

THE NATURE OF THE QUEST

“Arayışın Doğası”

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ÖZET

İngiliz edebiyatının ilk dönemlerine ait yazarı bilinmeyen Sir Gwain and the Green Knight, 17. yüzyılda yazılan John Bunyan'ın Pilgrim's Progress, 18. yüzyılda Daniel Defoe tarafından yazılan Robinson Crusoe, 19. yüzyılda Charles Dickens tarafından kaleme alınan David Copperfield ve 20. yüzyılda Joseph Conrad tarafından yazılan Under Western Eyes adlı eserler farklı dönemlerde yazılmalarına rağmen, kahramanların mitolojik arayış serüvenleri açısından temelde aynı kalmakta ve benzer bir kalıbı takip etmektedir. Arayış içerisindeki kahramanlar buldukları yerden ayrılıp, pek çok zorlukları aşarak amaçlarını gerçekleştirmek için belli bir hedefe doğru hareket etmekte ve sonra tekrar yola çıktıkları yere dönmektedirler. Farklı dönemlerde yazılmış olan bu üç eser, kahramanlarının mitolojik arayışları açısından karşılaştırılacaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Arayış, Mitoloji, Ruhani yolculuk.

ABSTRACT

The present analysis is intended to shed some light on the quest pattern, which is a mythological journey and which has been used by many writers in different periods. The boundary of the study is confined to the function and significance of the quest pattern represented in the literary works. The introductory part revolves mainly around the general background information about the mythological quest motif. The anonymous Sir Gwain and the Green Knight, Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress, Daniel Defoe's Robinson Crusoe, Charles Dickens' David Copperfield and Joseph Conrad's Under Western Eyes, although they belong to different periods, have a common pattern: the quest. The mentioned works will be analysed according to this pattern. This brief investigation is hoped to familiarise the reader with the nature of the quest motif in different literary works.

Key Words: Quest, Mythology, Spiritual Journey.

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The following discussion aims chiefly at examining and interpreting the nature of the quest motif in the literary works of different periods. The quest motif which has been used in many literary works can also be called the quest tale, which goes back to the mythological adventure stories in epic narratives which are about heroes. These heroes strive for greatness and highly spiritual goals. Their strife involves painful, strenuous, dangerous tests and trials. They undertake a series of adventures, a quest. The quest tale goes under various names: the adventure tale, the epic, the search, the escape, a movement from one phase of life to another, the wandering, and the journey. In the quest stories, there is a sequence of events and adventures involving the main protagonists, leading to some goal or solution. The sequential nature of the quest implies a linear movement, a movement which goes forward in time. The hero undertakes a journey and during his journey, the hero must perform impossible tasks, battle with monsters, solve unanswerable riddles in order to achieve the desired goal. The hero's way is full of dangers and temptations, and they are so great that they are difficult for the hero to deal with. The hero takes a hazardous journey, and on his journey the hero confronts menacing powers. Mostly, the hero is alone on his way, although he is sometimes accompanied by someone who does nothing to overcome his isolation. It is essentially an individual journey, that is one must take it alone. Campbell summarised the traditional hero's adventure:

The mythological hero, setting from his commonday hut or castle, is lured, carried away, or else voluntarily proceeds, to the threshold of adventure. There he encounters a shadow presence that guards the passage. The hero may defeat or conciliate this power and go alive into the kingdom of the dark (brother-battle, dragon battle; offering, charm), or be slain by the opponent and descend in death (dismemberment, crucifixion). Beyond the threshold, then, the hero journeys through a world of unfamiliar yet strangely intimate forces, some of which severely threaten him (tests), some of which give magical aid (helpers). When he arrives at the nadir of the mythological round, he undergoes a supreme ordeal and gains his reward. The triumph may be represented as the hero's sexual union with the goddess-mother of the world (sacred marriage), his recognition by the father-creator (father atonement), his own divinisation (apotheosis), or again – if the powers have remained unfriendly to him – his theft to the boon he came to gain (bride-theft, fire-theft); intrinsically it is an expansion of consciousness and therewith of being (illumination, transfiguration, freedom). The final work is that

of the return. If the powers have blessed the hero, he now sets forth under their protection (emissary); if not, he flees and is pursued (transformation flight, obstacle flight). At the return of the threshold the transcendental powers must remain behind; the hero re-emerges from the kingdom of dread (return, resurrection). The boon that he brings restores the world (elixir.) (Campbell, 1968: 245-246)

As Joseph Campbell pointed out, the standard path of the mythological adventure of the hero is “separation, initiation and return”. (Campbell, 1968: 30) In this heroic quest pattern, at the beginning, there is a call for the hero. This call separates the hero from the community in which he was and directs him on his lonely course. The hero must depart from his settlement, town or his country and move through the alien country. Then the hero commences his hazardous journey. As expressed by Campbell, “the first stage of the mythological journey, the call to adventure, signifies that destiny has summoned the hero and transferred his spiritual centre of gravity to a distant land, a forest, a kingdom underground, beneath the waves, or above the sky, a secret island, lofty mountain top, or profound delight.” (Campbell, 1968: 30) On his journey he confronts and overcomes the dangers and temptations. Finally there is the return. The hero comes back to the point of departure which is a sign of the cyclical nature of the quest. In the process of the quest, the hero grows, and the journey expands his vision.

Although the quest motif was used literally, it was often described in religious terms in Medieval period. Every man’s life is a journey from birth to death, from the temptations of the world to heaven, from sin to salvation. Every day in a person’s life marked another stop on the journey. A person faced temptations of the world, and he succeeded or failed depending on how well he met these tests. Writers of the Middle Age used the quest motif or pilgrimage to describe spiritual progress. This motif was used by Dante in Divine Comedy where the narrator’s journey is a pilgrimage from the world through Hell, Purgatory, and Paradise. A hero’s quest, a standard pattern universally used as a dominant formal device, is a metaphor, according to Campbell “a metaphor that symbolises a going down into the depth, a seeking after the eternal life inside” (qtd. in Peter R. Stillman, 1985: 30). It is seen first of all as a metaphor for human life as a spiritual quest.

The anonymous Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, Bunyan’s Pilgrim’s Progress, Daniel Defoe’s Robinson Crusoe, Charles Dickens’ David Copperfield and Conrad’s Under Western Eyes follow a fairly close quest pattern. In the quest-based tales, the hero takes up a lonely journey, and he has a goal. The content and structure of the works shape the stories’ actions according to this pattern, namely the quest pattern. According to Piotr Sadowski, “it is useful to recall that the content of Sir Gawain and the

Green Knight reveals a pattern typical for the chivalric romance as well as for the heroic epic as its historical prototype which shapes the story's action according to a general regulating principle, that for want of a better term can be called the quest" (Sadowski, 1996: 16) The journey that Gawain takes from Arthur's court clearly fits the pattern, a medieval quest. The story commences in Camelot on New Year's Day. While everybody is feasting and having a wonderful time in King Arthur's court, the Green Knight enters and challenges everyone to a game in which his head will be cut off by a volunteer with his axe, but he must present himself for a return blow a year later. Sir Gawain takes up the challenge, and the Green Knight implies that Sir Gawain will be on a journey by stating:

Except, knight, your word to seek me
Yourself, to come to me there where I am. (1970: Lines, 394-397)

Here we encounter two essential elements of the quest motif. First the journey is a seeking, a looking for truth, and the second one makes it clear that Gawain will be by himself. It will be a solitary journey. Gawain says that he will keep his promise:

And I will come to you, however hard the road,
Wherever you are: I swear on my word. (1970: Lines, 402-403)

Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress in the seventeenth century is considered one of the most successful allegories in English literature. Its basic metaphor is that life is a journey. The famous story reflects man's progress through life to heaven. The journey which will be taken up by Christian is implied in the sub-title: *From This World To That Which is To Come, The Manner of His Setting Out, His Dangerous Journey; And Safe Arrival at The Desired Country*. The second part proposes a similar journey which is undertaken by the Pilgrim's wife, Christiana and their children. As the title indicates, it concerns itself with progress, and pilgrimage, that is a forward movement toward a holy place. As Katheen Swaim pointed out, "It is at root a quest for intellectual Enlightenment as well as spiritual growth, in important ways all allegorical writings may be said to take their readers on journey. The metaphor applies to Pilgrim's Progress with a special force, however, for Bunyan launched his enterprise with the hope that 'this book will make a traveller of thee.' " (Swaim, 1993: 23) At the beginning of his journey, Christian is isolated and desperate, and reads in his book the question 'what I must do to be saved? To be saved, Christian must travel

from the City of Destruction to The Celestial City, implying an outward and inward progress. The ultimate goal of Christian is:

I seek an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled and that fadeth not away. (I Peter I.4), and it is laid up in Heaven, and safe there (Hebrews XI. 16), to be bestowed, at the time appointed, on them that diligently seek it. Read it so, if you will, in my book. (Bunyan, 1988: 39)

His goal is the heavenly country, the Celestial City and the paradise of God.

Sir Gawain and Christ are superior in degree to other men and to their environment, so they are the typical heroes of romance, whose actions are marvellous but who are themselves identified as human beings. As pointed out by Northrop Frye, “the hero of romance moves in a world in which the ordinary laws of nature are slightly suspended: prodigies of courage and endurance, unnatural to us, are natural to him, and enchanted weapons, talking animals, terrifying ogres and witches, and talismans of miraculous power violate no rule of probability once the postulates of romance have been established.” (Frye, 1957: 33) Sir Gawain and the Green Knight and Bunyan’s Pilgrim’s Progress are two representatives of romance form: a secular form dealing with chivalry and knight-errantry, and a religious form consecutively.

The progress in the evolution of the forms introduces “the low mimetic mode, of most comedy and of realistic fiction which predominates in English Literature from Defoe’s time to the end of the nineteenth century.” (Frye, 1973: 34) In the transition from romance to realistic fiction, the characteristics of heroes change. They are neither superior to other men nor to their environment. The heroes in realistic fiction resemble us. In the first half of the eighteenth century, as Ian Watt says, “novels like Defoe’s depend upon the value the society places on each and every individual so that daily life at its most trivial acquires serious significance.” (Watt, 1957: 60) Realism is the defining characteristic which differentiates the work of the early 18th century novels from previous fiction.

The tale of adventure in the early eighteenth century features a good deal of self-examination and interiority for its protagonists. Robinson Crusoe does not only reflect the external characteristics of the adventure story, but also relegates the external world to Crusoe’s interior struggle for self-understanding and self-justification. Robinson Crusoe is the son of a middle-class English family. Although his father desires that Robinson should become a businessman and live a quiet life, he cannot quench his desire for

the sea. He has such a longing for the sea that he finds it impossible to remain at home. At the beginning of the story, Robinson rejects the traditional submission to circumstances urged on him by his father and sets out to sea:

My ill fate pushed me on now with an obstinacy that nothing could resist; and though I had several times loud calls from my reason and my more composed judgement to go home, yet I had no power to do it. I know not what to call this, nor will I urge that it is a secret overruling decree that hurries us on to our instruments of our own destruction, even though it be before us, and that we rush upon it with our eyes open. Certainly nothing but some such decreed unavoidable misery attending, and which it was impossible for me to escape, could have pushed me forward against the calm reasonings and persuasions of my most retired thoughts. (Defoe, 2000: 9)

The 19th century was the great age of the English novel. It was the best vehicle to present a picture of life lived in a society against a stable background of social and moral values of the 19th century. Realism emerged in the Victorian cultural background as a means of rendering fidelity to actuality in its representation. The novels are filled with realistic incidents of a picaresque kind and a gallery of typical characters. The novelists introduced variety of characters who were surrounded with a rich pattern of lives reflecting their own physical and moral individuality against a definite and vivid social background. As stated by Petru Golban, “the Victorian novelist is concerned with character, the amount of character development varying according to the type of the novel, ...in Bildungsroman the author is concerned with both the portrayal of the character and the plot, for this type of novel usually concentrates on the hero’s adventures and incidents happening in his life against a complex social background along with the presentation of his general growth and development.” (Golban, 2003: 105) The adventures of the heroes in the Victorian novel are quest stories. The Victorian novels more or less follow a typical plot pattern. Jerome Hamilton Buckley summarises the hero’s adventure which is in direct line with the summary of Joseph Campbell:

A child of some sensibility grows up in the country or in a provincial town, where he finds constraints, social and intellectual placed upon the free imagination. His family, especially his father, proves doggedly hostile to his creative instincts or flights of fancy, antagonistic to his ambitions, and

quite impervious to the new ideas he has gained from unprescribed reading. His first schooling even if not totally inadequate, may be frustrating insofar as it may suggest options not available to him in his present setting. He therefore, sometimes at a quite early age, leaves the repressive atmosphere of home (and also the relative innocence), to make his way independently in the city (in the English novels, usually London). There his real 'education' begins, not only his preparation for a career but also – and often more importantly – his direct experience of urban life. The latter involves at least two love affairs or sexual encounters, one debasing, one exalting, and demands that in this respect and others the hero reappraise his values. By the time he had decided, after painful soul-searching, the sort of accommodation to the modern world he can honestly make, he has left his adolescence behind and entered upon his maturity. His initiation complete, he may then visit his old home, to demonstrate by his presence the degree of his success or the wisdom of his choice. (qtd. in Golban, 2003: 11)

Having at its basis the narrative structure of the quest story, David Copperfield starts at an early age his journey away from his home due to his mother's marriage to Mr. Murderstone, since his father died before he was born. As a young boy, he lives happily with his mother and his nurse Peggotty. His happy days of childhood is shadowed by the devil figures, Mr. Murderstone and his sister Miss Murderstone. The Murderstones treat David cruelly, and they send him away to school and then to London where he is exposed to poverty, misery and difficulties of life. David Copperfield subconsciously acknowledges his desire for affection in his own search for the absent breast: "I search my breast, and I commit its secrets, if I know them, without any reservation to this paper." (Dickens, 1981: 551-552) He starves for affection. His insatiable desire which begins in the home "motivates his quest for self-realization; and ideally, it is stabilized and its transgressive potential neutralized in the safe harbour of marriage." (Poovey, 1988: 90) David's desire for the maternal breast reflects his desire for his happy childhood period and the physical landscape where he was born. David's quest "slowly moves from childhood through youth and early adult life to a more stable adult maturity; it consists mainly of memories about the formation of a personality through suffering and life experiences." (Golban, 2003: 157)

Where the earlier works employed the quest motif for heroism of noble actions and religious pilgrimage, and the realistic adventures of the

real heroes which feature a good deal of self-examination and interiority for its protagonists, the twentieth century fiction shifted its emphasis. Owing to the split personality, disillusionment, despair and internalised anguish of the hero, existential quest provides the material for the twentieth-century modern fiction. The Modern novel employs mostly the internal quest, meaning personal internal journey. The inner world of the individual comes to the forefront in the twentieth century fiction. The main theme in Under Western Eyes is the search for identity. Razumov's goal is self-knowledge. Boris Ford considers "Razumov's tormenting journey towards self-knowledge to be the central theme of the novel. Rootless and without identity, he is intent on creating a meaning for his existence [as he is] confronted by individuals and forces which undermine his precarious self-sufficiency and deepen his isolation." (qtd. in Bohlmann, 1991: 71) Razumov who is the illegitimate son of Prince K. is a lonely figure in his search: "He was as lonely in the world as a man swimming in the deep sea." (Conrad, 1980: 10)

In quest-based tales the hero's way is not always direct or clear to him. The road is full of many obstacles. Sir Gawain wanders for months before coming upon the place of his meeting with the Green Knight. He makes no stop. He proceeds through woods and hills, symbolising man's mood on his life journey, that is highs and lows with no man but God on the road to speak to. Gawain rides through frozen forests, lands and the frozen lake. He finds himself in strange roads where his mood often changes. He meets beasts; but they are representative of the hardships and trials of the world he must overcome on his solitary journey.

While Christian and Pliable are progressing in Pilgrim's Progress, they fall into the Slough of Despond, the hollow hopeless mud. Then, on his way, Christian loses the paper that Evangelist gave him. As he searches for the paper, he comes upon two lions. In the Valley of Humiliation Christian fights with the Giant Devil, Apollyon. In this battle Christian is wounded. After the Valley of Humiliation, comes the Valley of Shadow of Death in which Christian has to pass one of the gates to Hell. Having passed through this danger, he goes by the caves of the old giants, Pope and Pagan. Then Christian and Faithful come to Vanity Fair, an ancient town, where a fair is kept all the year long. Vanity Fair is built by Beelzebub, Apollyon and Legion on the way of the pilgrims who are going to the Celestial City. At this fair everything is sold: houses, lands, trades, places, honours, titles, countries, kingdoms, lusts, pleasures and delights of all sorts as whores, wives, husbands, children, masters, servants, bodies, souls, silver, gold, pearls, precious stones. Christian and Faithful are arrested because they don't buy anything from the fair.

Daniel Defoe puts the stress all the time on the island and on the dangers surrounding Robinson Crusoe. During his travels, he experiences many fatal dangers and fears: violent storms, huge waves, pirates, cannibals, and foot-print. In his first voyage, Crusoe's ship is caught in a great storm, and he is so violently ill and so greatly afraid that he vows never to leave the land again, if he is fortunate to escape from death. In his second voyage, his ship is captured by pirates, and he becomes a slave, and his life is so unbearable that at the first opportunity he escapes. In another voyage to Africa for a cargo of slaves, he has the most fatal shipwreck, of the crew and passengers only Robinson is saved. His life for the next twenty-four years is spent on the island where he is exposed to wilderness and cannibals. Crusoe leaves an impression of being a great individual who tries to dominate nature by his powers. Crusoe's heroism does not only stem from his controlling his environment but also from his mastering his interior struggle. As pointed out by John Richetti, "psychological survival in his absolute solitude is as difficult as physical maintenance in a wilderness." (Richetti, 1999: 67)

David Copperfield is vulnerable not only to physical dangers such as cane, hunger, poverty and misery, but also to psychological agony and anguish during his quest story. Physical and psychological torment is so intertwined that it seems impossible to distinguish them. Young David is terrified by the cruel step-father Mr. Edward Murderstone and Miss Jane Murderstone who are strict and brutal not only toward David, but to his mother as well. David closely scrutinizes Mr. Murderstone: "His hair and whiskers were blacker and thicker, looked at so near," and there is a "squareness about the lower part of his face, and the dotted indication of the strong black beard he shaved close everyday." (Dickens, 1981: 19) David explicitly states his fear of being consumed, for he notes that Murderstone's dog is "deep mouthed and black-haired like him – and he was very angry at the sight of me, and sprung out to get at me." (Dickens, 1981: 37) David also describes Murderstone and his sister – whose purse "shut like a bite" – as swallowing his mother and preying on him like "two snakes on a wretched young bird." (Dickens, 1981: 41-47)

Razumov in Under Western Eyes who is only engaged with his own work, silver medal, the prize of an essay competition, is disappointed with the coming of Haldin. Haldin seeks his help in escaping as a consequence of an assassination of a high government official. Razumov falls into a dilemma: should he help Haldin escape or should he betray him? Razumov's self interest prompts him to try to help Haldin to escape. He goes in search of the peasant sledge driver, Ziemianitch. He walks through the snowy streets of St. Petersburg as a solitary figure. Unable to wake Ziemianitch from his drunken sleep, he beats him badly and on his way back the snowy streets oppress him:

Razumov stamped his foot - and under the soft carpet of snow felt the hard ground of Russia, inanimate, cold, inert, like a sullen and tragic mother hiding her face under a winding-sheet - his native soil! - his very own - without a fireside, without a heart!

.....

It was a sort of sacred inertia. (Conrad, 1980: 34-35)

The snowy streets of St. Petersburg and his internal anguish distort his vision into dream-like figures. As a consequence of much strain on him, he sees a hallucination, the figure of Haldin lying on the snow. His outward journey turns into a subconscious journey. As Campbell stated, "as in the classical form of the hero-myth, a blunder - apparently the merest chance - reveals an unsuspected world and the individual is drawn into a relationship with forces that are not rightly understood." (qtd. in Rosenfield, 1967: 51) The dilemma in which he is placed by Haldin's arrival and his deep loneliness push him into the world of phantoms, in his innermost depths:

Suddenly on the snow, stretched on his back right across his path, he saw Haldin, solid, distinct, real, with his inverted hands over his eyes, clad in brown close-fitting coat and long boots. He was lying out of the way a little as though he had selected that place on purpose. The snow round him was untrodden. (Conrad, 1980: 38)

Razumov's quest beginning in the snowy streets of St. Petersburg directs him to the depths of his soul. His search for a well-lighted street is in vain. To use Goonetilleke's words, "Razumov tries to exorcise the ghost by walking over its chest but, to the end of his life, he is literally and metaphorically haunted by Haldin, somewhat like Shakespeare's Macbeth seeing Banquo's ghost." (Goonetilleke, 1990: 162) He decides to betray Haldin, and after betraying, while he is waiting for the hour of Haldin's arrest, he falls into a helpless despair. Razumov drops and breaks his watch. He loses his sense of time, and again he is immersed into the dream world. His loss of sense of time shatters his world, and he begins to see hallucinations again. His reason is distorted. He can neither work nor sleep. His dilemma and his sense of guilt, bring him to the point of delirium. His room is full of phantoms, and he is in a dream-like situation. His quest leads

him to the innermost depths of his unconscious. His betrayal of Haldin leads him to self-questioning.

In quest-based tales the hero's way is full of temptations. During his journey, as he is lonely and afraid, the hero is vulnerable to temptations. These temptations are obstacles to divert the hero from his way. In a way the hero is tested. At some point in his journey, the hero is warned about what he must avoid. Among the temptations, women are the most dangerous ones. The hero must be alert to every kind of temptation, especially to women. If the hero cannot overcome these temptations, his quest fails. Sir Gawain wanders around looking for the Green chapel until eventually he comes upon a castle, where he hopes to stay. The lord of the castle welcomes him in. He does not recognise the Lord of the castle as being the Green Knight. During his stay, Sir Gawain and the Lord of the castle agree on a contract over three days. During these three days the host will hunt during the day, while Gawain will rest in the castle, and in the evening they will exchange their winnings. While the Lord of the castle goes out hunting, the Lord's wife attempts to tempt and seduce Gawain. On the first day, the Lord's wife kisses Sir Gawain once, and in the evening, when the Lord gives Sir Gawain the deer, Sir Gawain gives the Lord one kiss. The second day Gawain accepts a second kiss from the lady and kisses the Lord twice in the evening. On the third day, the lady persuades Gawain to accept the three kisses and a magical belt which, she tells him, will keep him safe from harm. That night Gawain kisses the Lord three times, but keeps the belt as a secret. Sir Gawain avoids being seduced, but accepts the belt when he learns that it will save his life. The Lord's wife is sent by her husband specifically as a temptation, a test. While Gawain is leaving the castle, he asks for a guide. The guide tries to tempt him to run away and tries to persuade Gawain by reminding him that The Green Knight is so powerful and no one returns alive. He offers to keep it a secret if he runs away and leaves for other lands:

In the name of God pick some different
path! Ride wherever Christ takes you,
And I'll hurry home, and I promise you, knight,
I swear by God and all His saints,
I'll swear by any oath you ask,
That I'll keep your secret, conceal this story. (1970: Lines, 2090-
2114)

However, Sir Gawain does not run away, saying that God will protect him.

In Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress, from the beginning to the end of the journey, Christian is confronted with various temptations. The temptations come from his family, neighbours, so-called friends, individuals and society. They come in some form at any stage of Christian's journey. As Christian is running away from home, his wife and children begin to cry after him to return. The neighbours also come to persuade him to stay. Christian's neighbours come out to see him, and they try to persuade him to stay with them. Some mock and others threaten him to make him give up his journey. Going on his way, he soon meets Mr. Worldly Wiseman, who tries to convince Christian by stating that he will lead a happier life if he gives up his journey and settles down to the comforts of a burdenless town life. The most violent temptations come early in Christian's journey. Following the fierce battle with Apollyon in the Valley of Humiliation, he struggles successfully against the fiends of the Valley of the Shadow, and then he encounters the hostile society of Vanity Fair. Early temptations are violent. Later ones are mostly in the form of deception. At the close of the journey, he meets terrible temptations, these of the Doubting Castle and The River of Death.

In Daniel Defoe's Robinson Crusoe, there are many temptations which try to divert Crusoe from his voyage to sea. His father who is a wise and grave man gives Robinson Crusoe serious and excellent counsel against his future designs. He wants Robinson to follow the middle way since all the calamities of life are shared among the upper and lower part of mankind, but the middle station has the fewest disasters. He speaks of his brother who has run after his young desires and who has been killed. Crusoe's mother and friends try to persuade him not to go sea, but nobody can achieve:

I would be satisfied with nothing but going to sea; and my inclination to this led me so strongly against the will, nay the commands, of my father, and against all the entreaties and persuasions of my mother and other friends, that there seemed to be something fatal in that propension of nature tending directly to the life of misery which was to befall me. (Defoe, 2000: 1)

In Charles Dickens' David Copperfield, David's mother Clara Copperfield who is good-hearted and generous embodies maternal caring until her death. David remembers his mother as an angel whose independent spirit was destroyed by Mr. Murderstone's cruelty. Clara's parting words are suggestive of the ambiguous source and direction of David's desire to leave his home: "That you could hurt any one I love!...I forgive you, but I am so

grieved, Davy, that you should have such bad passions in your heart.” (Dickens, 1981: 53)

In Under Western Eyes, Razumov is compelled to abandon his education and become a spy in Geneva. Razumov is forced to overtake a double role. Razumov’s life disintegrates into chaos. His hopes, plans, and daily life are turned upsidedown. To overcome this chaos, he pretends to be a revolutionary. He engages in two quests: one of them is his role-play, and the other is his spying act. He takes up the role of a revolutionary, Haldin, whom he has betrayed, and he wears a mask. The revolutionaries believe that he is Haldin’s best friend. He is one whom he does not want to be. His mind splits. In Tony Tanner’s words, “Life for Razumov changes into a grotesque pantomime, a hideous force, a monstrous puppet show, a nightmare, anything but normal reassuring reality.” (qtd. in Goonetilleke, 1990. 166) His long quest for individuality takes him on a terrible journey. Being among the revolutionaries, accepted by all as the accomplice of Haldin, seems a shelter for Razumov, but his spiritual loneliness and anguish deepen day by day. He himself becomes a phantom-like figure and wherever he goes, he confronts the apparition, in a way himself. The mentioning of Haldin’s name disturbs him.

In quest tales, during the journey the hero has a guide or guides. Although the hero undertakes a solitary journey, he is seldom without guidance and protection of some sort. The guide or guides provide information, magic weapons. The belt given to Gawain by the lady of the castle provides help vital to the completion of his mission. In the same way the book in Christian’s hand, the fellowship in the House Beautiful, the meeting with the shepherds, and the companionship of fellow believers, Evangelist, provide protection against temptations. In the middle of Robinson’s twenty-fourth year on the island, a band of savages visit the island with their prisoners in the night. Robinson finds the bones and the torn flesh the next morning and is terrified since they might return and find him. Finally the cannibals return. While they prepare themselves for a new feast, Robinson shoots some of them and frightens the others away. He is able to rescue one of the prisoners. He names the man Friday after the day of rescue. Friday become his faithful servant and friend. Clara Peggotty in David Copperfield provides guide for David. She is nanny and caretaker. Peggoty is gentle and selfless, opening herself and her family to David whenever he is in need. She is faithful to David and his family all her life, never abandoning David and his mother. In Under Western Eyes Haldin’s ghost is Razumov’s guide. Against his will and his wish, Razumov becomes Haldin’s most trusted friend who will take up his mission. Whatever he does, he feels Haldin’s ghost by his side. The man whom he betrayed is his eternal comrade.

In quest-based plots, towards the end of the journey the hero descends into darkness. At the climax of the quest tale, the hero must go alone to the dreaded place. This is the ultimate task, and the hero feels profound fear and despair when it approaches. He senses that it will be violent; he will be injured, even killed. The hero feels terrible loneliness. The descent is perhaps the most complex step of the quest tale. In a way, the suffering of the hero will clean him of his sins, purify him and renew everything. But the hero feels a terrible fear in his soul. Gawain goes to the chapel, and three times the Green Knight raises his axe to cut Gawain's head. The first time Sir Gawain pulls back in fear, the second time the knight stops the blow, the third time, the blow hits Gawain's shoulder. After these blows, Sir Gawain becomes angry and says that it is enough. Then the Green Knight reminds him of their bargain in the castle, the agreement made with the Lord of the Castle, which Gawain broke by accepting and hiding the belt. Sir Gawain confesses his sin. In a way, he is cleansed of his sins. His acceptance of his sin is the sign of his spiritual growth. Sir Gawain confesses and is forgiven

In Pilgrim's Progress after passing through the country of Beulah, Christian sees the glistening gates of the City of Heaven. Thinking that they have left all their troubles behind them, they lay down to rest. When they go on towards the city, they come to the river of death. They enter the river and begin to walk through the water. Soon Christian becomes afraid. The more he fears, the deeper the river becomes. Hopeful shouts at him to have hope and faith. Cheered by these words, Christian becomes less afraid and the water becomes less deep and finally they both get across safely. In a way they are cleansed of their sins. They run up the hill toward Heaven. Shining angels lead them through the gates.

In Geneva Razumov's physical loneliness turns into moral loneliness. Finally Razumov finds his double life and guilt unbearable. His divided self, and self-torment cause him to reveal his guilt to Natalia when he feels that he is safest. After his confession to Natalia and revolutionaries, he is cleansed of his sin.

At the end of the quest journey the hero is not the same after emerging from the darkness of his descent. The change takes many forms depending on the nature of the quest and the degree of suffering he has undergone. Wisdom, maturity and spiritual growth are commonly granted to the hero after the struggle. What he really accomplishes is the attainment of a higher state of being. In Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, at the beginning the Knight is challenged, and he must set off on a quest to prove himself, and then having done so Gawain returns to Arthur's castle, which proves the cyclic nature of the quest. He confesses there baring his scar as a sign of his weakness:

“My lord”, said Gawain, lifting the belt,
This band and the nick on my neck are one
And the same, the blame and the loss I suffered
For the cowardice, the greed, that came to my soul.
This sign of bad faith is the mark of my sin:
I’ll wear it on my waist as long as I live,
For a man may hide an injury to his soul,
But he’ll never be rid of it, it’s fastened forever.”(1970: Lines, 2497-2512)

Gawain knows that he is not perfect, but that he has sinned and made good. He has changed and attained self-knowledge.

Christian arrives at the Celestial City, the desired goal at the end of The Pilgrim’s Progress. Robinson, having spent the greater part of fifty-four years away from his homeland, finally reaches England. He is glad to live out his life in peace and in preparation for the longer journey from which he will never come back. David Copperfield ends with David’s returning to his origins. He finds everything as it used to be when he was a child. As Barry Westburg points out, “the beginning of David’s life and the end of his trials meet and close a mythic circle. Time’s arrow is really a boomerang after all. The end is a repetition on a higher and even more stable level of the situation at the beginning.” (qtd. In Golban, 2003: 158) When Razumov confesses, Nikita bursts his ear drums, and in his deaf state he does not hear a tramcar, which runs over him. He becomes a cripple and deaf. Razumov becomes totally dependent upon Tekla. Tekla takes him back to Russia. His confession is an assertion of character. He learns about himself and his unconscious. To use Rosenfield’s words, “he realises by his behaviour that the life of reason is not enough, that there are irrational forces - among them guilt feelings - that projected into the cosmos appear as supernatural ones.” (Rosenfield, 1967: 157)

The quest describes a sequence of related events in the life span of the protagonist, or at least within a crucial part of his life. The stories of the above mentioned works symbolically describe human life conceived as a pursuit of higher spiritual values, attained through a series of tests and trials of physical, psychological, and moral nature. The quest-based structure is a series of adventures forming a hero’s quest. This structural pattern has been universally used as a dominant formal device. Heroic or chivalric quest in the medieval period turned into existential quest, psychological quest in the

twentieth-century fiction. The circular nature of the adventures, both in space and time, naturally suggest the idea of cycle and universality.

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