

How Could Tolkienian Mythology Be Inspiring for Spiritual Leadership ?

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Abstract

In this paper, the author would like to check to what extent Tolkienian mythology could be inspiring for spiritual leaders. In order to understand Tolkienian mythology, we must unveil its structural components. Mythogenetic processes explain how given myths are created throughout time. These have cosmogenetic, metaphysical, eschatological, and ethical dimensions. Tolkienian mythogenetic processes could improve the way business leaders are addressing issues of transcendence, holism, and systemic thought. And that could be done in three basic ways. Firstly, business leaders could better circumscribe the way they understand transcendence. Secondly, business leaders should put attention to every metaphysical questioning that could constitute the basis for ethical reflection and behavior. Thirdly, business leaders should be able to grasp the ultimate outcomes of ethical dilemmas. In brief, spirituality and transcendence could be closely linked to leadership, while taking mythogenetic processes into account.

Keywords : spiritual leadership, Tolkien, mythology

1. How Could Tolkienian Mythology Be Inspiring for Spiritual Leadership ?

Spirituality has never been so popular and its meaning so vague than nowadays. Insofar as spiritual leaders put more attention to organizational members' spiritual needs, they could increase organizational performance (Salehzadeh et al. 2015). The problem is that the notion of "spiritual needs" remains quite vague. Any increase of organizational performance could be more generally caused by the way leaders have individualized consideration for organizational members, without necessarily taking into account the variety and nature of their spiritual needs. Chen and Yang (2012) found that the effects of spiritual leadership can vary from an industry to another. Such effects could be stronger in the retail industry than in financial services. The effects of spiritual leadership could also be different in large, small and medium-sized enterprises. Hicks (2003) rightly asserted that spirituality (as well as ethics) could be defined instrumentally in terms of productivity. Spirituality (and ethics) should never

become a tool for increasing profitability, since it is closely related to human well-being and to meaning of life. Neither human well-being, nor meaning of life should be used as an instrument to improve financial results.

What does spirituality actually mean? Mitroff and Denton (1999) made an intrinsic link between spirituality and the transcendence. However, transcendence is defined as "the mystery that is at the core of the universe and of life itself" : "there is a transcendent power that is responsible for the creation and care of the universe" (Mitroff and Denton 1999, 24). Monotheistic religions would agree with such definition of spirituality. Even Hindus would agree. However, Mitroff and Denton (1999) have included a religious component although they believed that spirituality should never be confused with a particular religion. Their notion of spirituality could then create more misunderstanding than discernment. Spirituality could be experienced in religious as well as in non-religious settings. Hindu sacred texts could even be used for leadership development (Jain and Mukherji 2009). However, when dealing with spirituality in a non-religious context, we should be more cautious in the way we are defining the subject matter. Individual spirituality basically influences a spiritual leader to perform spiritual behaviors toward his/her subordinates, although the whole organization could be explicitly led by spiritual principles and values (Pawar 2014). However, organizational spirituality is probably the subproduct of leader's individual spirituality. Moreover, it could be quite difficult to prove that leadership spiritual behaviors could directly and clearly influence subordinates' behaviors. Phipps (2012) concluded that leader's spiritual beliefs basically influence the strategic leader rather than his/her followers.

Novels, stories, dramas as well as autobiographies could be used to unveil lessons of leadership in the organizational setting (Ferris 1998). Some could choose Proust, Dostoyevsky, Kafka, and Hemingway to find out how their literary works could be inspiring for leaders. Other would prefer Charlotte Brontë, Thomas Mann, Iris Murdoch, and Gao Xingjian. Those writers have produced very different kinds of literary works so that nobody could claim that they would necessarily converge on the same components of personal and social life. When dealing with transcendence, spirituality, and leadership, the literary works of J.R.R. Tolkien (1892-1973) could be particularly inspiring for leaders. The purpose of the paper is to see to what extent Tolkienian mythology could be inspiring for spiritual leaders. Firstly, the structural components of Tolkienian mythology will be explained: the cosmogenetic, metaphysical, eschatological, and ethical components of the way myths are created (the mythogenetic process). Secondly, the Tolkienian mythogenetic process could improve the way business leaders are addressing issues of transcendence, holism, and systemic thought. The originality of the paper is to unveil how spirituality and transcendence could be closely linked to leadership, while taking the mythogenetic process into account.

2. The Structural Components of Tolkienian Mythology

Carl-Gustav Jung looked described mythologies as subproducts of human soul. Myths make an integral part of every religion (Jung 1978). The function of religious myths is to heal human beings from their suffering and anxiety, whether they are

caused by war, sickness, or death (Jung 1964). Tolkienian mythology does not absolutely need gods. God could be the original Principle of everything-that-is. However, it is the only thing we could say about God. Any other discourse about God would be the projection of human mind. That's why Tolkienian mythological eras are not impregnated with the Divine Presence. Tolkien could talk about the origin of the Universe. But even the Creator (Eru, Ilúvatar) did not play any historical role. God did not intervene in human/Elf temporality. According to Tolkien (1978), fairy tales are stories dealing with Faërie, that is, the Perilous Kingdom in which elves, sorcerers, trolls, giants, and dragons live and have their own being. Peoples of the Faërie could contribute to human happiness as well as to human tragedy, since they could deeply influence the way human beings deal with their desires. That's why coming close to the wonders and mysteries of Faërie is always risky (Tolkien 1978b). As Janet Brennan Croft said, "Faërian drama is a form of Elvish art a human can almost but no quite grasp and understand" (31). Faërie makes possible to be in touch with the depths of space and time and to be in harmony with all living beings. So, Faërie could contribute to make environmentalism continuously evolving.

When analyzing Tolkienian mythology, we could define the way myths are created (the mythogenetic process). This process includes cosmogenetic, metaphysical, eschatological, and ethical components.

3. The Cosmogenetic Component, or the Interconnectedness Between Divine Creation, Reincarnation, and Mortal/Immortal Beings

Knowing the myths is learning the origin of things (Eliade 1963). Tolkien's world is theocentric (Wood 2003). Ilúvatar, the Father of everything-that-is (Eru, the One: Tolkien 2012) has created the Universe. Eä is the material universe, the High Wall of Everything (Ilurambar) (Tolkien 1999). We cannot see the High Wall of Everything (Tolkien 2012). Ilúvatar used His thought in order to create the Ainur, who are the pagan gods inhabiting the world. At the real beginning of the Universe (Eä), Ilúvatar said "This is", or "It must be like that". Ilúvatar has sent given beings in the visible Universe (Eä). Ilúvatar is the origin of thought (Tolkien 1984, 13-18, 21, 32-33, 51-59, 132). Ilúvatar is the Creator of the Universe and is living outside of the whole Universe. Before the beginning of Time, Ilúvatar lived with the Ainur (Tolkien 2012a). The world is in the midst of Kúma (Voidness), the formless and eternal Night. We can only cross the High Wall of Everything through the Door of the formless/eternal Night. The Door of the Night is safeguarded by Eärendel. Only the greatest gods (Valar as Lords of the World) could reach the Door of the Night (Tolkien 2012). Ilúvatar is the One who was, is and will always be. That's why Ilúvatar can never be grasped by anybody. His Divine Heart is always hidden (Ridoux 2004). Ilúvatar's children are suffering beings. They have spirit, and are thus able to elaborate artistic works (Tolkien 2012a). Elfs (Ilúvatar's oldest children) and human (mortal) beings are Ilúvatar's sons (Tolkien 2012). The Children of Earth are the First-Born beings. They were originally powerful and beautiful. Ilúvatar (Eru) has given to His Children the power to rule over the Earth. He is generous. Originally, Elfs (Eldar) were more wise and powerful than human beings.

They did not suffer from any sickness (Tolkien 2012). The specific home of Elfs and human beings was created by Ilúvatar (Tolkien 2012a). Elfs still own more scientific knowledge than most of human beings (Tolkien 2009).

Ilúvatar has given gods their powers and home (Valinor, Aulë's home). Any human wisdom comes from the Lords of the World (Valar). Valar (gods) know a lot of things about future. However, their knowledge is limited. Some Valar decided to stay in the world and thus to be substantially shaped by Time (Tolkien 2012a). Human beings considered the Valar as pagan gods (and servants of the Ainur), while Elfs call them Powers, that is, immortal beings. Immortal beings are known as the Powers and Guardians of the World and the Lords of Valinor (Poveda 2003-2004). Valar talked about countries in which death does not exist. According to Tolkien (1984), there are nine Valar. Firstly, Manwë, Lord of gods (Head of Valar), Lord of Goodness. Manwë's spouse is Varda, the Lady of the Stars, who is particularly loved by the Elfs. Manwë and Varda live in Valinor/Asgard (Valar's land). Secondly, Ulmo, the Lord of Waters, loves as much the Elfs as human beings. He lives alone. Thirdly, Aulë, the Lord of Earth, Master of the Arts. Aulë's spouse is Yavanna. She loves every living being on earth. Protecting the environment is thus an action that is godly approved. Fourthly, Oromë, the Lord of Forests (Oromë's spouse is Vana). Fifthly, Tulkas, the Lord of Courage and Struggle. Sixthly, Ossë, the Master of Oceans (Ossë's spouse is Uinen). Seventhly, Mandos, the Master of Fate and of the House of Dead. Eightly, Lorien, the Lord of Dreams. Ninthly, Melko, the Lord of Evil. The most powerful Valar are Manwë and Melko (Morgoth) who are brothers. Manwë is the Lord of Valar (the Being of Goodness), while Morgoth is the Being of Evil (Tolkien 2012). Morgoth is the only Vala who could experience fear (Tolkien 2012a). Melkor/Melko/Morgoth is no longer a Vala. He rebelled against Ilúvatar and was guided by envy, jealousy, and hate. That's why Melko is a fallen Vala.

4. The Metaphysical Component, or the Dialectics Between Death and Freedom

Elfs and human beings are free beings. They could refuse to be guided by Valar, although such refusal could cause them deep unhappiness. Elfs have been created in order to be closer to Valar than human beings actually are (Tolkien 2012a). Unlike the people of Elfs (Eldalië), human beings do not have access to reincarnation processes. Reincarnation implies a time of waiting (in Mandos' rooms) before gods (Valar) could give access to new lives (Tolkien 2012). Elfs could have thousands of lives. If they want, they could die and go to Valinor, in the Mandos' Palace (Tolkien 1984). Any Vala, Elf or human being has never been able to escape from Mandos' rooms, except with Mandos' and Manwë's Will (Tolkien 2012a). Indeed, the waiting duration depends on Mandos' Will (which must be confirmed by Manwë's Will) and the merit of the dead being (Tolkien 2012; 2012a). Human beings are mortal beings. They have received short existential duration (Tolkien 2012a). That's why human beings are free. Existential finitude is the real origin of human freedom. Death is human destiny (Tolkien 1984). Human freedom cannot exist without our having-to-die. Death is not a possibility-to-be if human freedom is not real and effective. Only Beren (Barahir's son) has come back from the after-life world. But he has then said nothing more to human beings

(Tolkien 2012). Since then, any human being has never called Beren for help and support (Tolkien 2012a). Human beings do not know what happens to their mind after their death. Nobody (even the Valar) has never come back from Hades. The Country of Living Dead (a kind of Paradise) is a human interpretation of Gods' Life (Tolkien 2012). It responds to the basic desire of an immortal happiness (Tolkien 2012a). But only those who overcome the frontiers between life and death can explain the nature of those frontiers. Only those people could know what lies beyond death. Someone who has not crossed the ultimate barrier cannot know the nature of the barrier and what is made available beyond the barrier (Tolkien 1978a).

5. The Eschatological Component, or the Dialectics Between Time and Destiny

On one hand, Destiny cannot be understood without referring to temporality. Destiny occurs within-time. Being in-time is then being subjected to a destiny, and above all, to our having-to-die. According to Tolkien, there is a circle of Destiny. There is a destiny for every being in the Universe, since every living being has been created by Ilùvatar. However, human beings have strange destiny. They can neither understand their destiny, nor avoid it (Tolkien 1984). The object of Destiny is death (Tolkien 1988a). Death is Ilùvatar's gift to human beings (Tolkien 1984; 2012a). Nobody could fight Ilùvatar's Will, who is the Master of Destiny (Tolkien 1984; 2009a). Only Ilùvatar (who has created the visible Universe) could change the Destiny of the Universe.

On the other hand, Time cannot be understood without Destiny. As it is grounded in Time, freedom cannot be grasped without the end of personal duration (destiny as our having-to-die). Tolkien talked about the depths (or abyss) of Time (Tolkien 1984). Ilùvatar's creatures are interconnected through the links of Time (Tolkien 1999). Time is running toward its end. At the end of Time, Ilùvatar will bless all living beings as His own Children, since He is merciful. The Creator of the Universe is thus the Ultimate Protector of every living being. However, a merciful God is something strange and unbelievable (Tolkien 1984). The way Tolkien addressed the issue of Time seems to mirror a sacred Time (Primordial Time), whether it is Eternity (as the Time before every temporality), or the Original Time (as the basis of every temporality). However, it is not the case. Religiosity could make somebody defining the mystery of Time, when dealing with eternity. Mysticism opens some doors that make possible for believers to avoid the worldly imprisonment (our having-to-die). Such mystical doors open our mind to unusual and amazing things that most of people are not aware of (Tolkien 1999). Tolkienian mythology does not provide precise ideas about rituals and practices that make possible to open mystical doors. As paradigmatic gestures, rituals are nothing but repetitive actions that are projecting believers into the mythical era (Eliade 1969). During Tolkienian mythological eras, prayer was rarely practiced (Tolkien 1984). Human beings cannot know the real meaning of prayers. However, Tolkienian mythology does not give any idea about the mystical means to abolish secular temporality. According to Tolkien, mystical experience is closely linked to supernatural realities (Tolkien 2006). But non-religious people do not grasp Time as mystery, but rather as the basic dimension of human existence (Heidegger 1962).

6. The Ethical Component, or the Dialectics Between Freedom and Hope

In Tolkienian mythology, Morgoth (Melkor) is the enemy of the world. Tolkienian mythology thus implies a war against Evil (Tolkien 1984), that is, a war against part of who-we-are (Tolkien 1988). Morgoth is destroying everything that is beautiful and new, and then makes people suffering (Tolkien 1984; 2009a). Melkor (Morgoth) is the origin of every evil. He is the Evil Breath. Morgoth has been created by Ilùvatar. Morgoth owned every power that has been given to the Valar (gods), but he used them in order to put evil everywhere, in every individual existence. Morgoth is jealous of Manwë's power. Manwë knows Ilùvatar's Will for each of His creatures, particularly human beings (Tolkien 2012; 2012a). Morgoth's mind is always full of evil potentialities. Morgoth is called the Being of Evil, the Oppressor (Bauglir) (Tolkien 2012a). He has evil intents (Tolkien 2009). Morgoth is always lying (Tolkien 2012). Morgoth is the Spirit of Evil. He is the Being of lies, jealousy, hate, anger, violence, and destruction. Morgoth is the Being of unhappiness (Tolkien 2012; 2012a). Too often, human beings have become Morgoth's soldiers. Morgoth has created demons, dragons, monsters and Orcs as the main instruments of Evil (Tolkien 2012a). Even gods (Valar) cannot get rid of all lies that Morgoth has put into the heart of human beings (Tolkien 2012). Morgoth is a shadow in human spirit and heart (Tolkien 2012a). Gods cannot control human will, although they could only be guided by good intents (Tolkien 2012). Morgoth tried to exert as much power as possible over human beings (Tolkien 1984). Unfortunately, many human beings have been deeply influenced by Morgoth and Sauron. But some are still resisting to Morgoth's power and are united in love and mutual understanding (Tolkien 1984; 1988a; 2009a). Although the world is impregnated by evil and makes it risky to decide in a way or another, it is unveiling that love is more powerful than hate, in the long run.

Uncertainties come from Morgoth. Morgoth (Melkor) was the first and most powerful Vala, while Ilùvatar had not still created the world (Tolkien 1999; 2009). According to Ilùvatar, Manwë is Melkor's brother, although he is always focusing on goodness and justice. Manwë is the King of Valar (Tolkien 2012; 2012a). Manwë is the Vala of world peace. He is the Vala who is loved by Elfs and human beings in the most profound way (Tolkien 2012a). Melkor (Morgoth) is jealous and full of envy and hate (Tolkien 1984). According to Tolkien (1999), jealousy is nothing but mystery. Sauron is Melkor's lieutenant. He lived in a place which is full of fires. Sauron is denying everything human beings have learned from the Valar (their pagan gods). Melkor has created Orcs (as demons, or the people of hate: Tolkien 2012). Orcs served Melkor, but are afraid of Melkor's angry. Melkor made Orcs deeply suffering. Morgoth (Melkor) tried to be worshipped and looked like Savior, since he claimed to own the power to release human beings from their existential predicament (Tolkien 1984). Without human beings, Elfs could not overcome the power of Orcs (Tolkien 2012). Tolkienian mythology tries to find out how the universe could be saved from the total sovereignty of the Absolute Evil. It seems that forgiveness could substantially reduce the power of the Absolute Evil. But ultimate forgiveness and judgment are given by gods (Valar) (Tolkien 2012; 2012a). Too often, human beings feared the powers of Valar and were unable to

really love them. But nobody can really know what would happen if one would disobey to Valar (Tolkien 2012a).

Human beings are free beings (freedom as Ilúvatar's gift). They could choose evil or goodness, whatever their gods could say or believe (Tolkien 1988a; 1999; 2012a). According to Wood (2003), Tolkien was quite close to Augustine. Both agreed that "real freedom is the liberty to choose and do the good, and that to do evil is to act unfreely, to exercise an unslaved will" (70). Augustine believed that evil is the way the will is distorted in order to neglect and forget God's Will (Augustine 1964). A good will is then "a will by which we desire to live upright and honorable lives and to attain the highest wisdom" (Augustine 1993, 19). Evil feelings could be linked to fear/terror, shame, sadness, anger, hate, envy, maliciousness, or malevolence. Evil and bad attitudes/behaviors are actualized through three basic sources: (a) lies, tricks, and deceit; (b) cruelty, tyranny, and violence; (c) pride, greed, and covetousness. Those who are led by evil are focusing on their egoistic needs (Tolkien 2009). However, even in that case, we could find out some goodness among malicious beings (Tolkien 1989; 2009).

Tolkien (1992) distinguished despair from wisdom. Wisdom implies to acknowledge the necessity, after having identified all other solutions to a given problem. The Enemy is represented by Morgoth, for whom the desire of power is the only valuable thing in the world. Power is not expressed through arms, but rather through wisdom. With Morgoth, we are losing our hope (Tolkien 2009b). Evil and bad feelings make living beings full of despair. Wherever there is despair, believers are quite rare (Tolkien 1984). According to Tolkien (2009a), evil and despair are interdependent. Wherever there are evil and bad attitudes/behaviors, there is despair. Despair gives birth to evil and bad attitudes and behaviors. People are dying without any hope (Tolkien 1999). Despair implies to see the end of things as being indubitable (Tolkien 1992). Tenderness and kindness could make us hope about the future. Love makes us very close to Ilúvatar's Heart (Tolkien 1999). Goodness refers to beauty, freedom, wisdom, hope, happiness, and peace. According to Tolkien, goodness follows from love. But courage is not possible without wisdom. Wisdom is not possible without courage (Tolkien 1989). Courage implies reliable opportunities we could really choose (Tolkien 2010). Goodness and right attitudes/behaviors (such as forgiveness, courage, and prudence) make human beings full of hope. The whole world needs hope (Tolkien 1988a; 2001; 2009a). Dying without hope will make us curse life and death (Tolkien 2001; 2009a). There is no hope without freedom, since freedom is grounded on goodness. And goodness is a possibility-to-be that could be preferred to evil. There is no freedom without hope, since hope is the ultimate outcome of goodness. Being subjected to evil cannot give us any hope. Only goodness could provide us hope as the desire for a better future, here-and-now as well as in the after-life.

7. Mythogenetic Lessons for Leadership

In order to efficiently fight the various forms of evil, business leaders should precisely identify who is the Enemy, that is, the enemy of humankind. The Enemy is not a specific enemy, but rather the ground of every evil on Earth. Business leaders

should clarify how to fight the Enemy. Business leaders will not be able to make the Enemy disappear, since human existentiality implies insurmountable finitude. However, we could reasonably expect that business leaders will show an exemplary conduct and explain how to fight the Enemy in the daily organizational life. Tolkienian mythology has made us more aware of three basic challenges.

Firstly, business leaders should circumscribe the way they understand transcendence. Leaders who want to take transcendence into account should be cautious, when defining what it's all about. C. Dean Pielstick (2005) distinguished three forms of belief systems. Transcendence implies that the ultimate reality is the Absolute, the Other. In that case, the ultimate reality is isolated from human/material reality (Judaism, Christianity, Islam). Moreover, immanence means that the ultimate reality is with and within human and material reality (pantheism, or the identity between God and Nature; monism, or the existence of a transcendent reality which is one with material reality). Finally, pantheism expresses that God is both within material reality and absolutely other than such earthly reality. Transcendental leadership seems to convey a quite frail and vague notion of transcendence. Cardona (2000) defined transcendental leadership as leader-member exchange theory. The motivation is called "transcendent" because it is a motivation to contribute to others' well-being. Transcendence then means overcoming egoistic motivation. Any other spiritual meaning of transcendence seems excluded. According to Fernando et al. (2009), transcendental leadership should be focused on the best way to shape organizational culture so that external and internal stakeholders will perceive what the organisation actually is. Some authors agree that there is a nexus between environmental leadership and spiritual leadership (Crossman 2011; 2010). In such case, spiritual leaders are focusing on a higher purpose, when dealing with challenging situations. They pay great attention to others' suffering and are then able to practice empathic understanding of others' pain (Klaus and Fernando 2016). Empathy basically implies a call of conscience. According to Heidegger (1962), the call of the conscience is an appeal as mode of discourse. It is an appeal to *Dasein*, that is, an appeal to choose given possibilities-to-be, while excluding others. This is an appeal to become who-we-are. Weiss et al. (2004) identified five components of the calling in the context of Christian vocation: (1) this is an invitation we are receiving; (2) we must listen to the call and use our discernment; we must be in silence, pray, and meditate; (3) the calling implies an invitation to actively contribute to common good; (4) the calling is an invitation to do something concrete and possible; (5) we are always free to accept or reject the invitation. The experience of calling does not necessarily have any religious meaning. Calling rather implies the personal commitment to higher ideals or purposes, whether they are religious or not (Markow and Klenke 2005). Such higher ideals could even be economically, politically, socially, culturally, or aesthetically induced. Ego-transcendence could then be prioritized, when endorsing an ideal that overcomes the challenges of the daily life. As Markow and Klenke (2005) rightly said, self-transcendence is required to feel any sense of calling. Transcendental thought should focus on the interconnectedness between Divine Creation, reincarnation, and mortal/immortal beings (the cosmological

component). Transcendental leaders could then open the way either to holistic thought, or to systemic way of thinking.

Secondly, business leaders should put attention to every metaphysical questioning that could constitute the basis for ethical reflection and behavior. Holistic thought should be confronted to the dialectics between death and freedom (the metaphysical component) and to the dialectics between Time and Destiny (the eschatological component). Benefiel (2005) defined spirituality as “the human spirit fully engaged”, thus referring to the intellectual, emotional, and relational abilities as well as the capacity to change and develop oneself (9). Spiritual leadership is often considered as enhancing a holistic style of leadership, since it takes body, mind (reason), heart (emotions and feelings), and spirit into account (Fairholm 1996; Delbecq et al. 2004; Wu and Li 2015). According to Dede and Ayranci (2014, 3395), holism is a spiritual leadership factor which is weakly connected to altruism and trust, since it mirrors interiority. It is not focusing on others’ well-being. Holistic thought should deepen the way death and freedom are interconnected one to the other. In doing so, holistic leaders would better contribute to grasp the existential character of freedom, as it is perceived and exercised in the organizational setting. Holistic thought should improve its understanding of the basic link between Time and Destiny. Holistic leaders would then redefine temporality as well as determinisms, when applied in the organizational life.

Thirdly, business leaders should be able to grasp the ultimate outcomes of ethical dilemmas. Systemic thought should deepen the way it perceives and defines hope and freedom. According to Geh (2014), spiritual organizations put the emphasis on inspiration rather than motivation. Motivation cannot be sustained in the long run without the interconnectedness between the self, the significant others (people who are significant for me), and the organizational culture and life. Inspiration could open the way to such interconnectedness. Fry and Cohen (2009) defined the basic purpose of spiritual leadership in the following way: “to tap into the fundamental needs of both leader and follower for spiritual well-being through calling and membership, to create vision and value congruence across the individual, empowered team, and organization levels and, ultimately, to foster higher levels of organizational commitment and productivity” (269). Fry and Cohen (2009) believed that the spiritual leadership paradigm embraces a stakeholder approach and focuses on the best way to launch, develop, and improve dialogue with stakeholders. However, Fry and Cohen (2009) did not explain how spiritual leadership appears as a paradigm. Painter-Morland (2008) described how theories of systemic leadership are focusing on collaboration (rather than control), trust, wisdom, authenticity, and humility. Systemic leaders deeply enhance diversity in the organizational setting. They have a real sense of inclusion. Systemic leaders put the emphasis on collaboration rather than control, so that they are defining the way interdependence is actually experienced in the organizational life. According to Korac-Kakabadse et al. (2002), spiritual leadership implies attitudes of discernment, listening, and humility. Spiritual leaders accept reality as-it-is and do not play power games. They do not try to control everything in the organizational life. Systemic leaders are

able to face paradoxes quite efficiently, since they consider paradoxes as springboards for self-transcendence. The paradoxical coexistence of social traits could imply hierarchy vs participation, unity vs diversity, or discipline vs creativity (Collier and Esteban 2000). Systemic leaders could unveil how hope and freedom are interconnected in the organizational life and culture.

8. Conclusion

Nowadays, spiritual leadership is not an epiphenomenon. It is more and more attracting, when business leaders have to deal with religious and cultural pluralism. However, spirituality makes room for transcendence as well as for holistic and systemic thought, without precisely defining the ins and outs. Looking at the mythogenetic process as it is actualized in Tolkienian mythology could improve the way business leaders have to deal with transcendence, holism, and systemic thought. Being aware of the deep challenges which lie behind any spiritual leadership, business leaders could more efficiently face spiritual and cultural diversity as well as the need for global human development. This study has some limitations. The various components of the mythogenetic process have not been included in empirical studies. However, the way spiritual leadership is perceived and defined by organizational members and leaders could be much more precise and inspiring, if the cosmogenetic, metaphysical, eschatological, and/or ethical challenges are explicitly addressed.

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