing, Frodo embarks on a journey that revolves around duty, dichotomy, and changes due to the hero's separation from home. Once Frodo finally makes the decision to separate himself from the other members of the fellowship, he moves further into the initiation phase, and further away from the separation phase, for it is only after the hero has severed all real ties with his previous world that he can truly begin to recognize the real world and begin to understand that only through that complete separation can he contemplate his own ideas of home and of the world at large.

Many other tests that take Frodo and Sam further away from the ideals of home must be passed before the two will move from innocence to experience, from home to the world. For example, both on separate occasions will pity and pardon Gollum (TT, pp. 221-222; RK, pp. 221-222), because they recognize that he too will suffer from the evil if the journey is not completed; these actions of pity not only allow them to use the rules of home to understand the world but also allow the journey to be taken to its completion, for Gollum actually carries the Ring into the
fire. During this time of transition, both call on their memories from the various homes they have visited to help them to carry out the journey, and thus these recollections aid them to pass from initiation to return. Consequently, during this time the two also begin to recognize the importance of home and that although their memories of home will remain, home will never be the same if they ever return home.

No matter how hard the two heroes try to forget about how much they miss their home in the Shire or the comforts of the other Edenic homes they visited, the idea of home and the desire to go back home is always in the back of their minds. Consequently, thoughts of home come more and more often as they near the completion of their journey. However, Frodo’s and Sam’s thoughts of home are different from their previous ones because there is the glimpse of the beginning realization that the home of the past will not be the home of the future, for knowledge of evil is a constant in the world of the present and therefore will also be a constant in their previously peaceful land of the Shire.

With such thoughts becoming more and more prominent with the journey’s progression, the heroes truly reflect the initiatory phase, for recollections of home have become their sanctuary rather than the home itself and their expectation of the home they will return to have changed. They are no longer the hobbits who left the Shire, but are now hobbits with at least inklings of a new knowledge.

Totally severing the ties of home is an impossibility, for the knowledge of the learnings of what is right and wrong as well as the desire for things to be the way they were in the past at home always remain. Thus, neither separation nor initiation can be completely
achieved during the initiation phase. In keeping with this idea, the travelers cannot completely achieve home either. Instead of finding a real home on the road, the travelers find only the constant reminder of all that has been lost. Being completely away from the shelter of home serves to explain the connection between the past ages of Middle Earth and the events of Eden, and to further remind the initiate of his need to accept and to understand his task and why he must be away from home.

Immediately after Frodo and Sam meet Faramir and his companions, Faramir and his men engage in war with some evil beings, reminding Frodo and Sam of all the evil in the world that has separated men from their homes, often permanently: Sam remarks on the tragedy of such a situation, not realizing the similarity of his predicament to that of the warrior’s:

He wondered what the Man’s name was... and if he was really evil of heart, or what lies or threats had led him on the long march from his home; and if he would not really rather have stayed there in peace. (TT, p. 269)

Certainly, Frodo, Sam, Faramir and his companions would have had no need for their quests had not evil come into the world when Sauron tempted the men of Middle-earth to try to sail to the forbidden land of the gods, or when the snake tempted Eve to eat of the forbidden fruit.

The discussion at Faramir’s resting place also centers around the preservation of lore and the memory of the old days when Numenor was great and evil did not play a part in their lives. Faramir mentions the importance of lore many times during his discussion with Frodo and Sam, almost as if he is somewhat preoccupied with the idea of the loss of Numenor; for example, in one instance he remarks:
'But I stray. We in the house of Denethor know much ancient lore by tradition, and there are moreover in our treasuries many things preserved.... (TT, p. 278)

Customs are also preserved and especially important are the rituals that preserve the memory of the "Numenor that was":

Before they ate, Faramir and all his men turned and faced west in a moment of silence. Faramir signed to Frodo and Sam that they should do likewise.

'So we always do,'....'We look towards to Numenor that was, and beyond to Elvenhome that is, and to that which is beyond Elvenhome and will ever be. (TT, pp. 284-285)

A sadness at the loss of Numenor and a hope for the reconciliation with God in the future is evident in the actions of these men; humanity also hopes for a reunion with God in Paradise, the Eden of the future.

Reminders of the natural beauty that was lost when Numenor and Eden disappeared are also a large part of the discussion between Faramir and Frodo and Sam. The discussion mainly centers around the importance of gardening at home, an idea that immediately suggests the Garden of Eden. After Sam explains to Faramir that "gardening's [his] job at home" (TT, p. 288), the truth about the Ring becomes known and Faramir is amazed at Frodo's ability not to be tempted to use the evil ring; here Faramir connects the idea of gardening and Eden and home and at the same time gives hope for future generations to rise above evil:

'And I marvel at you; to keep it hid and not to use it. You are a new people and a new world to me. Are all your kin of like sort? Your land must be a realm of peace and content, and there must gardeners be in high honour." (TT, p. 290)

However, Frodo must respond that "'Not all is well there,'" (TT, p. 290) and the present is brought into proper perspective again; no matter how hard Faramir and Frodo wish that the events of Numenor,
or the events of Eden that Tolkien speaks of, had not occurred, the dream of the return of the beauty of the past which Faramir hopes for is a long way off, a hope that may only occur if the journey is completed, and even then the future of someone on a quest is still not secure:

"For myself... I would see the White Tree in flower again in the courts of the kings, and the silver crown return, and Minas Tirith in peace: Minas Anor again as of old, full of light, high and fair, beautiful as a queen among other queens: ...I love only that which they defend: the city of the Men of Numenor; and I would have loved her memory, her ancieninity, her beauty, and her present wisdom.... (TT, p. 280)

Whether or not that beauty and peace will ever be regained "beyond Elvenhome" or in Paradise remains a mystery.

Part of the mystery of what lies in the future for Man revolves around Original Sin and the method of cleansing Man for that sin committed in Numenor, in Eden. Faramir calls the One Ring that Frodo carries an "heirloom" (TT, p. 277), thus connecting Original Sin and the symbol of the ring, for both are continually passed on through the lineage of generations. Bachelard explains the "ring of fate" and its connection to the past:

The hero relating his adventures has himself a ring of fate, a ring carved with of signs that date from some remote time.51

The ring that Frodo carries contains hidden writing which was added to the Ring when it was made and thus it represents "that remote time" when evil was introduced into world, when evil "carved" its fate on the life of man. The message inscribed on the Ring, "One Ring to rule them all, One Ring to find them, One Ring to bring them all and in the darkness bind them..." (FR, p. 39), is a reminder of the presence of evil that connects all men. The Ring has the potential to symbolize hope for
the future generations only if the evil message inscribed in the Ring can
be erased or destroyed. Otherwise, as the Ring suggests, the evil will
"bind" all men forever.

By discussing the heritage that the two have carried with them on
their journey in the symbol of the ring, Frodo and Sam are reminded of
their journey; they are also reminded that perhaps their task "...is a
hard doom and a hopeless errand" (TT, p. 302) because the transgres-
sion of the past may forever cause them to be travelers without a true
home, or to never find the peace and security one desires at home. The
ultimate discovery that must be made throughout the journey, then, is not
only that Numenor (Eden) is lost forever, but that it may take more than
the destruction of one "ring of fate" to attain Paradise, the Eden of the
future, if ever it is to be attained at all. 52

Near the end of their journey, Frodo and Sam appear to be coming
to the conclusion that the concept of the return to the perfect home is
a fantasy. Sam tries to place himself and Frodo into history and in do-
ing so, comes to an understanding of the changes that have occurred in
their lives that will affect their homecoming:

'And we shouldn't be here at all, if we'd known more about it
before we started. But I suppose it's often that way. The
brave things in the old tales and songs, Mr. Frodo: adventures,
as I used to call them. I used to think that they were things
the wonderful folk of the stories went out and looked for,
because they wanted them, because they were exciting and life
was a bit dull, a kind of a sport, as you might say. But that's
not the way of it with the tales that really mattered, or the
ones that stay in mind. Folk seem to have just landed in them,
usually—their paths were laid that way, as you put it. But I
expect they had chances of turning back, only they didn't....

We hear about those as just went on—and not all to a good
end, mind you; at least not to what folk inside a story and not
outside it call a good end. You know, coming home, and finding
things all right, though not quite the same—like old Mr. Bilbo.'
(TT, pp. 320-321)
Sam realizes that when and if they ever return that life will be noticeably different from the life they led before their adventures into the world. Sam continues with his explanation of the events that have caused them to travel out into the world and away from their homes and discovers the connection of the past in the present that Tolkien has been speaking of all along; here Tolkien, the narrator, helps Sam to explain how the past of Middle-earth continues into the present and also the connection of Eden to the condition of the present generation:

'Beren now, he never thought he was going to get that Silmaril from the Iron Crown in Thangorodrim, and yet he did, and that was a worse place and a blacker danger than ours. But that's a long tale, of course, and goes on past the happiness and into grief and beyond it—and the Silmaril went on and came to Earendil. And why, sir, I never thought of that before! Why, to think of it, we're in the same tale still! It's going on. Don't the great tales never end?" (TT, p. 321)

An understanding of the journey pattern and the concept that the journey is an ever-continuing process as long as the world exists in its present condition and an understanding that the journey will continue to draw people away from their homes until the "tale" finally ends is part of the learning that must occur before the two go home and find that things have not completely been set aright and that their part in the journey is not the only part that must be played before the great tale ends.

A further indication of initiation involves the initiate's understanding that his earlier status cannot truly be returned to. The hobbits are gradually realizing that their home cannot truly be returned to. As the journey continues, Frodo and Sam think more often of home, but they do so in a different way, for although thoughts of home still continue to help them to make decisions, they are also beginning to realize more
fully that the thoughts of home that appear in their minds are events in
the past that will never be relived in the present if they ever return
home. They also begin to realize that they can call on the idea of home
to help them build confidence, but that in the end it is their actions
which will ultimately decide the fate of the journey. And finally, the
two must realize that the idea of home must not be totally relied upon
for the journey could fail if the two think too much about home and the
past and not enough about the journey at hand and their duties of the
present.

In one instance that occurs shortly before the Ring is delivered
to the fire, Sam and Frodo must throw away many personal belongings,
some of which they have carried all the way from the Shire, in order to
continue on with the journey, in order to make the weight of the Ring
Frodo is carrying lighter. Sam relives some of his fonder memories of
the Shire and the journey before he finally rids himself of some of the
burdens of home:

...he took out all the things in his pack. Somehow each of
them had become dear to him, if only because he had borne
them so far with so much toil. Hardest of all it was to part
with his cooking-gear. Tears welled in his eyes at the thought
of casting it away.

'Do you remember that bit of rabbit? Mr. Frodo?' he said.
'And our place under the warm bank in Captain Faramir's
country, the day I saw an oliphant?...'...With that he carried
all the gear away to one of the many gaping fissures that
scored the land and threw them in. The clatter of his precious
pans as they fell down into the dark was like a death-knell
to his heart. (RK, pp. 214-215)

Sam's action is symbolic of his final realization that the memories of
home are also a burden he has carried for far too long, and a burden
that must be discarded before the return so that he is not deluded into
believing that home will be the same when he returns. That Frodo has also come to a similar conclusion is evident in his comment to Sam; he says that he has no deep memory of the past:

'At least I know that such things happened, but I cannot see them. No taste of food, no feel of water, no memory of tree or grass or flower, no image of moon or star are left to me. I am naked in the dark...'(RK, p. 215)

Perhaps it is this casting away of the pots and pans that delineates the completion of the initiation phase. For in casting them away, the hobbits have cast away the last physical evidence of the old homes they have known and, free of encumbrances, are prepared to step into a new phase, prepared to confront the essence of their task as new creatures, without any preconceived notions of the outcome.

Frodo and Sam must learn not to dwell in the past so that the journey can continue, and hope for the present and the future can be focused upon instead. The two also need to realize that being separated from home is far easier than ever returning home after being away. Sam realizes the distance between himself and home when he reminisces about swimming in the waters of the Shire before his long separation:

...through all his thoughts there came the memory of water, and every brook or stream or fount he had ever seen, under green willow-shades or twinkling in the sun, danced and rippled for his torment behind the blindness of his eyes. He felt the cool mud about his toes as he paddled in the Pool at Bywater with Jolly Cotton and Tom and Nibs, and their sister, Rosie. 'But that was years ago,' he sighed, 'And far away. The way back, if there is one, goes past the Mountain.'

(RK, p. 216)

Immersed in this thought is also the idea of the difficulty of being cleansed of sin and the hardship of reaching the summit of a mountain based on dreams rather than reality.
Because of the magnitude of their goal, Frodo and Sam can not hope to reach the summit on the basis of this one journey even though their part in the tale is a significant one. The most important realization during the initiation phase then is one of horror, rather than grandeur, for the truth of the situation is that Frodo and Sam will never truly return home, for the idea of home is a fantasy that may never be recovered in this world:

He shook his head and as he worked things out, slowly a dark thought grew in his mind. Never for long had hope died in his staunch heart, and always until now he had taken some thought for their return. But the bitter truth came home at last: at best their provision would take them to their goal; and when the task was done, there they would come to an end, alone, houseless, foodless in the midst of a terrible desert. There could be no return. (RK, pp. 210-211)
'In this box there is earth from my orchard, and such blessing as Galadriel has still to bestow upon it. It will not keep you on your road, nor defend you against any peril; but if you keep it and see your home again at last, then perhaps it may reward you. Though you shall find all barren and laid waste, there will be few gardens that will bloom like your garden....' (FR, p. 392)

Once the ring has been delivered to the fire and the evil of Sauron and of the world has been temporarily thwarted, Frodo and Sam pass into the return phase of their journey. During this phase, Frodo and Sam both reexperience the fall from their garden of Eden and finally accept the reality that their home on earth will never be exactly the way they want it to be because of the introduction of evil and of death into the world as a result of Man's fall to temptation. Their experience out in the world causes them to also realize that what had once seemed perfect only appeared to be so because of their naiveté which resulted from being oversheltered in their false garden of Eden, the Shire. Once the two return home, they must learn to accept and to deal with the imperfections of life that have opened their eyes and brought them from innocence to experience, and from fantasy to reality as well as from confusion about their world to understanding of the journey of life and the never-ending quest to find Paradise.
Return to home always means acceptance of the loss of a permanent home, and of the pain of separation that comes from that loss. No matter where the travelers are during the return phase, they find themselves wanderers, always dissatisfied by their search for the true home which cannot be found on Middle-earth. Thus, separation, initiation, and return are in many senses the same phase, for during each of these phases the travelers feel lost in the memory of home; the difference between the phases then is that during the earlier phases of the journey, the travelers do not understand the reasons for such strong sentiments for home, and in the later phases they do.

After finally returning the ring to the fire, Sam and Frodo give first priority to returning home even though they have accepted that home will not be the same. Since the Ring has been destroyed, evil is at least temporarily removed from Middle-earth, and the hobbits may return in peace. However, the hobbits have been initiated into the world of the knowledge of true evil. Thus, they know that the Edenic home they return to will be different. Their home has not only been under the domination of evil so that many of its Edenic qualities would be changed, but also Frodo knows that he would not return to the same Shire as the same hobbit.

Vladimir Propp indicates that in the traditional fairy tale the return often revolves around the happy reunion of the hero and his family and his subsequent marriage which celebrates the beginning of an age of peace and prosperity for the land and its people. Campbell also discusses the traditional joyous return and marriage of the hero as an essential part of the typical journey pattern. Although Faramir and Eowyn, Sam and Rose, Aragorn and Arwen, all marry at the end of the
quest, Frodo, the true hero, does not, which thus raises some controversy about the success of his journey.

In order to reap the benefits of such a successful return, however, the hero has many duties which must be completed upon his return. In order to come to terms with his new existence, the hero, who is now a newcomer in his own homeland, must learn to exist inside structure again and he must learn to use what he has learned while he was away in order to deal with his new life. Campbell says that "hero's requirement" is "now to knit together his two worlds." First, he must learn to separate the old and the new, the world of adventure and that of reality. After separating the experiences of the journey from those that occur after the hero returns home again, the hero must also pass on what he has learned in his world away from home to the people at home so that the experience does not become lost in the past and so that the message is not unlearned.

Bringing the message of the journey back to society is easier said than done, however. Campbell explains the true hero's usual method of bringing his experience to fruition in the "real world," which includes all places the hero returns after his journey; he says:

The full round, the norm of the monomyth, requires that the hero shall now begin the labor of bringing the runes of wisdom, the Golden Fleece, or his sleeping princess, back into the kingdom of humanity, where the boon may redound to the renewing of the community, the nation, the planet, or the ten thousand worlds. According to Campbell, the return phase is often marked by the hero's struggle to accept this new found reality and by his frequent refusal to handle the responsibility that he is expected to face upon his return:
But the responsibility has been frequently refused.... Numerous indeed are the heroes fabled to have taken up residence forever in the blessed isle of the unaging Goddess of Immortal Being. 57

Frodo is guilty of such a refusal. When he chooses to dwell in the Blessed Isle with Galadriel and the immortal elves, he forsakes his responsibility to return to his home with the boons of renewal he has received on the completion of his journey. Moreover, Frodo refuses the return on many levels; passing over sea to dwell with the immortals is the culmination of all of his separate refusals, and this final action is further evidence that Frodo's search for a home that will take him in with open arms is not over—for Frodo is not searching for the Elven Paradise, but the Paradise where a mortal may go to rest after he dies. Whether Frodo, or any hero, reaches his destination is something no one, not even Tolkien can predict. Tolkien does not, however, condemn Frodo for his refusal to actually throw the Ring to the fire, even though Frodo is guilty of such a refusal, for to condemn Frodo for such would be to deny the fall in the garden of Eden, a concept that all humans must admit in order to understand their predicament and their constant search for a permanent home, one which, according to Frodo's journey, does not exist in this world.

Frodo's journey ends with a refusal which further emphasizes Man's propensity to sin and thus, is reminiscent of Eden, for it is sin that forces the hero out of his home, out of his garden and into the world. The fact that Frodo himself does not cast the ring into the fire brings about a significant problem in understanding the return phase of the journey. Frodo first refuses the journey when he is tempted to keep the
ring for himself rather than to throw it into the fire:

'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!'
(RK, p. 223)

When he does this, Frodo's heroism falters and his humanliness comes out instead. Had not Gollum also been humanly and felt a desire for greed and power, and tried to take the Ring for his own, and had he not accidentally fallen into the fire with the Ring in his attempt, the devil, represented by Sauron, probably would have set up permanent residence in Middle-earth, and hope for even a momentary glimpse of either the Shire or of Paradise might have been forever lost.

However, Tolkien does not, and should not, condemn Frodo for his action at the Cracks of Doom because he has intentionally given Frodo human characteristics, thus Frodo's error of not being able to throw the Ring to the fire without assistance is understandable, as Tolkien himself asserts in his letters:

I do not think that Frodo's was a moral failure. At the last moment the pressure of the Ring would reach its maximum--impossible, I should have said, for any one to resist, certainly after long possession, months of increasing torment, and when starved and exhausted. Frodo had done what he could and spent himself completely (as an instrument of Providence) and had produced a situation in which the object of his quest could be achieved. His humility (with which he began) and his sufferings were justly rewarded by the highest honour; and his exercise of patience and mercy towards Gollum gained him Mercy; his failure was redressed.

We are finite creatures with absolute limitations upon the powers of our soul-body structure in either action or endurance. Moral failure can only be asserted, I think, when a man's effort or endurance falls short of his limits, and the blame decreases as that limit is closer approached. Nonetheless, I think it can be observed in history and experience that some individuals seem to be placed in 'sacrificial' positions: situations or tasks that for perfection of solution demand powers beyond their utmost limits, even beyond all possible limits for an incarnate creature in a physical world--in which
a body may be destroyed, or so maimed that it affects the mind and will. Judgement upon any such case should then depend on the motives and disposition with which he started out, and should weigh his actions against the utmost possibility of his powers, all along the road to whatever proved the breaking-point.

Frodo undertook his quest out of love—to save the world he knew from disaster at his own expense, if he could; and also in complete humility, acknowledging that he was wholly inadequate to the task. His real contract was only to do what he could, to try to find a way, and to go as far on the road as his strength of mind and body allowed. He did that.58

Frodo redeems himself slightly by feeling relief when the Ring, the symbol of the evil that had come into the world as a result of the fall, is finally destroyed: thus he chooses good in the end, and he chooses home, if only home will let him in. That thoughts of home immediately arise upon the Ring’s destruction is not surprising considering that both Frodo and Sam have continuously found confidence reminiscing about the old days in the Shire: here, Sam mistakenly believes that Frodo is the same person he was at the beginning of the journey, a virtual impossibility:

And there was Frodo, pale and worn, and yet himself again; and in his eyes there was a peace now, neither strain of will, nor madness, nor any fear. His burden was taken away. There was the dear master of the sweet days in the Shire. (RK, p. 224)

Although Sam does not realize it yet, Frodo’s actions at the Cracks of Doom have scarred his master; this scar will ultimately cause Frodo to leave his homeland in the Shire shortly after he arrives. Frodo will carry his wound, a symbol like the Scarlet a for it not only reveals his failure but also the human propensity to sin, to his grave; the joy of the completion of the journey thus is mingled with the pain of the reality of evil and ultimately symbolizes that all must die:
'Master!' cried Sam, and fell upon his knees. In all that ruin of the world for the moment he felt only joy, great joy. The burden was gone. His master had been saved; he was himself again, and he was free. And then Sam caught sight of the maimed and bleeding hand. (RK, p. 225)

Frodo's refusal of the return is now symbolized by his wound, which in turn represents the real world, which is made up of joys and sorrows, boons and deprivations, and evil and death. Frodo's inability to deal with his reawakening into reality manifests itself in many ways; the first evidence of Frodo's shortcoming comes on his actual "return" journey to the Shire and in his actions once he is "at home" in the Shire, which is the real world in miniscule. For example, even on the journey back to the Shire, Frodo finds the entire journey home difficult to accept and consequently he almost refuses to return to the Shire:

They were eager now to see the Shire again; but at first they rode only slowly for Frodo had been ill at ease. When they came to the Ford of Bruinen, he had halted and seemed loth to ride into the stream. (RK, p. 268)

The stream represents life, thus Frodo's hesitation to "ride into the stream" reveals his trouble dealing with life itself. During initiation, Frodo had been "thrust out into the flowing stream" (FR, p. 393) by the elves of Lothlorien, but during the return, the hero finds himself alone and at an impasse which he must deal with on his own now that he has passed out of the initiation phase into the real world. Somehow even thoughts of home are no longer enough to help him forget his wound. Frodo finally admits that he had failed in the world and so he accepts the consequences of his wound—he admits that his actions at the Cracks of Doom will deny him the return he has hoped for in the Shire, and will also deny him a permanent home in this world.
In reply to Gandalf's remark that "Alas! there are some wounds that cannot be wholly cured..." Frodo realizes and accepts his failure with regret:

'I fear it may be so with mine,' said Frodo. 'There is no going back. Though I may come to the Shire, it will not seem the same; for I shall not be the same. I am wounded with knife, sting, and tooth, and a long burden. Where shall I find rest?' (RK, p. 268)

To Tolkien, the Shire thus comes to represent the real world, or the place where Eden used to be, and the home that Man has denied himself through his actions. Frodo's desire to "find rest" is Tolkien's way of bringing the story back to the continuous human search for final rest in Paradise.

Having alluded to the loss of Eden through the symbol of home, Tolkien now carries the image further, when the hobbits find their garden of Eden, Bag End virtually destroyed:

...they came at last to the beloved place. The garden was full of huts and sheds, some so near the old westward windows that they cut off all their light. There were piles of refuse everywhere. The door was scarred; the bell chain was hanging loose, and the bell would not ring. Knocking brought no answer. At length they pushed and the door yielded. They went in. The place stank and was full of filth and disorder.... (RK, p. 297)

It is important to note that the return phase usually indicates a return to the physical place where the journey began. However, that place returned to usually undergoes some form of transformation either because the ritual passenger views his world differently upon his completion of the journey or because the events of the ritual action may have brought a physical change in the place. To compensate for or to understand these changes when the hero returns home, the ritual
passenger must have gradually begun to realize that home will never be the same if he returns there. Such is the case for Tolkien's hobbits, for their home is greatly changed when they return, as is the way in which they view their home also changed. Although prepared for these changes during their initiation, the hobbits do not truly believe or understand the return phase until they actually return home to see for themselves.

Although Frodo's home in the Shire, Bag End, or Eden to Tolkien, has been destroyed due to the evil that has been brought into the world, hope for a new Eden, or of reaching Paradise at sometime in the future is restored as Bag End is restored; the gift of Galadriel, seed for the garden, makes the garden bloom again:

Spring surpassed his wildest hopes. His trees began to sprout and grow, as if time was in a hurry...In the Party Field a beautiful young sapling leaped up: it had silver bark and long leaves and burst into golden flowers in April. It was indeed a mallorn ...the only mallorn west of the Mountains and east of the Sea....

Altogether 1420 in the Shire was a marvellous year. Not only was there wonderful sunshine and delicious rain, in due times and perfect growth, and a gleam of beauty beyond that of mortal summers that flicker and pass upon this Middle-earth. All the children born or begotten in that year, and there were many, were fair to see and ... rare among hobbits. The fruit was so plentiful that young hobbits very nearly bathed in strawberries and cream...And no one was ill, and everyone was pleased....(RK, p. 303)

Even though Bag End is restored, there is no going back to the way things were, and the human heritage, which ultimately takes mortals toward death, and only possibly toward an after-life in Paradise, has not changed; evidence of the failure of the quest to totally bring Man forgiveness for the events of Eden, or of Numenor, is glimpsed through Sam's remark that the Shire would not heal, would not truly be home again until
For one thing, this hurt would take long to heal, and only his
great grandchildren, he thought, would see the Shire as it
ought to be. (RK, p. 302)

Because of his wound and his inability to accept the changes he
finds when he finally reaches home, Frodo must leave his home forever,
only to return to it in memory. The wound that Frodo has brought back
with him into the Shire constantly reminds him of his transgression, and
what he has lost as a result of his "fall"; he often finds himself look-
ing to feel the security of the Ring, which represents the existing evil
that has denied humanity permanent home for centuries; Frodo's actions
indicate that although the Ring has been physically destroyed, thoughts
of its power still linger in his mind:

Farmer Cotton found Frodo lying on his bed; he was clutching a
white gem that hung on a chain about his neck and he seemed
half in a dream. 'It is gone forever,' he said, 'and now all
is dark and empty.' (RK, p. 304)

However, in the place where the ring had been hangs another chain
that weaves pain and memory of many homes into his life; the chain and
the white stone had been given to Frodo by Arwen the moment she had reaff-
irmed her choice to be mortal and at the same time had given up her
claim to ever see her Elvenhome, the paradisal realm which becomes home
for the Elves after the Third Age is over (RK, pp. 252-253). The whiteness
of the jewel symbolizes hope, hope being a kind of desire for perfection,
a paradisal wish. The jewel also symbolizes the memory of the loss of a
permanent and perfect home, of Paradise lost, as it simultaneously reminds
Frodo of the loss of Rivendell, Lothlorien, the Shire, and of Numenor,
the Eden of Frodo's world, lost in the First Age, and as a result, makes
him long for the Paradise of Elvenhome, and for immortality.

By choosing to dwell with the immortals, Frodo must once again deny both the journey and his home. Immediately before his departure for Elvenhome from the Shire, Frodo asks Sam to take over his responsibility of communicating the message he has learned on his journey, thus reneging or refusing his duties by passing the buck; here Frodo realizes exactly what he is giving up and he warns Sam to tell others to guard their homeland in order not to lose it:

'I tried to save the Shire, and it has been saved, but not for me. It must often be so, Sam, when things are in danger: some one has to give them up, lose them, so that others may keep them. But you are my heir; all that I had and might have had I leave to you.... You will be the Mayor, of course, as long as you want to be, and the most famous gardener in history; and you will read things out of the Red Book, and keep alive the memory of the age that is gone so that people will remember the Great Danger and so love their homeland all the more.'

(RK, p. 309)

Although Frodo's message is Christ-like, Frodo's journey does not represent ascension to Heaven, for it will take more than the destruction of one ring to erase Original Sin and to bring about Paradise. Instead, Frodo takes another sort of journey, one which takes him to the Grey Havens, a place that Tolkien considers purgatory, and a place from which the only return is through death:

They only set out after sundown; but if any keen-eyed observer from that shore had watched one of these ships he might have seen that it never became hull-down but dwindled only by distance until it vanished in the twilight; it followed the straight road to the true West and not the bent road of the earth's surface. As it vanished it left the physical world. There was no return. The Elves who took this road and those few 'mortals' who by special grace went with them, had abandoned the "History of the world" and could play no further part in it....
Yet since Tolkien does not regard Frodo’s actions at the Cracks of Doom as a "moral failure," and Frodo travels to temporary Paradise, Frodo's journey over Sea is a positive sign. Tolkien explains the meaning of Frodo’s final journey away from his home to this temporary Paradise:

Frodo was sent or allowed to pass over Sea to heal him—if that could be done, before he died. He would have eventually to 'pass away': no mortal could, or can, abide for ever on earth, or within Time. So he went both to a purgatory and to a reward, for a while: a period of reflection and peace and a gaining of a truer understanding in littleness and in greatness, spent still in Time amid the natural beauty of 'Arda Unmarred', the Earth unspoiled by evil.60

Thus, Frodo is not returning to Paradise by passing over sea with the immortals, but instead he is once again traveling to a temporary home which may lead him back to Paradise, a place where he may finally rest his head and call home.

Although Frodo’s journey to the Grey Havens takes him to a paradisial land, Frodo's journey through life does not end there, for Frodo must die before he can possibly enter true Paradise. And the return phase would not be complete without a return to reality, which must inevitably include death, if a journey is to end the way all journeys through life actually end.

Tolkien brings his work from fantasy to reality by ending The Lord of the Rings with an appendix in which he reveals a glimpse of truth: the human journey through life ends in death as a result of the fall and the loss of Eden. The most sorrowful reminder of this is evident in the passing of Arwen and Aragorn. On Aragorn’s death bed, Arwen relates death to the fall and finally comes to understand the pain of loss that comes with death:
'...I must indeed abide the Doom of Men, whether I will or I
will: the loss and the silence. But I say to you, King of the
Numenoreans, not until now have I understood the tale of your
people and their fall. As wicked fools I scorned them, but I
pity them at last. For if this is indeed, as the Eldar say,
the gift of the One to Men, it is bitter to receive.'
(RK, p. 344)

Arwen's death is also presented tragically, but realistically; since she
has chosen mortality, she must also return to her maker; and rest in her
"green grave, until the world is changed..." (RK, p. 344).

By linking death to the fall, and by considering death as the only
passageway through which mortals can escape the circles of the world
and reach Heaven, Tolkien brings the journey to the door of Paradise and
thus brings the journey to a close for he has brought the journey from
separation from home to return to home. Tolkien explains that the rela-
tion of death and the desire for immortality, which is closely linked to
the longing for a permanent home, has been the major focus of the work
all along:

'The real theme for me is about something much more permanent
and difficult: Death and Immortality; the mystery of the love
of the world in the hearts of a race 'doomed' to leave and
seemingly lose it; the anguish in the hearts of a race
'doomed' not to leave it, until its whole evil-roused story
is complete. But if you have now read Vol. III and the story
of Aragorn, you have perceived that.61

Tolkien does not, however, present death as "an enemy", but as
something that is simultaneously bitter and sweet; bitter, for it means
that the dead must leave his earthly homeland and his loved ones, sweet
for when the dead pass away from the earthly realm the road may lead to
Paradise. Tolkien explains the necessity of the combination of the bit-
ter and the sweet in a fairy-tale, and how the intermingling of joy and
sorrow produces hope of reaching Paradise at its ending:
...the joy of...the good catastrophe, the sudden joyous "turn" (for there is no true end to any fairy-tale); this joy...is not essentially "escapist," nor "fugitive." In its fairy-tale --or otherworld--setting, it is a sudden and miraculous grace: never to be counted on to recur. It does not deny the existence of dipscatapstrophe, of sorrow and failure; the possibility of these is necessary to the joy of deliverance; it denies (in the face of much evidence, if you will) universal final defeat and in so far is evangelium, giving a fleeting glimpse of Joy, Joy beyond the walls of the world, poignant as grief.63

This joy, Tolkien continues, results in part because it revolves around reality and truth:

The peculiar quality of the 'joy' in successful Fantasy can thus be explained as a sudden glimpse of the underlying reality or truth. It is not only a 'consolation' for the sorrow of this world, but a satisfaction...64

Here, Tolkien mentions death as a part of the chain of life that brings about the eucatastrophe and the Resurrection as the "greatest 'eucatastrophe'" possible:

...it produces its particular effect because it is a sudden glimpse of Truth, your whole nature chained in material cause and effect, the chain of death, feels a sudden relief as if a major limb out of joint had suddenly snapped back...

And I concluded by saying that the Resurrection was the greatest 'eucatastrophe' possible in the greatest fairy story--and produces that essential emotion: Christian joy which produces tears because it is qualitatively so like sorrow, because it comes from those places where Joy and Sorrow are at one, reconciled.... 65

Aragorn's death, although not of the same magnitude as the Resurrection of Christ, serves to bring about that "Joy, Joy, beyond the walls of the world, poignant as grief" and to bring Tolkien's version of truth home. Aragorn's courage on his deathbed and his strong belief that upon his death he will be traveling at last to a final resting place, Paradise, brings both joy and sorrow together and so the journey ends with Man no longer separated, but returned, to home:
But let us not be overthrown at the final test, who of old renounced the Shadow and the Ring. In sorrow we must go, but not in despair. Behold! we are not bound for ever to the circles of the world, and beyond them is more than memory, Farewell!\textsuperscript{4} (RK, p. 344)

Upon his death the beauty and terror of life blend together to form joy, a joy which reveals Aragorn may have indeed reached home:

Then a great beauty was revealed in him, so that all who came after there looked on him in wonder; for they saw that the grace of his youth, and the valour of his manhood, and the wisdom and majesty of his age were blended together. And long there he lay, an image of the splendour of the Kings of Men in glory undimmed before the breaking of the world. (RK, p. 344)

Thus, through ending the work with the idea of death and the homecoming to Paradise, Tolkien connects the three phases of the journey: Separation, Initiation, and Return, by explaining his belief that only through death can the initiate have hope for a final return to the home from which he has too long been separated—it is only through death that Man has hope to find "light and high beauty for ever beyond its reach" (RK, p. 199).
V

NOT REACHING A CONCLUSION: "THE ROAD GOES EVER ON AND ON..."

Whether one can reach Paradise is a question that Tolkien does not completely answer in The Lord of the Rings. Instead of a journey which has a sense of finality at its end, the journey toward home remains unfinished, for actually it is uncertain as to whether Aragorn or any of the other characters truly reach that supreme home, Paradise.

In the end, the real question is not whether they do reach Paradise, but whether they should reach Paradise, for such a question leads to the need for an understanding of the feelings humanity has about actually finding and living in perfection and about finishing a quest that has continued since the beginning of time. Evidence of how the characters might feel if they reached Paradise is given in this statement about Rivendell:

Now it is a strange thing, but things that are good to have and days that are good to spend are soon told about and not much to listen to; while things that are uncomfortable palpitating, and even gruesome, may make a good tale, and take a great deal of telling anyway. (H, p. 61)

Not only is such simple goodness difficult to tell about, but as Tolkien shows us it is also difficult to live. The journey continues—the hobbits leave Rivendell of their own accord—because there is no challenge in this paradisial abode. People often find it difficult to live with inaction, and without challenges, and thus, finding happiness does not
necessarily coincide with finding perfection or reaching a goal. The quest is itself a goal which is never finished.

The importance of challenges, and of accepting quests without knowing that the outcome can be easily reached, helps the hobbits feel the essence of their humanity. Sam and Frodo realize that if the success of any journey is known, then the hero may not accept the quest, and thus, no goal will be accomplished:

'I wonder what sort of tale we've fallen into?'
'I wonder,' said Frodo. 'But I don't know. And that's the way of the real tale. Take any one that you're fond of. You may know, or guess, what kind of tale it is, happy-ending or sad-ending, but the people in it don't know. And you don't want them to.'

'No, sir, of course not. Beren now, he never thought he was going to get that Silmaril from the Iron Crown in Thangorodrim, and yet he did, and that was a worse place and a blacker danger than ours... (TT, p. 321)

Sam and Frodo also realize theirs is only a small role in a greater quest which has not yet ended:

'But that's a long tale, or course, and goes on past the happiness and into grief and beyond it—and the Silmaril went on and came to Earendil. And why, sir, I never thought of it before! We've got—you've got some of the light of it in that star-glass that the Lady gave you! Why, to think of it, we're in the same tale still! It's going on. Don't the great tales never end?'

'No, they never end as tales,' said Frodo. 'But the people in them come, and go when their part's ended. Our part will end later—or sooner.' (TT, p. 321)

If the Paradisial home the hobbits seek is reached, then the 'great tale' would end, and so would the challenge. Tolkien explains the connection between these smaller victories and the final victory:

I am a Christian... so I do not expect 'history' to be anything but a 'long defeat'—though it contains... some samples or glimpses of final victory.
The ultimate quest of the Christian, to be admitted to Paradise, virtually an unattainable goal in the near future, thus, keeps him reaching for the sky, and dreaming of that perfect home, but also very appropriately never quite attaining it:

Maybe it is a good thing for us to keep a few dreams of a house that we shall live in later, always later, so much later, in fact, that we shall not have time to achieve it. For a house that was final...would lead to thoughts--serious, sad thoughts--and not to dreams. It is better to live in a state of impermanence than in one of finality.
NOTES


"Crossing the first threshold into Rivendell becomes the paradigm for the greater pattern of separation-reunion to come, "but she focuses on death and rebirth rather than separation from and return to home. The essay that comes closest to an interpretation of the concept of home is Charles Moorman's, "The Shire, Mordor, and Minas Tirith," in The Precincts of Felicity: The Augustinian City of the Oxford Christians (Gainesville, Fla.: Univ. of Florida Press, 1966), pp. 86-100; rpt. in Tolkien and the Critics, p. 203. Moorman notes that "...the journey is undertaken always on behalf of the City" he focuses on three cities, the Shire, Mordor, and Minas Tirith, and says that "we are confronted with three stages of the journey, actually three states of man; as he exists in the Shire, in the wilderness of Mordor, and in the City."
However, in their use of various approaches toward an understanding of the work, critics have not focused on the relationship between the concept of home and the journey pattern, a pattern I believe could help to connect all the other issues most critics find relevant.


3 John Ronald Reuel Tolkien, The Lord of the Rings, 2nd ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1965), 3 vols., consisting of The Fellowship of the Ring, The Two Towers, and The Return of the King. Each will be considered individually, as will The Hobbit; or There and Back Again (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1979). Subsequent references to these texts will appear in the text and will hereafter be cited as: FR: The Fellowship of the Ring; TT: The Two Towers; RK: The Return of the King; H: The Hobbit.


5 Lewis, p. 15.

6 Lewis, pp. 15-16.


10 Campbell, pp. 30, 36, 245.

11 Campbell, pp. 30, 36, 245.


15 Letters, "From a letter to Joanna de Bortadana (drafts)," April 1956, Letter 186, p. 246.


18 Bachelard, pp. 46-47.


24 All the preceding information about the fall of the Elves and the fall of the Numenoreans appears in Letters, "To Milton Waldman, pp. 146-161; see also The Silmarillion.

25 Bachelard, p. 222.

26 Van Gennep, p. 166.

27 Ps. 24:3,7.
Although many other homes are visited during the course of the journey, Rivendell is the only one visited more than once. It is a fitting home to center the journey because it is a place where the inhabitants regret the past so fully that the sojourner who returns there is continuously reminded of the problems created by "serial longevity, and hoarding memory," and thus, while he is there he is forced to repeatedly confront his view of the past, of death and immortality, of home, of the meaning of the quest, and of his role in the quest as a whole—and he is also given the time and the opportunity to do so. Many conversations which help the sojourner interpret life and the meaning of the quest are also held in Rivendell. It is during the conversations of the Council of Elrond (Fr., pp. 252-284), that Frodo and Sam first are told about the nature of their journey. When discussing the hero's final visit to Rivendell, Tolkien says that "...at Rivendell, [Frodo] came to understand things more clearly. The conversations he had there are not reported, but enough is revealed in Elrond's farewell III, 267." See Letters, 211, p. 284; see Letters, "From a letter to Mrs. Eileen Elgar (drafts)," September 1963, Letter 246, p. 328.


Bachelard, p. 13.


See Propp, pp. 39-55; see Campbell, pp. 97-172.

Campbell, p. 97.

Van Gennep, p. 166.

Campbell, p. 213.

Turner, p. 94; Turner, p. 167; Turner, p. 97.
Bachelard, p. 6.

Bachelard, p. 6.

Bachelard, p. 5.

Bachelard, p. 94.

Campbell, p. 153; Campbell, p. 145.

Campbell, pp. 59-60.

The elements of Christianity in the text are far more relevant than what I have been able to discuss in this thesis, yet these religious parallels are important and are often unmistakably Christian. Tolkien himself admits that his work contains Christian ideas several times in his letters; he says, "The Lord of the Rings is of course a fundamentally religious and Catholic work; unconsciously so at first, but consciously in the revision. That is why I have not put in, or have cut out, practically all references to anything like 'religion', to cults or practices, in the imaginary world. For the religious element is absorbed into the story and the symbolism." Letters, "To Robert Murray, S J.," n.d., Letter 142, p. 172; see also Letters, "To Milton Waldman," p. 144; see also Letters, "From a letter to Mrs Ruth Austin," 25 January 1971, Letter 320, p. 407; see also Letters, "To Carole Batten-Phelps (draft)," Autumn 1971, Letter 328, p. 413.

Bachelard, p. 22.

Bachelard, p. 22.

Propp, pp. 63-64.

Campbell, p. 245.

Campbell, p. 228.

Campbell, p. 193.

Campbell, p. 193.

Letters, "From a letter to Mrs. Eileen Elgar (drafts)," pp. 326-327.


Letters, "From a letter to Mrs Eileen Elgar (drafts)," p. 328.
61 Letters, "From a letter to Joanna de Bortadano (drafts)," p. 246.


65 Letters, "To Christopher Tolkien," 7-8 November 1944, Letter 89, p. 100.


67 Bachelard, p. 61.
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