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Gandalf

Thinker, Teacher, Mentor, Grouch

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Abstract

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The Lord of the Rings is one of the most read novels throughout history. Its popularity is huge and it has a fan-base matched only by that of *Star Trek* and *Star Wars*. It is believed that its popularity is due to its applicability and its many interesting characters – which all have different personalities and appeal to different people. One of the most popular main characters is the powerful wizard Gandalf.

In this essay, I argue that in Tolkien's novel *The Lord of the Rings*, Gandalf's relationship to Frodo is constructed as a mentorship as defined by the modern pedagogical research, in order to examine what affect Gandalf's mentoring has on Frodo. In order to confirm this, it will first be established that Gandalf and Frodo has the potential to be in a mentoring relationship. Second, a close reading of the novel will be undertaken, analyzing Gandalf's and Frodo's interaction, comparing it to the interaction between a "good mentor" and his mentee, as defined by modern pedagogical research. Third, I will analyze how Gandalf's actions as a mentor influence Frodo's development and actions in the novel.

This study shows that Gandalf and Frodo did indeed interact in the way of a mentor and his mentee. Furthermore, Gandalf performed his role the way a "good mentor" should; he asked questions, challenged productivity, encouraged risk-taking, helped to identify goals, listened actively, offered encouragement, promoted independence, provided feedback, shared critical knowledge, provided structure and gradually granted Frodo more responsibilities – the way a "good mentor" should. This all contributed to Frodo's success in helping him develop confidence, competence, self-knowledge, self-sufficiency and determination.

Sökord: Frodo, Gandalf, *Lord of the Rings*, mentor, Tolkien

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I Introduction

Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* has been deemed to be the third bestselling novel ever authored. It has sold over 150 million copies and it has been recreated in movies, videogames, theatrical plays and other adaptations (Allen). There are critics who have concluded that the strength of the novel is that it renders a wide variety of characters to which the readers can be attracted (Sánchez Aranda, Bonaut and Granío 193). One of the most popular characters is Gandalf (Kuipers and De Klot 144) – a powerful wizard possessing a vast amount of expertise. Sent to Middle-earth to council and aid the Free Peoples against the Dark Lord Sauron, he sets the saga's main quest afoot: to eliminate the Ring of Power. Gandalf's function as an advisor can, in my opinion, be viewed on both a macro- and microscopic scale. On the macroscopic scale, he councils the leaders of nations – influencing major events – and on the microscopic scale he advises his comrades and companions – influencing their individual development. In this epic adventure, Gandalf councils the Ring-bearer Frodo Baggins in his task to destroy the Ring.

In this essay, I am going to examine how Gandalf functions as a mentor to Frodo Baggins and how this influences Frodo's actions. It is my aspiration that it will contribute to a greater insight into one of Gandalf's multiple functions in the novel and provide a fresh perspective on the interactions between the characters and its outcome, by examining their affiliation from a pedagogical viewpoint. The reason I chose to examine how Gandalf mentors Frodo is that the hobbits¹ are the most inexperienced characters of the Fellowship and Frodo bears the heaviest burden, namely, the responsibility of carrying the Ring to Mordor. According to Tolkien – who has devoted a section of the novel's prologue to describe the

¹ In this essay, I will use Tolkien's way of capitalizing of the noun "Hobbit"; capital "H" is used when referring to the Hobbit-race and a lower case "h" is used to indicate a particular group of Hobbits – namely the hobbits of the Fellowship.

Hobbits' costumes – Frodo, up until the story commences, has lead a quiet life, away from the dangers of the world (Tolkien, *Lord of the Rings* 1-7, 33). It is thus of interest to examine how Gandalf – the oldest, most experienced character of the Fellowship – mentors the young callow Hobbit Frodo.

The popularity of Gandalf and Frodo (Kuipers and De Klot 141), combined with the fact that so many have read the novel (Allen), makes it especially relevant to examine how Gandalf mentors Frodo. *The Lord of the Rings* has, after all, one of the most prominent fan-bases, matched only with that of *Star Trek* and *Star Wars* (Rosenbaum 192). Mathijs claims that the novel has "[p]rovided a wellspring of parallels between fictional characters/events and real-life (and historical) figures and events, regardless of Tolkien's own discomfort with such allegorical interpretations" (1-2). Tolkien himself preferred to term this phenomenon "applicability" – which contrary to "allegory" resides in the liberty of the reader (Tolkien, *The Lord of the Rings* xxiv). By this, Tolkien denoted that allegories are determined by the authors intent, whereas implacability is a phenomenon tied the readers own interpretations, which differ naturally, as a result of cultural heritage and personal experience. In the DVD documentary *J.R.R. Tolkien: Creator of Middle-Earth*, it is theorized that this is one of the strengths of the novel – since it leads the reader to find his or her own meanings in the novel and thus establishes a bond to it on a personal level. Since the novel has had an impact on so many lives (Rosenbaum 192) and has this applicable connection to real life (J.R.R. Tolkien: *Creator of Middle-Earth*), it is highly motivated to examine the novel from a, as yet unexplored, pedagogical viewpoint, although the approach may, of course, also be applied to any novel with a similar construction. However, Gandalf, who is well known and popular (Kuipers and De Klot 144), influences many readers through his actions, and sets an example of mentoring, which makes it especially motivated to examine what he is conveying. In what way does Gandalf fit into the category of "the mentor"? Does Gandalf always conduct himself in the manner a "good mentor" would? If so, to what extent does he fulfill the role and how do

his actions affect Frodo? In this essay, I argue that in Tolkien's novel *The Lord of the Rings*, Gandalf's relationship to Frodo is constructed as a mentorship as defined by the modern pedagogical research, in order to examine what affect Gandalf's mentoring has on Frodo.

1.1 Method

In this study, I will undertake a close reading of Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*, analyzing Gandalf and Frodo from a pedagogical point of view. This will be achieved by studying modern pedagogical research in order to define the characteristics of the mentor. The reason for choosing modern pedagogical research as a source for defining the mentor is simply that it reflects the general view of what a mentor is and how such a person should interact with his/her mentees. After defining what a mentor is, Gandalf will be compared with those characteristics, in order to analyze how he fits into the category. Furthermore, in order to analyze Gandalf's (the mentor) interaction with Frodo (the mentee), the characteristics of the mentee will also be defined in order to confirm that said relationship actually could exist between the two parties. An analysis of how Frodo fits into the category will then follow in order to take the final step and analyze the interactions between Gandalf and Frodo, and thus determine if, and in what way, the characters way of interacting fits into the typical interaction between a "good mentor" and his mentee, as defined by modern pedagogical research. The reason for choosing the term "good mentor" when referring to the interaction is that one may possess the qualities of a mentor, but still not live up to the role in the interaction – whether one actually is a "good mentor" or not is thus determined by ones actions. Paralleled with my analysis of Gandalf's actions, I will also analyze how said actions affect Frodo in order to determine if they are deriving a "good" result.

The reason for selecting Gandalf as the mentor to analyze, despite the fact that other members of the Fellowship could perform that function as well, is that Gandalf, beyond any

doubt, is the most experienced of the characters. He has existed since the dawn of time and been present in Middle-earth since the onset of the Third Age (Tolkien, *Unfinished Tales* 372-84; Drout 230). For a related reason, I have selected Frodo as the mentee, even though Gandalf also councils other members of the Fellowship. The hobbits are the youngest, least experienced members of the Fellowship, having lived a secluded life in rural Shire (Drout 280-81) and Frodo, in my view, is the one in most need of support, since he has the most strenuous task. Frodo has to transport the Ring to Mordor – a task that is not only unsafe in an evident way, that is, through the nature of the journey, but also through the corruptive power of the Ring itself.

2 Gandalf Possesses the Qualities of a Mentor

In order to analyze how Gandalf functions as a mentor, it is necessary to first establish that he truly belongs to that category. To that end, I will now define what a mentor is and then compare Gandalf to this category.

2.1 What is a Mentor?

Ambrosetti and Dekkers claim that there is no single definition of what mentoring is, although most definitions describe some variety of hierarchical affiliation where the mentor possesses expert knowledge which is sought after by the mentee (43). This is confirmed by *The Oxford Dictionary*, which defines the word "mentor" as an experienced and trusted advisor who trains and councils someone with less experience. Burton explains the concept further by claiming that a mentor is a person who has the ability to help others with difficult life transitions in a manner transcendent from the average man (507-17). A mentor is well known for considerable achievements and is a person who can function as a role model for others to

emulate (Burton 507-17; Ambrosetti and Dekkers 44; Gearity and Metz 24; Smith 278; Lankau and Scandura 787). Levinson argues that the mentor is a teacher, advisor, sponsor, host and a guide to the domain into which the mentee wishes to enter (Corbett 62). This view is also shared by Smith (278).

To sum up, the mentor can be defined as a person who is higher up in the hierarchy than the mentee and a guide into the domain which the mentee wishes to enter. A mentor is a person of experience, a source of expert knowledge and an advisor. He or she is also more capable of counseling than the average man, a person who has achieved great things, and who is suitable as a role model.

2.2 Is Gandalf a Mentor?

Gandalf is one of five wizards referred to as the Istari who arrived to Middle-earth in the year 1000 of the Third Age. Each was a Maia (a demigod) sent by a Vala (a god) to provide council to the peoples of Middle-earth in their struggle against the Dark Lord Sauron (Tolkien, *Unfinished Tales* 372-84; Drout 230). This should establish that Gandalf is a character of high hierarchical status – being an actual demigod. One can also safely assume that Gandalf has the role of advisor and guide – since this is the very purpose of his existence in Middle-earth, and thus he fulfills two of the criteria of the mentor. This position is confirmed by the fact that Gandalf remained true to this task to selflessly aid and guide the Free Peoples throughout his stay in Middle-earth (Tolkien, *Unfinished Tales* 372-84).

When it comes to experience and expert knowledge it is also clear that Gandalf possesses these traits. The Istari, despite appearing in Middle-earth in the Third Age, are much more ancient beings who have served as helpers of the Valar from the dawn of time (Tolkien, *The Silmarillion*). Thus, Gandalf possesses a vast amount of experience – having existed since the very birth of Arda (the world, in which Tolkien's tales are set). Gandalf is

described as the wisest of the Maiar (Tolkien, *The Silmarillion*) and it is claimed in the *J.R.R. Tolkien Encyclopedia* that Gandalf possessed vast knowledge as well as self-knowledge and imagination (Drout 230). This confirms that Gandalf fulfills the knowledge criterion of the mentor. These gathered aspects of Gandalf's character should also establish that he has a higher capability of counseling than the average man – being extremely knowledgeable, possessing mighty experience as well as self-knowledge. This self-knowledge is illustrated through the following passage in the novel when Frodo implores Gandalf to take the Ring: "[n]o!" cried Gandalf, springing to his feet. 'With that power I should have a power too great and terrible. And over me the Ring would gain a power still greater and more deadly'" (Tolkien, *Lord of the Rings* 61). It is thus clear that Gandalf realizes that even he would become corrupted by the Ring. His power, added to the Ring's would make the enemy even stronger – since he would himself, through corruption, become a servant of the Dark Lord.

During his time in Middle-earth Gandalf has become well-known, has learnt many languages and encountered many of the peoples living in Middle-earth (Drout 230-31). As a consequence, he is known under several aliases: Gandalf, Mithrandir, Tharkun and Greyhame (230-31). In the novel, Gandalf is well respected which is confirmed by the fact that he is invited to the council of Elrond (Tolkien, *Lord of the Rings* 239). Gandalf is even recognized in the Shire – despite the Hobbits' characteristic ignorance of the outside world (2-5) as a provider of spectacular fireworks (Tolkien, *Lord of the Rings* 25-27; Tolkien, *The Hobbit* 13). To the rest of Middle-earth, however, he is famous for being a magnificent wizard and a legendary hero (Tolkien, *The Hobbit* 13). This fulfills the condition of being a person who is recognized for great feats, which is one of the characteristics that distinguish a mentor. It also implies that Gandalf is a suitable role model – since he is well-known for laboring for the good of Middle-earth – aiding the Free Peoples against the Dark Lord Sauron. The fact that he never wavered from his selfless task (Tolkien, *Unfinished Tales* 372-84), as I mentioned

earlier, validates this position further since Gandalf essentially functions as a patron to Middle-earth and is incorruptible by evil (Tolkien, *Lord of the Rings* 61, 259-60).

Gandalf also takes a special interest in Hobbits and is very knowledgeable in Hobbit lore (Drout 230-31; Tolkien, *Lord of the Rings* 48). This makes him ideal for mentoring a Hobbit. Although he does not suffer fools gladly, he yet shows great fondness towards the young and inexperienced (Drout 230-31) – a category the hobbits of the Fellowship definitely belong to. Despite this, Gandalf is still quick to reprove, showing exasperation towards foolishness (Tolkien, *Unfinished Tales* 372-84) and there is also some degree of self-satisfaction, irascibility and sarcasm to the wizard (Burns, 73). Whether these features apply to the relationship between Frodo and Gandalf remains to be seen, and will be discussed in Section 4.2.11. However, it is crucial to be aware of these traits, in order to recognize them in Gandalf's actions. Yet it is now determined that Gandalf fulfills all of the established conditions for being capable of functioning as a mentor.

3 Frodo could be Viewed as Gandalf's Mentee

In this section, I will argue that Frodo can actually be viewed as Gandalf's mentee. To this end, I will first define what a mentee is and then compare Frodo to this category.

3.1 What is a Mentee?

The Oxford Dictionary defines a "mentee" as someone who is trained, advised or counseled by a mentor. This being the case, one can look back at the definition of mentor in the beginning of Section 2.1, which mentions a hierarchical relationship between mentor and mentee, where the mentee is less experienced and in need of guidance (Ambrosetti and Dekkers 43). Levinson's view that the mentor is a guide to the domain which the mentee

wishes to enter suggests that the mentor/mentee relationship is field specific – the mentee should be assigned a mentor with the skills suitable to guide them to their specific goals (Corbett 62). Thus a mentee is a person with less experience than the mentor and has a development zone, in the area of the mentor's expertise.

In addition to what I have mentioned above, the grounds for naming somebody mentee of a more experienced party seems to be bound to the nature of their relationship. Announcing a mentoring relationship does not necessarily make it so – both parties need to agree to the roles they are given and act accordingly, which will be discussed in the next section.

3.2 Is Frodo Baggins a Mentee?

Frodo Baggins is a Hobbit, also known as Halfling. The Hobbits are small humanoids that traditionally live in holes in the ground (Drout 280-81). Most Hobbits are farmers and live in tightly knit family structures. They lead a quiet life in their country (the Shire) isolated from the rest of Middle-earth. Their isolation has led them to become suspicious of outsiders – some even to the point of xenophobia (280-81). They are generally uninterested in any other lore than their own and care little for events outside of their borders (Tolkien, *The Lord of the Rings* 2-5). Yet Frodo is an unusual Hobbit who is well-known in the Shire as a friend of Elves. He inherited his so-called Uncle Bilbo's (they are actually cousins) thirst for adventure and as a consequence, he was deemed to be a bit strange by the other Hobbits – given their near non-existent interest in things outside of the Shire (Drout 223-24) as well as their fear and distrust of the Elves (Tolkien, *Lord of the Rings* 7). Thus, Frodo has more experience in the ways of the world than the average Hobbit. Despite his adventurous qualities, however, Frodo enjoys the quiet life of good food and comforts of his home (33). This means that he will require help in adapting to the dangers of a life on the road, as well as education concerning the various cultures and places he will pass through on his way to Mordor – a task

fitting Gandalf who, as mentioned, is no stranger to travel (Drout 230-31). However, the most crucial aspects, which Frodo will need the most help coping with, are the dangers of carrying the Ring. Frodo is completely ignorant of its true nature and the lore surrounding it. This knowledge is vital for him in order to succeed in his quest, as it is the knowing of the very nature of the dangers he will face on his journey – both the temptation and corruption from the Ring itself (Tolkien, *Lord of the Rings* 47) and the various servants that seek it on their Dark Lord's behalf (220). This would make Gandalf an ideal mentor since his very purpose in Middle-earth is to labor against Sauron – which through millennia has made him very knowledgeable in ring lore and the customs of the enemy (Drout 230-31).

When determining if Gandalf and Frodo actually agree to be in a mentoring relationship, this can be traced to the very onset of the novel when Gandalf promised Frodo's uncle Bilbo that he would watch his nephew with "two eyes, as often as I can spare them" (Tolkien, *Lord of the Rings* 32). Later, before Frodo sets out on his quest, Gandalf formalizes their mentoring relationship: "I will help you bear this burden, as long as it is yours to bear" (61), and after the council of Elrond, when the first part of Frodo's journey is complete, Gandalf reconfirms his mentorship of Frodo: "Frodo, I do not know if I can do anything to help you; but I will whisper this in your ears [...] I think I shall come with you" (273). Thus it is established that Frodo and Gandalf both have agreed to be in a mentoring relationship.

4 Gandalf Interacts with Frodo in the way a "Good Mentor" Would

As would be expected, there is no single definition on how a successful mentor interacts with his/her mentees. In fact, Beutel suggests that it is the most complex of all pedagogical relationships (82). Nevertheless, I will now attempt to gather the principal facets involved in a successful mentoring relationship in order to compare Gandalf's interaction with Frodo to the typical interaction of a "good mentor" and his mentee.

4.1 How Does a "Good Mentor" Interact with his Mentees?

Smith (277-78) emphasizes that mentoring is about developing the mentee's whole person rather than merely particular skills. To that end, Smith has provided a list of tasks that a mentor should perform. According to her, a mentor should ask questions that enable the mentee to reflect, challenge productivity, encourage risk-taking and help identify goals. A mentor should listen actively and offer encouragement. Furthermore, he or she should promote independence, provide feedback and share critical knowledge (277-78). This list, despite lacking a few items, provides a fairly good insight into the function of the mentor in a mentoring relationship.

In a qualitative report on mentoring, Gearity and Metz present findings which resemble Smith's views. They point out that the mentor is a person demanding both excellence and quality, thus, challenging productivity. Furthermore, a mentor devotes a large amount of time to advising his/her students and providing feedback (24). Another single case study made by Sempowicz and Hudson confirms the importance of feedback further; it shows that feedback is vital for progress – making it possible for the mentee to self-reflect, enabling growth (13).

Another model (Fig. 1. next page) that validates Smith's views on mentoring is the one summarized in a report by Hudson. It consists of five parts: "personal attributes", "system requirements", "pedagogical knowledge", "modelling" and "feedback" (Hudson 32-33). "Personal attributes" includes personal support, encouragement, being able to listen attentively and instill confidence – which can be compared to Smith's emphasis on offering encouragement and to listening actively, but also promoting independence and encouraging risk-taking. "System requirements" involve communicating the surrounding rules of the mentoring relationship such as policies, aims and curricula, (32-33) which can be compared to the sharing of critical knowledge. "Pedagogical knowledge" encompasses the ability to plan ahead, teaching strategies, abilities to provide structure as well as possessing the awareness of the mentee's skill-level and behavioral traits (32-33). This can be compared to Smith's

emphasis on helping to identify goals. "Modelling" incorporates providing a good example and "feedback" involves articulating expectations, communicating how well the mentee fulfills them and providing advice on how the mentee can improve (32-33) – which is the definition of the term that will be used henceforth throughout this essay. Compared to Smith's views, this definition of "feedback" can be related to asking questions, challenging productivity and, of course, providing feedback.

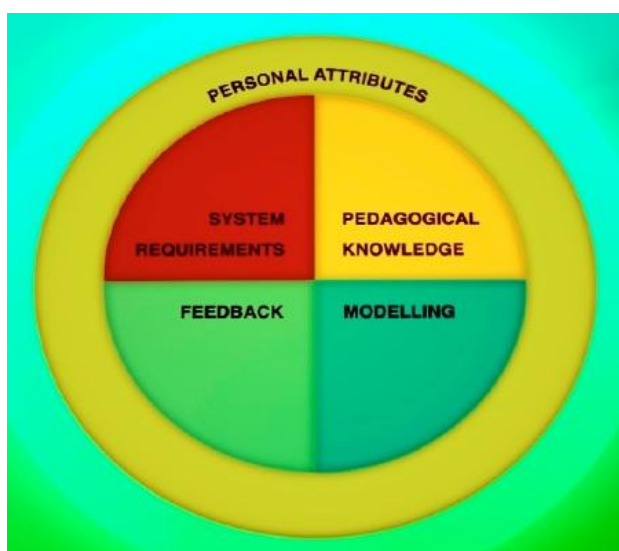


Fig. 1. "Mentoring Model" from Hudson, Peter. "Mentors Report on Their Own Mentoring Practices." *Australian Journal of Teacher Education* 35.7 (2010): 30-42. Print.

Another aspect of mentoring is mentioned by Corbett who compares the mentor's role to parenthood (62-63). However, according to Corbett, a mentor should not be confused with a parent. The mentor has more of a transitional role while parenthood is permanent. Mentorship is essentially an apprenticeship to an expert who is more advanced and authoritative. The mentor's task is to provide moral support and help the mentee realize his/her dreams. The relationship between the mentor and mentee should also gradually become more mutual as the mentee gains a fuller understanding of his/her abilities and becomes more capable (62-63).

A final aspect of a successful mentoring relationship is pointed out by Ambrosetti and Dekkers (44), as well as by Sempowicz and Hudson (12), who all emphasize the importance of matching a mentor with his/her mentee in order to maximize the productivity of the relationship. This is a critical aspect to keep in mind, since a mismatch could become a source of friction between mentor and mentee.

To sum up, a mentor's role is highly complex and functions on many levels. There are many aspects to keep in mind when analyzing a mentoring relationship and although it is nearly impossible to name all the specific tasks of the "the good mentor", it is nevertheless possible to characterize the most dominant of them. I will now list the activities I will search for when analyzing Gandalf's interactions with Frodo in *The Lord of the Rings*. Does Gandalf help identify goals, promote independence or encourage risk-taking? Is he challenging Frodo's productivity? Is it the case that Gandalf shares critical knowledge or asks questions? Does he listen actively? Are there instances where he offers encouragement, provides feedback, or provides structure? Is he always behaving in an appropriate manner? And, finally, does Gandalf gradually grant his mentee more responsibilities?

4.2 The Interaction between Gandalf and Frodo in the Novel

In this section, I intend to analyze the interaction between Gandalf and Frodo in the novel with regard to the aspects mentioned in the section above. Naturally, the analysis will mainly focus on the part of the novel commonly referred to as *The Fellowship of the Ring*, since it contains the majority of the interactions between Frodo and Gandalf. The analysis will be presented thematically and an analysis of how Gandalf's mentoring affects Frodo will be integrated into it, in order to show the relationship between cause and effect transparently.

4.2.1 Helping to Identify Goals

There are two instances in the novel when Gandalf directly or indirectly helps Frodo to identify his goals – which is an essential aspect of mentoring (Smith 278). The first can be found in chapter two, where Gandalf shares information about the Ring, its past and its corruptive power. He also stresses that something has to be done, and soon: "[t]he Shire – [Sauron] may be seeking it now, if he has not already found out where it lies. [...] I fear that he may even think that the long-unnoticed name of *Baggins* has become important" (Tolkien, *The Lord of the Rings*, 59, original emphasis). This has that very purpose of making Frodo capable of taking an informed decision and makes it possible for him identify his first goal – to take the Ring out of the Shire: "I cannot keep the Ring and stay here [...] I ought to leave Bag End, leave the Shire" (62). Gandalf also successfully helps Frodo to identify where he should go, by suggesting his destination: "Rivendell! [...] I will go east, and I will make for Rivendell" (66), and thus Frodo's first goal is to take the Ring there.

Gandalf's role in helping Frodo to identify his second, and final goal, is both direct and indirect. Indirect, since Gandalf has made it possible for Frodo to participate in the council, and direct, because Gandalf is also attending himself. He contributes to the discussion of what should be done with the Ring – whether to hide it, use it or have it destroyed. It is uncovered that the Ring cannot be destroyed effortlessly: "Gandalf has revealed to us that we cannot destroy it by any craft that we here possess" (266), nor should it be hidden: "'in the sea it should be safe.' 'Not safe for ever,' said Gandalf" (266), neither should it be used: "its strength [...] is too great for anyone to wield at will" (267), and the only real option left is to destroy it: "[i]f we seek this, we shall put [Sauron] out of reckoning" (269). The discussion of facts and possible options of managing the crisis helped Frodo to make his decision to take the Ring to Mordor himself: "[a]t last with an effort [Frodo] spoke [...] 'I will take the Ring'" (270).

4.2.2 Promoting Independence

From the very onset of the mentoring relationship Gandalf promotes Frodo's independence, as emphasized by Smith (278): "the decision [of what should be done with the Ring] lies with you [Frodo]" (Tolkien, *The Lord of the Rings*, 61). When Frodo decided to take the Ring out the Shire, Gandalf encouraged him to make a plan: "you must go, or at least set out, either North, South, West or East – and the direction should not be known" (65). This proves that Gandalf intended Frodo to make this decision independently and even though Gandalf later advises Frodo on where to go, this way of letting Frodo decide his own course of actions should make him motivated to carry out his journey – since he is not forced, but is carrying it out, of his own will.

Another occasion when Gandalf promotes independence is during the council of Elrond, though Gandalf does not say anything explicitly which confirms this position. Nevertheless, none of those present expect Frodo to take the Ring and he makes his decision independently, as is illustrated by Elrond's words: "[t]his quest may be attempted by the weak with as much hope as the strong" (269). Thus, anyone could take on the quest with roughly the same chance of success and Frodo is in no way talked into it by anyone but himself.

When the Fellowship turns back after their inability to proceed through Caradhras Frodo is the deciding factor in the joint decision to travel through Moria: "I beg that there should be no vote, until we have slept on it. Gandalf will get votes easier in the light of the morning" (297). During this discussion the fellowship is divided, and Frodo points out that the current pessimistic situation may influence their judgment. I also argue that Frodo in the same time expresses his opinion, since he essentially defends Gandalf's proposal – Frodo thinks it is a good idea to take Gandalf's advice and this contributes to pivot the vote in Gandalf's favor.

The way Gandalf promotes independence makes Frodo dedicated to complete his task throughout his journey – which he eventually does, due to the fact that he is doing it out of

free will. Frodo is focused on his task, and determined to complete it, almost to the very end: "This is the end at last. On Mount Doom doom shall fall" (945). He says this just before he climbs the final path to the mountain, which shows his resolve – he struggles on despite major exhaustion.

4.2.3 Encouraging Risk-Taking

The fact that Gandalf is the triggering factor to Frodo's journey can be interpreted as "encouraging risk-taking", which is included in the functions of the mentor by Smith (278). Gandalf is essentially encouraging Frodo to leave his home and travel roads unfamiliar to him, which will, in all probability, include danger. Although encouraging a mentee to put himself in situations involving high risk is not the mark of a "good mentor" it is, nonetheless, preferable to the alternative in Frodo's case. Frodo cannot simply get rid of the Ring, because of its corruptive power. Gandalf puts this in a clear way: "[a] Ring of Power looks after itself, Frodo. *It* may slip off treacherously, but its keeper never abandons it [...] he would never just forsaken it, or cast it aside" (Tolkien, *Lord of the Rings* 55, original emphasis). Nor can Frodo throw the Ring away: "[t]hese Rings have a way of being found. In evil hands it might have done great evil. Worst of all it might have fallen into the hands of the enemy" (60). Furthermore, Frodo cannot stay in the Shire with the Ring since "[t]he enemy has learned that the One has been found [...] he has at least heard, I think, of *hobbits* and the *Shire* [...] he may be seeking it now, if he has not already found out where it lies" (59, original emphasis), and when the Ring eventually would have been found by Sauron "he would have tormented [Frodo] for trying to keep his Ring". The Ring also cannot be entrusted to another, for two reasons – firstly, because Frodo does not own the strength to part with it since "[no] greater torment [would be] possible [for Frodo] than being robbed of it" (222), and secondly, because even if he did entrust it to another more powerful and able character, like Gandalf "the Ring

would gain a power still greater and more deadly" (61). Thus, the only real option remaining is for Frodo to make the journey himself, since all other options would cause harm, not only to Frodo himself, but to entire Middle-earth. Therefore it is right of Gandalf to encourage risk-taking in this way, extreme though it may be, since it may eventually result in Frodo destroying the Ring and ridding himself from the danger it poses – which is in his best interest.

4.2.4 Challenging Productivity

When examining if Gandalf challenges Frodo's productivity as accentuated by Smith (278), and by Gearity and Metz (24), one can look to Frodo's awakening in Rivendell, when Gandalf delivers a somewhat cryptic comment about his absence on Frodo's journey there: "I was delayed [...] and that nearly proved our ruin. And yet I am not sure: it may have been better so" (Tolkien, *Lord of the Rings* 220). Taken in context, I believe that Gandalf, who has just praised Frodo and the hobbits for making it through the dangers of the road, realizes that despite the risks the hobbits have faced without his help, they have overcome every obstacle, and it has made them stronger and wiser for the experience. Thus, Gandalf's inability to join the group, as was his intention, may have been a better outcome since his aid would have eased the hobbits' burden and hindered them from obtaining as much firsthand experience as they did. It has challenged them and they made the trip independently, albeit with the aid of Aragorn, who was sent to the hobbits by Gandalf for that very purpose. Gandalf has thus, unintentionally challenged the hobbits' and Frodo's productivity to the limit. However, one must consider that this inadvertently led to Frodo's injury, which nearly cost him his life. Therefore Gandalf's unintended absence has also proven to be extremely dangerous. Nevertheless, it is the case that Gandalf was powerless in the matter of his absence and could not have joined the hobbits despite his will to do so: "It was impossible to find you, Frodo, in

the wilderness, and it would have been folly to try with all the Nine at my heels. [...] But I hoped to draw some of them off, and yet reach Rivendell ahead of you and send out help" (264). The help sent out actually saved Frodo's life – without the aid of Glorfindel, who lent Frodo his horse, Frodo would not have made it to Rivendell. Thus, Gandalf may have put Frodo in danger, but he did also, indirectly, save his life. It is also a fact that Gandalf tried to get a message through to Frodo, where he urged Frodo to leave earlier – in order to avoid danger; however the message was delivered too late. Furthermore, Gandalf was unaware of the fact that the Ringwraiths had already been resurrected at his last meeting with Frodo: "I did not know that they had arisen again or I should have fled with you at once" (220). Thus while challenging Frodo's productivity to the very limit Gandalf at the same time provided all the support he could muster – the way a proper mentor should. Consequently, Frodo accumulated substantial firsthand experience in managing the perils of traveling, as well as confrontations with his enemies.

4.2.5 Sharing Critical Knowledge

There are numerous occasions in the novel where Gandalf acts as a provider of critical knowledge, which is one of the traits of the mentor highlighted by Smith (278). In the second chapter Gandalf explains to Frodo how the Ring of Power had ended up in his care, thus proving the Ring's "identity": "It is the last proof [...] I may have started with guesses about Gollum, but I am not guessing now. I know" (Tolkien, *Lord of the Rings* 56). Through sharing the cautionary tale of Gollum's life Gandalf also explains the Ring's corruptive power to Frodo: "the thing was eating up his mind, of course, and the torment had become almost unbearable" (55). This serves as an example of what could happen to Frodo if he should keep the Ring, and makes Frodo realize the Ring's horrible effects on even the most decent of people, like his uncle Bilbo, who, as Gandalf explains, also felt the effects of it. The

information shared in this chapter of the novel serves to make Frodo aware of the danger the Ring poses, in which he succeeds, as illustrated by Frodo's outburst: "[b]ut this is Terrible! [...] Far worse than the worst that I imagined from your hints and warnings" (59). However, it also provides Frodo with the knowledge required to make an informed decision on how to handle this peril, and were it not for this, Frodo would have remained ignorant until the servants of Sauron had eventually found him, which would have caused him great harm.

When Frodo meets Gandalf in Rivendell, Gandalf again acts as a provider of information, by informing Frodo about what happened at the Ford of Bruinen: "[y]our friends crossed after the flood had passed and they found you lying on your face at the top of the bank [...] they feared that you were dead, or worse" (224), who the Ringwraiths are: "the Black Riders are the Ringwraiths, the Nine Servants of the Lord of the Rings" (220), and what could have happened to him if his wound had gone unchecked: "you would have become like [the Ringwraiths] are, only weaker and under their command [...] [Sauron] would have tormented you for trying to keep his Ring" (222). This way, Gandalf is providing Frodo with information that helps him realize the gravity of the situation he had been in – which should serve to make Frodo more cautious throughout the remainder of his voyage.

At Rivendell, Frodo is invited to join the council of Elrond thanks to Gandalf's advice that brought him there, and to the fact that Elrond had received word of his arrival owing to Gandalf, probably through the Dunedain who live as rangers in the North. At the council was gathered the wise and mighty, and all present, including Gandalf, held in their knowledge a scrap of information, which put into a whole, shed light on the current situation regarding Sauron and the Ring. This way, Gandalf is both directly and indirectly performing the role of the mentor by providing Frodo with vital knowledge that aided him in making the decision to carry the Ring to Mordor himself.

Prior to leaving Rivendell, Gandalf spends some time tutoring Frodo personally in the lore of Middle-earth, focusing on "their road and the perils they would meet" (277). Once

again, Gandalf is sharing knowledge critical for Frodo to succeed, in accordance with the views on mentoring by Smith (278). Since Gandalf knows how dangerous their road will be, he rightly takes advantage of the opportunity to prepare his mentee, by improving his competence.

Before the Fellowship decides to travel through Moria, Gandalf informs Frodo about that road's advantages as well as disadvantages in order to make him aware of the dangers they will face there and what it will demand of their character: "I would not lead you into Moria if there were no hope of coming out again. If there are Orcs there, it may prove ill for us [...] but there is a hope that Moria is still free" (Tolkien, *Lord of the Rings* 296). Thus, Gandalf is providing Frodo with information about this alternative road, which makes Frodo able to take a stand, as well as prepare himself for the journey.

When inside of Moria, Gandalf not only provides information about the dwelling and its inhabitants (former and present) but also hands out important advice on how to handle the journey: "[g]o carefully with the water [...] There are many streams in and wells in the Mines, but they should not be touched" (310). That way, Gandalf further prepares Frodo for the journey and hinders him from making dire mistakes, like drinking foul water.

4.2.6 Asking Questions

There are two occurrences which beyond any doubt are the most pivotal moments when Gandalf asks Frodo questions, which according to Smith is one of the functions of a mentor (279). Gandalf naturally also asks Frodo questions at other times, however the impact of these specific questions is very clear – they strongly affect Frodo's actions as the novel progresses, and therefore I will focus solely on them.

The longest interactive sequence between Frodo and Gandalf in the novel takes place in chapter two where Gandalf informs Frodo about the Ring and introduces him to the dilemma

he has to face. Therefore, it is natural that this is when Gandalf asks Frodo the most questions. When Frodo becomes upset about the fact that Bilbo let Gollum live, Gandalf says to Frodo that "[m]any that live deserve death. And some that die deserve life. Can you give it to them" (Tolkien, *Lord of the Rings* 59)? Gandalf asks Frodo this existential question in order to make Frodo reflect on power and mercy. He wants Frodo to consider that the consequences of his actions cannot be predicted, and, therefore, he should not make rash decisions, for it may have catastrophic effects on the future. This lesson is important for Frodo to learn – in order for him to succeed in his task, and, indeed, Frodo does pity Gollum later on in the novel, and spares him as they meet in Emyr Muil. Then "[i]t seemed to Frodo [...] that he heard, quite plainly but far off, voices out of the past [...] *Can you give it to them?* [...] 'now that I see him, I do pity him' [said Frodo]" (615, original emphasis). This distinctly shows the impact of Gandalf's words.

In order to make Frodo realize the intensity of the bond between the Ring and himself Gandalf asks Frodo "[w]ould you? How would you do that? Have you ever tried?" (60) as Frodo declares that he would have "done away with" (60) the Ring if he had known of its hazard. It is vital for Frodo to realize the gravity of what is happening to him and the impact of these questions can be seen shortly after they were asked, as is illustrated in the following citation, when Frodo cannot commit himself to harm the Ring: "[y]ou see? Already you too, Frodo, cannot easily let it go, nor will to damage it" (60). This way, Gandalf makes the Ring's power over Frodo tangible, and his comment after Frodo's failed attempt further enhances the impact on the Hobbit – it gives him the insight into the Ring's power to corrupt and makes Frodo aware of the psychological danger he is in, and thus improves his self-knowledge.

4.2.7 Listening Actively

Smith (278) and Hudson (32) both emphasize the importance of active listening in a mentoring relationship. There are, without a doubt, many instances when Gandalf listens to Frodo in this manner – it can be derived from the ease of their communication. However, there are two occasions when it is explicitly mentioned and accentuated, which I will now present.

The first can be found during the characters' interaction in chapter two. Gandalf then watches Frodo carefully for signs of influence from the Ring in order to diagnose how far gone he is in the process of corruption, since, in the words of Gandalf: "[c]learly the ring had an unwholesome power that set to work on its keeper at once. [...] I watched and I waited [...] Ever since Bilbo left I have been deeply concerned about you" (Tolkien, *Lord of the Rings* 48-49). Later, "[t]o Frodo's astonishment and distress [the] wizard threw [the Ring] into [...] the fire. Frodo gave a cry and groped for the tongs; but Gandalf held him back. 'Wait!' he said in a commanding voice, giving Frodo a quick look from under his bristling brows" (49). Evidence that Gandalf is observing Frodo acutely at this time can also be found in this citation: "[Gandalf's] eyes seemed closed, but under the lids he was watching Frodo intently" (61). This is, in my opinion, a very clear example of active listening, since Gandalf not only listens to Frodo's words, but also observes his actions and body-language. Gandalf is essentially scrutinizing Frodo, assessing his progression in order to communicate to him how the Ring is affecting his psyche, which he does, as mentioned earlier in the previous section.

At Rivendell, there is a similar occurrence where Gandalf diagnoses Frodo in an analogous manner:

"[Gandalf] took a good look at Frodo [...] there seemed to be little wrong with him. But to the wizard's eye there was a faint change [...] about him [...]. 'He is

not half through yet, and to what he will come in the end [cannot be foretold]. Not to evil, I think. He may become like a glass filled with a clear light for eyes to see that can'" (223).

Here Gandalf is ascertaining how Frodo's near lethal injury is affecting his character – Frodo was, due to his weakened state, very close to falling into the influence of Sauron, and this could undoubtedly have dire consequences. Gandalf is watching out for his mentee, searching for signs of corruption in order to help him, if needed.

While only the first of these two instances directly affect Frodo, the second, nonetheless, affect him indirectly because it influences how Gandalf interacts with him. The first leads Gandalf to endeavor to make Frodo aware of the Ring's coercive power, which he succeeds in, and the second had similar potential, but since Gandalf found no signs of change to the worse in Frodo, he reassures Frodo instead, which alleviates his anxiety.

4.2.8 Offering Encouragement

There are many instances when Gandalf offers Frodo encouragement, which is one of the functions of the mentor accentuated by Smith (278) and Hudson (32). Frodo undoubtedly has a very cumbersome task to perform, both physically and mentally, and Gandalf naturally feels the need to uplift him. Gandalf does this by emphasizing that, despite the power of the Ring, Hobbits seem to be more resistant to it than most: "[Bilbo] gave it up in the end of his own accord" (Tolkien, *Lord of the Rings* 49), "[h]e felt better at once [...]. Soft as butter [Hobbits] can be, and yet sometimes as tough as old tree-roots. I think it likely that some would resist the Ring far longer than most of the Wise would believe" (48). This way, Gandalf instills Frodo with hope. Gandalf also points out the advantage of knowing to remaining ignorant: "I wish it need not have happened in my time,' said Frodo. 'So do I,' said Gandalf, ' and so do all

who live to see such times. But that is not for them to decide. All we have to decide is what to do with the time that has been given to us" (51). Furthermore, Gandalf shares with Frodo his intuition that "there was something else at work [when Bilbo found the Ring]. [...] Bilbo was *meant* to find the Ring, and *not* by its maker. In which case you also were *meant* to have it. And that may be an encouraging thought." (56, original emphasis). All this, in combination, has the effect of relieving Frodo's anxiety and bolstering his courage, which enables him to look on the situation more objectively, with a lesser degree of terror. It contributes to his ability to manage his burden, since it all aims to strengthen his resolve and self-confidence. Frodo is naturally discouraged and horrified of the magnitude of the danger he is in, and the impact of Gandalf's reassurance is clear since Frodo overcomes this despair and ultimately decides to take action.

At Rivendell, Gandalf attempts to promote Frodo's confidence by explaining his importance to Middle-earth and why he should not count himself among common folk: "there are many reasons why they should [give you a place of honor at the celebration]. I am one reason. The Ring another: you are the Ring-bearer. And you are the heir of Bilbo, the Ring-finder" (224). Frodo is a humble character and Gandalf does not want him to underestimate his own importance. This may well be a contributing factor to why Frodo makes the bold decision to take the Ring to Mordor himself at the council, despite the mighty that were also present, and could have taken on the task.

While they are traveling, Gandalf provides encouragement in order to uplift Frodo's spirits: "[l]et us be glad that the first stage is safely over. [...] There is a wholesome air about Hollin. Much evil must befall a country before it wholly forgets the elves, once they have dwelt there" (Tolkien, *Lord of the Rings* 283). This way, Gandalf is letting Frodo know that they have made good time, and that they have now arrived in a place that they can consider relatively safe and rest for a while. This should be comforting for Frodo since he is still not

used to traveling hurriedly and he is thus reassured that, despite his inexperience, he is managing fine.

4.2.9 Providing Feedback

Providing feedback is one aspect of mentoring which is emphasized by many researchers, such as Sempowicz and Hudson (13), Gearity and Metz (24), Hudson (33) and Smith (278). The first time Gandalf engages in this activity is when Frodo decides to take the Ring out of the Shire: "I hardly expected to get such an answer, not even from you. [...] Bilbo made no mistake in choosing his heir" (Tolkien, *Lord of the Rings* 62). This way, Gandalf is letting Frodo know that he is impressed by Frodo's ability to make a rational decision, which strengthens Frodo's resolve. Gandalf mentions this comparison with Bilbo more than once: "[y]ou take after your uncle Bilbo [...] There is more to you than meets the eye, as I said of him long ago" (328). Gandalf is thus letting Frodo know that he has surpassed his expectations and is a worthy heir of Bilbo – who performed great deeds in his time, and at Frodo's awakening in Rivendell he praises Frodo in a similar manner: "I think well of you [...]. It is no small feat to have come so far, and through so many dangers, still bearing the Ring" (220). He also tells Frodo that "I have known strong warriors of the Big People who would quickly have been overcome by that splinter which you bore for seventeen days" (222), and after turning back from Caradhras, Gandalf confirms Frodo's position not to give up: "[y]ou are right, Frodo, [...] to go back is to admit defeat and face worse defeat to come" (294). These examples of praising are a very positive form of feedback, which is of vital importance to maintain Frodo's courage and determination. Had Gandalf's feedback in those situations been negative, it is certainly plausible that Frodo would not have been as successful throughout the novel.

Gandalf also provides another form of feedback, which develops Frodo, at several instances. One such occasion can be found after Frodo makes an outburst about Gollum: "[w]hat a pity that Bilbo did not stab the vile creature, when he had a chance" (59). Gandalf then tells Frodo about the importance of mercy and the rewards that sparing someone can have, even if the individual is evil and does not deserve pity. As Gandalf eloquently puts it: "do not be too eager to deal out death in judgment. For even the wise cannot see all ends" (59). Another occurrence is when Gandalf and Frodo discuss the innkeeper Barliman Butterbur: "you don't know much, even about them, if you think old Barliman stupid", and at that time he also provides feedback on Frodo's view of Aragorn: "[o]nly a Ranger!" cried Gandalf. 'My dear Frodo, that is just what the Rangers are. The last remnant in the North of the great people, the Men of the West'" (221). Here Gandalf is trying to teach Frodo not to pass judgment too quickly, there is more to people than meets the eye and it is important for Frodo to be aware of this, since he will encounter many beings on his journey towards Mordor. Gandalf is thus helping Frodo develop self-knowledge by making him aware of his own bias. The fact that Gandalf's feedback does influence Frodo can be confirmed by comparing his first meeting with Aragorn to his first meeting with Faramir. When Frodo meets Aragorn, he is prone to suspicion and behaves somewhat rudely towards him, while when he meets Faramir, Frodo is still careful not to reveal too much about the purpose of his journey, yet he behaves in a courteous manner.

4.2.10 Providing Structure

There are many times in the novel when Gandalf provides structure in the manner emphasized by Hudson (32). He does this by offering Frodo advice on how he should handle the Ring: "I should not make use of it, if I were you. But keep it secret and keep it safe" (Tolkien, *Lord of the Rings* 36). He also tells Frodo that the "direction [he plans to travel in] should not be

known" (66), that he should travel "[t]owards danger; but not too rashly, nor too straight" (66), and that when he leaves he should "go as Mr. Underhill" (63). Furthermore, Gandalf gives advice on traveling companions: "if you look for a companion, be careful in choosing! And be careful of what you say, even to your closest friends! The enemy has many spies" (63). These pieces of advice help to provide a structure for how Frodo should act, which he follows, and thanks to which he does not imperil further corruption from wearing the Ring. He is also able to leave the Shire unnoticed as well as remain relatively unnoticed at Bree, up to a point.

Gandalf also offers Frodo advice on where to go: "If you want my advice, make for Rivendell" (66). This advice is well-measured – the road to Rivendell, although not without danger, "should not prove too perilous" (66), and when he arrives Frodo will have the chance to get advice as well as more information. Gandalf is thus providing Frodo with structure: the first goal of his journey. It influences Frodo in an obvious manner, since Frodo takes Gandalf's advice and travels there.

Despite Gandalf's absence during Frodo's journey to Rivendell he, nonetheless, still manages to provide structure through his ability to plan ahead: he has sent his friend "Strider" (Aragorn) to find the hobbits on their journey and aid them. He did also leave a letter with the innkeeper Butterbur at Bree, which was intended to be delivered to the Shire, informing Frodo of the possibility of Aragorn joining them on their voyage: "*[y]ou may meet a friend of mine on the Road: a Man, lean, dark, tall, by some called Strider. He knows our business and will help you*" (169-170, original emphasis). Thus, even in his absence, Gandalf provides support and structure to help Frodo reach his goal to travel to Rivendell. It also clearly influences Frodo since Strider is an asset for him on the road – for instance, Frodo would most likely have perished at Weathertop without him. It is also the case that Gandalf's whereabouts elsewhere indirectly alleviated the danger Frodo was in. Gandalf acted as a distraction through drawing "some of [the Black Riders] off" (264) and away from Frodo. He thus provided an invisible support structure which prevented the Nine from pursuing Frodo in a

joint effort, which clearly eased his peril and thus made it possible for him to make it to Rivendell.

Owing to Gandalf, the Hobbits Meriadoc and Peregrin joined the Fellowship at Rivendell, despite Elrond's initial doubt. Although this might not seem related to his mentoring of Frodo, I maintain that it is of interest since everyone in the Fellowship has the task of aiding Frodo. Gandalf is thus influencing the nature of that aid by recommending that Merry and Pippin come along. It is proved to be a wise decision later on as Merry was the one who put Gandalf on the right track outside the Doors of Durin, and thus enabled them to enter into Moria. This way, Gandalf provided Frodo with the support he needed to make his journey.

When the Company travels south, Gandalf serves as the leader of the group by deciding their direction, with the assistance of Aragorn: "Gandalf walked in front, and with him Aragorn, who knew this land even in the dark" (281). He is thus providing structure, as accentuated by Hudson (32), by leading Frodo on the safest road. While this is essentially steering Frodo instead of promoting his independence, I believe it is nonetheless the way a "good mentor" should act since Gandalf and Aragorn are the most traveled of the Fellowship and thus know the territory and its perils the best. The countries they are traveling through are, after all, unknown to Frodo who has no firsthand experience traveling them and the dangers of choosing the wrong road has increased in comparison to the first part of Frodo's journey. This way, Frodo travels the least dangerous road, and does not encounter unnecessary danger.

4.2.11 Appropriateness

There are several instances when Gandalf's actions can be interpreted as what Burns described as "the [s]hadow [side] of Gandalf" (69) – according to her, the wizard has a tendency to

indulge in sarcasm and self-satisfaction (73). He also possesses some degree of irascibility (73) and is quick to reprove (Tolkien, *Unfinished Tales* 372-84). The first such instance takes place during a conversation with Frodo. Gandalf says something, which, out of context, could be seen as offensive: "It would be a grievous blow to the world, if all of your kind, jolly, stupid Bolgers, Hornblowers, Boffins, Bracegirdles, and the rest, not to mention the ridiculous Bagginses, became enslaved" (Tolkien, *Lord of the Rings* 49). This could be viewed as an indulgence in sarcasm that in the opinion of Burns, is one of Gandalf's character traits (73), however, it is meant to be interpreted as fondness, rather than disgust. Hobbits are, after all, totally oblivious to the outside world – they are naïve and ignorant of the dangers outside their borders, unaware of the fact that their peace and quiet is being paid for by the hard work of others (Tolkien, *Lord of the Rings* 2-5, 248, 251). Gandalf is very fond of the innocent Hobbits and, despite his ridicule, he cares for them deeply: "Hobbits really are amazing creatures, as I have said before. You can learn all there is to know about their ways in a month, and yet after a hundred years they can still surprise you in a pinch" (62). Here, Gandalf expresses his admiration of the Hobbits' ability to exceed themselves and come through when things really matter, which affects Frodo in a positive manner. This expression of fondness should make him develop a bond of friendship with his mentor, which is confirmed by the fact that Frodo calls Gandalf the "best of friends" (59).

At the council of Elrond, one can again get a glimpse of the shadow side of Gandalf mentioned by Burns (73). This occurs when Gandalf speaks of a letter that was supposed to be dispatched to Frodo from the innkeeper at Bree. "'Butterbur they call him,' thought I. 'If this delay is his fault, I will melt all the butter in him. I will roast the old fool over a slow fire'" (Tolkien, *Lord of the Rings* 263). However, once again, one should not interpret this literally. Gandalf's bark is worse than his bite and, in this case he, is merely expressing his fear for Frodo's safety. The news of Aragorn joining the hobbits delivered by Barliman Butterbur overjoyed Gandalf, and he immediately forgave his friend his mistake. The words

of Gandalf earlier might not be the words of a good role model but his actions are nonetheless. The little scolding that actually took place was understandable and motivated – Butterbur had after all, in his negligence, compromised Frodo's safety. This position is confirmed by the fact that Gandalf defended his friend earlier in the novel just after Frodo's awakening in Rivendell: "[y]ou don't know much even about them, if you think old Barliman in stupid" (221). At this instance, Gandalf points out that though his friend might be easily distracted "he can see through a brick wall in time" (221) – he considers Butterbur to be an asset. This should be clear to Frodo and, therefore, not influence him negatively.

Outside of Moria, Gandalf is notably vexed when he is beset with questions regarding his advice to bring the Company there. He then makes several outbursts that are neither very polite nor constructive: "have you no wits left" (306), he says to Boromir when he doubts Gandalf's claim that he once traveled through the mines. Gandalf is also grouchy towards Pippin after he asks Gandalf what they should do about the closed doors of Moria: "[k]nock on the doors with your head, Peregrin Took, [...] But if that does not shatter them, and I am allowed a little peace from foolish questions, I will seek for the opening words" (307). Later, when Gandalf's frustration ends, he says that "Merry, of all people, was on the right track" (308). These utterances are not the characteristic of a "good mentor", but rather the opposite and can be interpreted as a genuine example of Burns' views that Gandalf possesses less admirable character traits, such as self-satisfaction, irascibility and sarcasm (73). Gandalf is unmistakably insulting his companions and provides a bad example for Frodo. However, one must bear in mind that Gandalf is a character in the novel that has feelings like any other, and like any other he can lose his temper when stressed. Furthermore, Gandalf himself later realizes the cause of his grouchiness: "I know what is the matter with me [...] I need smoke! I have not tasted it since the morning before the snowstorm" (Tolkien, *Lord of the Rings* 314). That fact further alleviates his actions somewhat – smoking is common among Hobbits and, apparently, it has withdrawal effects – but Gandalf is, nonetheless, setting a bad example,

which is not appropriate for a mentor. However, I do not believe that these isolated incidents, which are the exception rather than the rule, make him an inappropriate mentor. There is also no evidence that Frodo is influenced in any negative manner as a consequence of Gandalf's grouchiness.

Furthermore, it is of interest to know that, throughout reading the novel, I have not found a single instance indicating personal friction between Frodo and Gandalf. They seem to have a smoothly working relationship, and it is thus safe to assume that they are well matched as mentor and mentee – which was an aspect highlighted in Section 4.1 (Ambrosetti and Dekkers 44; Sempowicz and Hudson 12).

4.2.12 A Chronological Analysis – Responsibility

There are two ways of interpreting the relationship when it comes to the question if Gandalf actually grants more responsibility to Frodo as his voyage progresses. The first way is to look at the actual interaction between the mentor and mentee. From this perspective, it is not the case that Gandalf grants Frodo more responsibility, but rather the opposite. In the beginning, Gandalf offers Frodo information feedback and advice and then encourages Frodo to take an independent decision. Due to circumstances, Frodo (and the hobbits) are then left to make their own way to Rivendell and encounter Aragorn who was sent by Gandalf to aid them on the road. At Rivendell, Frodo makes an independent decision again and decides to take the Ring to Mordor himself. Gandalf then reconfirms the mentorship and travels with Frodo albeit, at that point, Gandalf determines their path, with only one exception. From this perspective, Frodo has more independence on the road to Rivendell than he has on the voyage south, and Gandalf has thus not granted him more independence. However, taking Frodo's inexperience in relation to the degree of danger into account, it is nonetheless reasonable – not to mention unavoidable – since Frodo's safety is paramount. Furthermore, one can argue that

Frodo's first decision carries less weight than his second. It is less difficult to "only" take the Ring to Rivendell than to carry it all through the increasingly more perilous roads to Mordor. Frodo, thus, takes on a much greater responsibility at Rivendell than he did in the Shire. Consequently, Gandalf actually grants Frodo the correct amount of independence – with the dangers of traveling in mind – and also, in fact, grants him greater responsibilities as the story progresses, the way a "good mentor" should, according to Corbett (62-36), and thus Frodo gradually becomes more self-sufficient.

5 Conclusion

In Tolkien's novel *The Lord of the Rings*, Gandalf has the capacity to function as a mentor to Frodo: he is an experienced and knowledgeable character who has achieved great things. He is a role model and an advisor capable beyond that of the average counselor. Gandalf also has the capacity to serve as a guide to Frodo. In addition, he possesses knowledge in the areas that are crucial to Frodo's success and he is higher up in the hierarchy than Frodo.

Gandalf's relationship to Frodo is constructed as a mentorship as defined by the modern pedagogical research, which affects Frodo in a positive manner – it helps him to develop confidence, competence, self-knowledge, self-sufficiency and determination. Gandalf helps Frodo to identify his goals, which enables him to destroy the Ring. He promotes Frodo's independence, which motivates him to complete his task – since he performs it out of his own will. Gandalf also encourages risk-taking in a way that is healthy in light of the circumstances, which eventually leads to a positive outcome for Frodo. He challenges Frodo's productivity in a way that enables Frodo to develop to the best of his ability. Furthermore, he shares critical knowledge that enables Frodo to take informed decisions as well as enhance his competence, and he asks Frodo questions that make him reflect on his own bias towards others. Gandalf listens actively to Frodo so that he can help him realize his own vulnerability to the Ring, and

he offers Frodo encouragement which strengthens his resolve. In addition, Gandalf provides Frodo with feedback which bolsters his confidence and helps him develop. He provides Frodo with structure that provides him with support, which makes his success possible. Furthermore, the lack of friction between mentor and mentee indicate that they are well matched.

Nonetheless, there are instances where Gandalf behaves inappropriately. However, they are few and not severe enough to make Gandalf an inappropriate mentor – since they do not seem to influence Frodo negatively. It is also clear that Gandalf gradually grants Frodo more responsibility, which makes him increasingly self-sufficient. Thus, Gandalf fulfills all of the requirements for interaction between a "good mentor" and his mentee as defined by modern pedagogical research. This influences Frodo in a positive manner, and makes it possible for him to destroy the Ring – without Gandalf, he would have remained ignorant of the Ring's power, and with all probability, would have been captured by the enemy.

Since this essay originally had the aspiration to analyze how Gandalf mentors all of the hobbits of the Fellowship, it is only natural to suggest this for further research. Merry, Pippin and Sam are, after all, inexperienced in a similar way as Frodo (Tolkien, *Lord of the Rings* 1-7, 33), and have the potential benefit from Gandalf's guidance. It would be particularly interesting to examine how Gandalf mentors Pippin since my research shows that Gandalf has behaved irascibly towards him on occasion, and this might indicate a less successful mentoring relationship. Furthermore, the same approach could be adapted to analyze how other characters perform the role of the mentor in Tolkien's novel, or any other novel which portrays a similar relationship. For instance, I believe the approach could be successfully applied to Dumbledore and Harry in Rowling's series *Harry Potter* or to Halt and Will in Flanagan's *Ranger's Apprentice*.

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