In 1881, when Robert Louis Stevenson, then a little-known writer of travel books, short stories, and essays, serialized Treasure Island in the periodical Young Folks, his story attracted little attention (McLynn 1980). Polished in style and almost static in its violence, much like a masterfully condensed Scott novel, Treasure Island was by design a children's book, a continuation of a tradition pioneered by Frederick Marryat and R. M. Ballantyne—the ripping tales of pirates and buried treasure that were already staples of juvenile fiction for boys. However, not until the story was printed in book form in 1883, penetrating the adult market, did it attract critical praise. Treasure Island was a product of literary alchemy, a series of stale juvenile devices, or ephemera, transmuted into a classic appreciated by adults, "an utterly original book" (Fraser 214).

H. Rider Haggard—also an author of failed fiction and travel books—is said to have written King Solomon’s Mines in 1885 after a brother challenged him to write a story half as good as Stevenson's (L. R. Haggard 121-22). Haggard's own account makes an even stronger connection: "I read in one of the weekly papers a notice of Stevenson's Treasure Island so laudatory that I procured and studied that work and was impelled by its perusal to try to write a book for boys" (Karlin xii). King Solomon's Mines, Haggard's landlocked imitation of Treasure Island, also exploited the stock characters and plot devices of boys' fiction, and yet at its time also seemed startlingly original, marketed as "The most amazing story ever written," (Cohen 87). Haggard translated the voyage to a pirate island into a trek across the Dark Continent. Treasure Island and King Solomon's Mines revived adventure fiction and, as points of imitation, typify boy's action books in the decades to follow—the worlds of Mowgli, the Time Traveller, Tom Swift, Tarzan, Flash Gordon, and Conan.

But the most influential and innovative heir of Stevenson and Haggard may be J. R. R. Tolkien, [1] whose 1937 first novel was also a tale for boys and whose imitators constitute a major genre of post-modern fiction. His stories of Middle Earth revitalized adventure fiction, which had again become stagnant. His first published novel, The Hobbit, shares with Treasure Island and King Solomon's Mines the distinction of being a children's book, yet presently appearing on adult bookshelves. Like Treasure Island and King Solomon's Mines, Tolkien's adventure story is impossible to confuse with any previous one and was the model for thousands of imitations, including his own great sequel, The Lord of the Rings. Yet The Hobbit, like Treasure Island, emerged from a popular tradition and exploits stock devices. Much as Haggard's book is Treasure Island
reinvented in the African veldt, The Hobbit is King Solomon's Mines reinvented in Tolkien's great linguistic and geographical subcreation, Middle-Earth.

Like Stevenson and Haggard, [2] Tolkien invented stories by a largely unconscious method, letting them grow autonomously. He "had the sense of recording what was already 'there,' somewhere" and claimed to have been oblivious of obvious literary influences. He denied, for instance, consciously imitating Beowulf (about which he had just written an essay) when he described Bilbo's stealing a precious cup from the hoard of a sleeping dragon, a clear echo of line 2405 in the Old English poem (Letters 145, 31). Extremely well-read, Tolkien drew from a vast literary tradition—what he called the "Tree of Tales"—and his self-reporting of literary influence is obscure and contradictory, not because he plagiarized, but because his creative method involved impulsive inattention, deliberate ignoring of analogues as he cultivated an autonomous fantasy world using the method that Carl Jung called visionary (Tree 56). [3] Thus, even though Tolkien apparently did not describe himself as imitating Haggard, many parallels between King Solomon's Mines and The Hobbit argue that Haggard's work fed Tolkien's creative process. [4]

Reading either book after having read the other creates deja vu, a parade of familiar motifs in new dress and altered order. The reluctant heroes of both stories, Tolkien's Bilbo Baggins and Haggard's Allan Quartermain, are repeatedly said to be small and timid but are, nevertheless, hardy, strong-willed, and ethical—reluctant to kill but loyal to the death. Both heroes are distinguished by their alertness: Bilbo repeatedly wakes just in time or notices details that others miss, and Quartermain's Zulu name means "the man who gets up in the middle of the night, or, in vulgar English, he who keeps his eyes open" (King 47). Both are of good birth, with modest wealth and education. If these traits are typical of boy heroes, what sets both Allan and Bilbo apart is that both are, like Don Quixote, about fifty years old. Their suicidal quest for treasure is driven, not by youthful bravado or greed, but by a muted form of Quixotic madness: they are old boys seizing the trailing edge of youth to escape their dead-end pasts. Quartermain, a hunter, has lived hand-to-mouth for decades in this dangerous occupation and wishes to provide for his son's medical education (39). Bilbo, a bachelor in his dead father's house, has never been outside the neighborhood of his birth. He has, in effect, rejected life. The treasure hunts are last chances to enlarge their lives in the face of old age and death.

The two proposals for adventure are remarkably similar, presented unexpectedly by tall, bearded travelling strangers: Allan is approached by an English aristocrat met accidentally on shipboard, Bilbo by a wizard at his door. And Sir Henry Curtis, like the wizard Gandalf, already knows the hero's name and history. The Curtis-Gandalf figure in both stories is the architect of the adventure and recruits the hero for his supposed cleverness: Allan as a wilderness guide and Bilbo as an "expert treasure-hunter" (31). Moreover, Curtis and Gandalf travel with smaller men who provide comic relief—Gandalf with the dwarf Thorin and his followers, Sir Henry with the vain, monocled Captain
Good. Sir Henry is searching for a lost brother, and Gandalf is helping Thorin to regain his ancestral home; so both expeditions are motivated by family honor, obligations that override the fact that neither has much hope of success. And (although we do not know this until late in Haggard's book) both expeditions return exiled kings—I gnosi in King Solomon's Mines and Thorn in The Hobbit.

Both heroes at first reject the proposed quests as suicidal. When Thorn tells Bilbo that his party "may never return," the hobbit collapses screaming on the floor (23). Allan, more self-controlled of himself, refuses Curtis' first offer with similar feelings: "I am, as I think I have said, a cautious man, indeed a timid one, and I shrank from such an idea. It seemed to me that to start on such a journey would be to go to certain death" (32). Allan (who tells his own story) repeatedly claims to be timid and at one point bursts into tears, and Bilbo repeatedly regrets joining the expedition; but both act bravely and with cool attention when called on (288). Their early timidity emerges as sane caution, a measured courage that makes them better guides in the end. Timid courage is wiser than, for instance, the rush to adventure that betrays Dr. Livesey and Squire Trelawney in Treasure Island. Even as Bilbo naively frets over leaving behind money and handkerchiefs, his anxiety over details links him with Allan, who itemizes his party's munitions and concludes, "I make no apology for detailing it at length, for every experienced hunter will know how vital a proper supply of guns and ammunition is to the success of an expedition" (34, 45). Bilbo and Allan are practical, believable heroes, more likely to survive suicide missions because they admit their fear and avoid risks.

In the first chapter of The Hobbit, Gandalf produces a map of the treasure mountain, a map printed in the book. At the end of Tolkien's book is a second map showing the terrain of Bilbo's journey across a range of mountains and through a desolate forest. Maps, as guides to hidden treasure, have an literary genealogy through Poe's "The Gold-Bug" and Dumas's The Count of MonteCristo--both of which influenced Stevenson--and, of course, Treasure Island. But Tolkien's maps most closely resemble the map in King Solomon's Mines, with traits of Haggard's single map split between Tolkien's two (McLynn 5, 199). The first map, the one carried by the adventurers, gives local access to the treasure but does not chart a path of travel. The second, printed but never mentioned in the story, charts the dangerous trek from "The Edge of the Wild" to Thorin's treasure mountain, and thus directly parallels the map in King Solomon's Mines.

Tolkien's first map, like Haggard's, is said to have been drawn long before the time of the story (Tolkien's about 170 years before, Haggard's 300 years) by the last of his race to see the treasure chambers. In The Hobbit, this is Thorin's grandfather Thror, and in King Solomon's Mines it is the Portuguese adventurer Jose da Silvestra. Both documents were passed to descendants and then handed over to strangers when one of the descendants--having failed on a rash adventure--is delirious and dying (Hobbit 30; King 25-26). At the beginning of each book, it has been years since this transfer, but
the present holder of the map--Gandalf in The Hobbit, Allan in King Solomon's Mines--has kept its existence secret while carrying the map (or a copy) on his person and only shares it with his co-adventurers after they have independently committed to a trek for which they need it (a pattern significantly different from Treasure Island). Both maps include wording that must be interpreted--Tolkien's runes and moon-letters, Haggard's Portuguese. Both indicate isolated mountains in the midst of plains and point to tunnel entrances with ruins nearby: labeled "hidden passage to the Lower Halls" in Tolkien and "mouth of the treasure cave" in Haggard (Hobbit 26; King 27).

Tolkien's second map, printed in the back of most editions, is a topographical road map of a region; however, if we trace the route of his adventurers on the map, we see strong analogues to Jose da Silvestra's. Both parties travel in more-or-less straight lines in compass directions (east in Tolkien, north in Haggard) over geographic barriers at right angles to the line of travel so that the travelers must cross them. Both routes cross a river, an alpine range, and a deadly wasteland. Also, both maps indicate hidden places of refreshment essential to the party's survival (Rivendell and Beorn's house in Tolkien, the "pan bad water" in Haggard), an ancient road, and a town near the destination. And, of course, at the far edge of each map (the top of Haggard's, the right of Tolkien's) is the mountain. Details from Haggard map are reoriented by Tolkien. However, the analogues make a strong case, at least, for cryptomnesia, or "concealed recollection" on Tolkien's part (See Jung et al. 23-26), his reproducing a half-forgotten pattern without (according to his letters) being conscious of its source.

Another remarkable similarity involves business contracts in the two stories. After Thorn explains that Bilbo is to be the expedition "burglar," the reluctant hero responds in "his business manner" that would like "to know about risks, out-of-pocket expenses, time required and remuneration, and so forth" (27). Faking professionalism to cover confusion, Bilbo exposes the dwarves' poor preparation in a comic analogue to King Solomon's Mines. When Allan Quartermain agrees to join Curtis' dangerous trek, he states his terms as three numbered items: (1) Curtis must pay all expenses, with "ivory or other valuables" evenly divided between Allan and Captain Good; (2) upon receiving a [pound]500 retainer, Allan will remain with Curtis to the end of the expedition; and (3) if Allan is killed or disabled, his son will be put through medical school (37-38). The last item requires a lawyer because Curtis will be at risk on the expedition (41).

Thorin leaves a virtual parody of this contract under Bilbo's parlor clock on the morning of departure, one that guarantees "traveling expenses," with profits to be divided between all participants and funeral costs paid by Thorin "or our representatives" (33). Since most of the perils of the journey involve being eaten or lost, this last provision is hardly practical; rather, it is the punch line of a darkly comic sequence. What "representatives" have been contacted since breakfast or are likely to turn up in the wilderness? The reference to "representatives" echoes the last item in Allan's contract by providing for the death of Bilbo's employer. There is no equivalent of Allan's second
item, no retainer--another comic contrast, for the dwarves are exiles, poor except in pride.

Both expeditions are planned in clouds of smoke, and tobacco is a tool of male bonding throughout both books—as in adventure tales as diverse as A Journey to the Center of the Earth, Treasure Island, A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur’s Court, The Lost World, Prester John, Green Mansions, and Lost Horizon. In King Solomon's Mines, Allan hears about the expedition after Sir Henry Curtis invites him to "smoke a pipe," and Allan decides to join Curtis "before the burning tobacco had fallen into the sea" (15, 37). Interludes of pipe smoking punctuate the African tale—idyllic scenes such as when the old boys "by the light of the full moon" feast on elephant steaks around a campfire, "and then we began to smoke and yarn" (54). Bilbo is such an old boy. Smoking a long pipe on his doorstep when he first meets Gandalf, he shows off with a manly display of smoke rings, only to be shamed by the wizard's superior display the next day. The only non-cloth objects the hobbit takes with him from home are a pipe and tobac co, and his companions blow smoke rings for amusement when they rest at night. At the end of The Hobbit, Gandalf visits Bilbo years later and (in the very last line), the hobbit renews old bonds by handing the wizard a jar of tobacco.

Claudia Nelson discusses a trend in late Victorian boys' schools and fiction toward shunning the influence of women, and The Hobbit is, in this sense, a belated echo of fin de siécle values. G. A. Henty, who wrote nearly eighty late Victorian boys' books in a study "full of pipe-smoke," declared, "I never touch love interest" (M. Green 221). When his hero marries, the wife is hardly more than an empty sign of heterosexuality and social connection (Nelson 220). Treasure Island, King Solomon's Mines, and The Hobbit all represent de-feminized worlds. Though Jim's mother is a blurry presence in early chapters of Treasure Island, a letter from Stevenson expresses a defeminizing plan—"No women in the story" (128)—and Haggard, in the words of Allan, makes the same claim: "there is no woman in it" (10). This, Allan admits, is an overstatement: King Solomon's Mines includes a crone, dancing girls, and a tragi-comic romance. But the overstatement does indicate how a Henty-like adventure differs from a conventional romantic story, an absence of the sort of love interest that, for instance, Stevenson includes in The Black Arrow and that Deborah Kerr gives Allan Quatermain in the 1950 film of King Solomon's Mines. The Hobbit goes a step further. It is really womanless, has no living female character, even a minor one. Bilbo's dead mother, discussed in the first chapter, is not mentioned later, and the few other references to women are anonymous or generic. Tolkien, as if reading "there is no woman in it" literally, created an all-male world.

In each story an early, almost gratuitous, episode occurs on the edge of the wilderness, a adventure that—except for providing an early cliffhanger (and, in Tolkien's more cumulative story, elvish swords)—might be omitted with little effect. The episodes are high points of weeks of slow travel from the comfortable homes through half-empty
lands, travel otherwise dismissed in summary. Before Haggard's party reaches "the real starting-point of our expedition," the old boys pause to slaughter elephants. In the climax of this episode, Captain Good--comic companion of the expedition's organizer and thus equivalent to Tolkien's dwarves--falls before a charging elephant "as the sun was just going down in its reddest glory" (63, 61). Good seems as good as dead until a Zulu spears the elephant and is killed in place of Good. This gives Allan and Curtis (the Bilbo and Gandalf figures) time to dispatch the animal.

Bilbo's group encounters, not elephants, but giant trolls, a species he recognizes "from the great heavy faces of them, and their size, and the shape of their legs" (37). The dwarves foolishly approach these monsters and are captured, but Gandalf distracts the trolls until the rising sun turns them to stone). These are, of course, very different episodes. What connects them is that both center on cliffhangers involving elephantine foes, parallel characters, and a solar epiphany in a summarized outward journey. Both episodes yield treasure--"a wonderfully fine lot of ivory" in King Solomon's Mines and "pots of gold" in The Hobbit--that both parties bury in anticipation of their return (King 63; The Hobbit 44). Here the echo becomes exact. The ivory is buried "carefully in the sand under a large tree...hoping that we might one day return," and the gold is buried "secretly not far from the track...in case they ever had the chance to come back" (King 63; The Hobbit 45).

The Hobbit soon echoes the next main episode in Haggard's story. Allan's people are staggering across a desert, their canteens empty. They hope to find a spring located nearby, according to Jose da Silvestra's old map. "If we do not find water we shall die" (83). Suddenly, the rising sun lights mountains they must climb to reach the treasure, tantalizingly clear but too far away to reach with empty canteens. Soon after, the expedition's tracker finds a pool at the top of a scrub-covered hillock in the desert. They drink, eat, smoke, and are refreshed. Allan's desert ordeal, from the cry "trek" with full canteens to "that blessed pool," is an exemplar of realistic but mythic adventure writing, and Tolkien seems to pay tribute to it in a briefer episode just after the escape from the trolls. Bilbo's company is trekking across a "silent waste" with food bags almost empty, led by Gandalf along a faint trail to Rivendell, their only hope: "We must not miss the road, or we shall be done for" (45-46). As they climb out of a stream bed (starvation, not thirst, is the peril), mountains loom suddenly near, seeming "only an easy day's journey" away though actually much farther. Soon after, Gandalf, the company's tracker, suddenly finds Rivendell (45-46).

Tolkien's description of the mountains is much leaner than Haggard's but suggests it. Haggard writes, "the morning lights played upon the snow and the brown and swelling masses beneath" (86), and Tolkien writes, "there were patches of sunlight on its brown sides and behind its shoulders the tips of snowpeaks gleamed" (46). Haggard's mountains are explicitly anatomical (snow-covered hillocks correspond "exactly ... to the nipple on the female breast" (85)), while Tolkien only writes of gleaming "tips." The
mountains ("Sheba's Breasts" in Haggard) combine with the foreground desert to suggest a supine woman, so that the pool of dark lifesaving water (in Tolkien's story, a hidden ravine with a stream) becomes a womb of rebirth. Haggard's nurturing womb is elevated on an altarlike hill, and its absence kills; Tolkien's is hemmed by bogs and sudden ravines, but he repeats in muted language Haggard's imagery of the earth as woman.

Tolkien wrote often of tunnels and subterranean travel. Three times Bilbo enters the west side of a mountain and passes through to the east, the "night sea journey" associated with mythological heroes, and The Hobbit's exploits parallel underground action in King Solomon's Mines. In the desert Allan's party finds "grateful shelter" from the sun under "an overhanging slab of rock," and Bilbo's party evades a storm by "sheltering under a hanging rock" (King 76; Hobbit 55). Later Allan's party rests for the night in a mountain pass in a cave with a "hole in the snow" for a door. During the night their Hottentot tracker dies, and then they find the frozen corpse of the Portuguese cartographer who drew the treasure map). In a parallel sequence, Bilbo and his party take shelter for the night in a cave in a mountain pass, a cave entered through a low arch. Just as Haggard's cave does "not appear to be very big" and is "not more than twenty feet long," Tolkien's cave "isn't all that big and it does not go far back" (King 96-97; Hobbit 57). In Tolkien's cave the outcome is similarly grim--goblins attack at night, and Bilbo and his companions are almost killed, their ponies eaten.

In Tolkien's book, after Gandalf rescues Bilbo from the goblins, he is abandoned in a maze of lightless tunnels and must find his way out. This parallels the plight of Allan, Curtis, and Good after they escape Solomon's treasure chamber. Like Bilbo, they are in a "stone labyrinth" of narrow tunnels that bend and are intersected by other tunnels (King 294). [5] Allan has three matches, which he lights at crucial points, otherwise moving in pitch blackness; and as if alluding to this, Bilbo notices (anachronistically) that he has no matches. Both are utterly lost. Allan's companion observes, "We can only go on till we drop," and Bilbo plods on, "not daring to stop, on, on, until he was tireder than tired" (King 296; Hobbit 67). Suddenly both heroes run splash into an underground body of water, a dead end. Turning back up the tunnels and taking an alternate route, both finally see light-"a faint glimmering spot"; "a glimpse of ... pale out-of-doors light"--and escape through a hole so narrow they must "squeeze" out (King 297; Hobbit 80). "A squeeze, a struggle, and Sir Henry was out," Haggard writes (297). Bilbo, on the other hand, "squeezed and squeezed, and he stuck!" (81) Only by bursting the buttons on his coat does he escape outdoors. Soon after, when Bilbo rejoins the dwarves and Allan's people rejoin their guides, there is surprise and joy. The dwarves have been wondering whether Bilbo is "alive or dead," and an African guide cries out, "Oh, my lords, my lords, it is indeed you come back from the dead!" (Hobbit 84; King 299) The parallels here are so many that, if Tolkien did not consciously imitate Haggard, we have a classic instance of cryptomnesia.

Both books also involve treasure chambers, cathedral-like rooms and corpses in the
mid-part of a passage through a hollow mountain. On one end of the passage is a large, well known public entrance, on the other a secret tunnel. In both stories parties of helpful natives conduct the outsiders to the vicinity of the treasure, but only the outsiders visit the fabulous chamber of diamonds. "The great chamber of Thror," with its rotting tables, skulls, and bones, recalls Haggard's cavern like "the hall of the vastest cathedral" with its side chapel where corpses sit around a table (Hobbit 205; King 262-67). Both parties enter the treasure chamber by a heavy stone door that blends into the wall when closed. Before the door opens, Allan says, he "looked for the doorway, but there was nothing before us but the solid rock," and when Bilbo's dwarves find their stone door, it looks like wall with no "post or lintel or threshold" (King 271; Hobbit 177). Each party is trapped behind such a door, under a snow-capped mounta in in the silent earth (King 286; Hobbit 199). Allan's party is trapped by Gagool, a crone who is called "Mother, old mother" and who looks like a cobra and moves like a vampire bat or a snake (162). Bilbo's party is trapped by a batlike, snakelike dragon--a creature associated by Jungian analysts with the devouring mother. [6]

Similar bits of underground stage business and wording connect the two stories: Good, like Bilbo, is struck in the face by a flying bat, Allan and Bilbo both put large jewels in their pockets, and in both stories a giant gem from the mountain is associated with the local king. Both parties are taunted with threats of starvation in the treasure caves: Gagool says, "There are the bright stones that you love, white men, ... eat of them, hee! hee! drink of them, ha! ha!" and a messenger tells the dwarves, "we leave you to your gold. You may eat that, if you will" (King 278, Hobbit 224). Perhaps Tolkien's most unmistakable echo of King Solomon's Mines is his Battle of Five Armies. Battles in the two books use the same strategy on like terrain: an outnumbered force executes a pincers movement to win against odds, attacking from two arms of high ground into a plain. Haggard's battleground is between two arms of a steep, flat-topped hill "shaped like a horse-shoe"--Tolkien's between narrow spurs of a solitary mountain (188).

The army of Haggard's good king, camped on the hilltop, initially holds off a force double its size thanks to the defensive advantage of high ground, but is weakened in the process; and, as the army of the evil king, Twala, is reinforced, the good are surrounded and without water. So the good king, Ignosi, plans to attack immediately, and he shrewdly deploys his force in four units: one to rush suicidally down toward the open end of the horseshoe, one to stand in reserve behind that one, and two to mass, hidden, on the flanking ridges. The plan is for the first unit, which Allan calls the Greys, to take grave losses and retreat, drawing the enemy army into exposed ground where it can be enveloped from three sides. Ignosi, who waits with the reserves, describes the plan thus: "when I see that the horns are ready to toss Twala, then will I, with the men who are left to me, charge home in Twala's face" (211-14).

The pincers movement, flanking an enemy with forces on both sides of a lagging middle, is a ancient tactic used successfully by the Athenian Miltiades against the
Persians and the Roman Scipio Africanus against Hannibal, but the most direct model for Ignosi's tactic is the Zulu general Shaka, who consolidated an empire larger than Napoleon's and held back the British using flanking and rugged terrain (O'Sullivan 88, 93-94). Shaka deployed the same four units as Haggard's Zulu-raised king Ignosi: (1) a "chest" of older warriors with white shields (Haggard's "Greys"), (2) reinforcements behind them, and (3-4) two "horns" of younger warriors (Bryant 501; Krige 275). Haggard modeled his fictional African kingdom on the Zulus, whom he knew from his British colonial service, and his fictional battle is an exact implementation of Shaka's tactics--Tolkien's a very close approximation.

In The Hobbit, armies of men, elves, and dwarves are between two arms of the mountain when a hoard of evil goblins is seen approaching. The good armies quickly devise a plan similar to Ignosi's: to lure the goblin hoard "into the valley between the arms of the mountain" (237). Elves are positioned on one arm, Dwarves and men on the other, and "brave men" (like Haggard's Greys) meet the Goblins and draw them into the pincers. When the armies on the "arms" (Ignosi's horns) simultaneously attack the goblin's flanks, the evil army panics (239). This parallels events in King Solomon's Mines; Ignosi's plan is successful. After terrible loss of life among the Greys, the attack of the horns seals victory. Tolkien's battle, however, is more convoluted: the successful attack on the goblin's flanks is followed by another reversal as goblin reinforcements swarm over the mountain and outflank the flankers. For the several pages--narrated in the summary style of a chronicle--there is reversal after reversal in the tide of victory.

However, details in this convoluted battle echo Haggard's simpler one. As Twala's host is drawn between Ignosi's horns, the Greys are so reduced in numbers that they circle around a knoll to fight off attacks from all sides, a "doomed band" (223). Similarly, Thorin and his supporters form a ring, attacked from all sides by goblins. In both stories, however, the encircled fighters survive thanks to a single hero identified with the "berserks" of old Norse sagas. Tolkien's son Christopher summarizes the myth: "Berserks were said to fight without corselets, raging like wolves with the strength of bears, and might be regarded almost as shape-changers, who acquired the strength and ferocity of bears" (93). Haggard's Allan compares Curtis, whom he believes to be of Danish ancestry, to "his Berserkr forefathers." Fighting with the "doomed band," Curtis is a "wizard" who "killed and failed not" (226). The berserk in Tolkien's story is Beorn, a man who can change into a bear and thus epitomizes the berserk myth. Beorn mows down the goblins who have encircled the dwarves and, killing their king, Bolg, routs the evil armies. This moment in Tolkien's battle aligns with the moment in Haggard's when Sir Henry Curtis faces in single combat the evil king Twala just as Ignosi's pincers movement takes effect. In both stories the "berserk" hero confronts the evil king at the exact moment that resolves the battle--the onset of the last ebb in the rhythm of the battle. Curtis does not kill Twala at this moment--as Beorn kills Bolg--but does a few hours later in ritual combat.
Motifs of chain mail and unconsciousness further connect the battles. Allan and his companions receive "shining" coats of mail in the African kingdom, armor reserved for royalty and of such workmanship that it forms "a mass of links scarcely too big to be covered with both hands" (157). They wear the mail under their "ordinary clothing," and it repeatedly saves their lives, though there is reference to bruised flesh (158, 187, 241). Captain Good almost dies of contusions. Similarly, after Bilbo and the dwarves enter the dragon's treasure chamber, they don ancient armor, the hobbit receiving a silver shirt of marvelous workmanship, "a small coat of mail, wrought for some young elf-prince long ago" and a helmet (203). Bilbo and the dwarves, like Allan's party, wear the armor under their ordinary clothing, and the helmet saves Bilbo's life. The ancient armor protects but does not save Thorn. The dwarf king's "rent armour" lies beside the bed where, like Captain Good, he lies feverish after the battle (243). Finally, Allan and Bilbo are both knocked out by blows to the head in battle, lost for a time on the battlefield after victory, and feared dead. In both stories unconsciousness allows narrative compression through flashbacks as both heroes (and their readers) hear summaries after the fact of the respective victories.

There are more similarities between King Solomon's Mines and The Hobbit: "biltong" Allan's party grows sick of on the trail and the "cram" of Bilbo's party," the catalogs of descriptive names (King 91, 195; Hobbit 225, 190), and the narrative pacing of dangers and rescues--what Haggard calls "shaves" and Tolkien eucatastrophes (King 312; Tree 68-69). These situate stories within a broader tradition, for Stevenson's sailors chew "biscuit" and "junk," his pirates have descriptive aliases, and he is a master of the cliffhanger. The many parallels between Haggard's first successful fiction and Tolkien's are specific enough, however, to draw a line of descent from Stevenson through Haggard to Tolkien in the family tree of fiction. An entire clan of fantasy descends from The Hobbit and its sequels, and another clan, including the Tarzan books and Michael Crichton's Congo, descends independently from Haggard. The link between Haggard and Tolkien marks the kinship between these clans in the genealogy of influence.

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Notes

(1.) Giddings and Holland argue persuasively for the influence of Haggard on The Lord of the Rings and place it accurately within a tradition of adventure fiction. However, they mention The Hobbit only briefly as biographical introduction. Though they make two questionable assumptions--that influences are conscious and that Tolkien's debt to adventure fiction can be narrowed to three novels--Giddings and Holland catalog impressive analogues between Tolkien's work and King Solomon's Mines, The Thirty-nine Steps, and Lorna Doone. An interesting application of their work is that The
Hobbit echoes King Solomon's Mines more consistently than its sequel does (indeed, most of the Haggard analogues in The Lord of the Rings also occur in The Hobbit but not vice versa) and yet shows little influence of The Thirty-nine Steps or Lorna Doone.

(2.) Stevenson developed story ideas from dreams and attributed much of his best work to the "Brownies" who inspired him—for instance, when he wrote Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde at a rate of perhaps eight thousand words per day (McLynn 254-59). Haggard is said to have written King Solomon's Mines and She each in about six weeks, and of the latter he said, "it was written at white heat, almost without rest.... I remember that when I sat down to the task my ideas as to its development were of the vaguest" (Cohen 97).

(3.) Jung praised writing "after the manner of Rider Haggard" because it "offers the richest opportunities for psychological elucidation." Such visionary novels were, in his view, deeper than psychological novels that consciously set out to explain character and thus obscured "the psychic background." A visionary tale "is constructed against a background of unspoken psychological assumptions, and the more unconscious the author is of them, the more the background reveals itself in unalloyed purity to the discerning eye" (Spirit 88-89).

(4.) Some of the analogues discussed in this article are mentioned at various points in my 1995 book, The Hobbit: A Journey into Maturity.

(5.) Jules Verne's A Journey to the Center of the Earth, is a primal novel of travel in an underground maze where the relationship between the leading characters suggests that between Bilbo and Gandalf, and the inexperienced hero is also "lost ins vast labyrinth" of tunnels (147).

(6.) The dragon as a central symbol of the devouring mother is developed a length in two of Erich Neumann's books, The Origin and History of Consciousness and The Great Mother: An Analysis of the Archetype.

Works Cited


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