

## A Never-Ending Holiday : The Sense of the Limit of Creation in J.R.R. Tolkien's "Leaf by Niggle"

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The Sense of the Limit of Creation in J.R.R. Tolkien's  
"Leaf by Niggle"

Yuko Watanabe

J.R.R. Tolkien (1892-1973) created a short story when he saw his favorite tree near his window cut down by its owner. The story is "Leaf by Niggle" (1945). Its hero named Niggle is a painter, who wants to create a great big picture of a country from his small drawing of a leaf. He has too many obstacles to finish it and, before long, is forced to go on a journey (i.e. dies) without completing it. At the terminus of his journey, however, he finds that his unfinished picture has become a real country in the end.

Almost all Tolkien scholars agree that the story is an allegory. The clearest identification is Tom Shippey's. He identifies the elements in the story as follows: the journey= death, Niggle the painter= Tolkien the writer, Niggle's great picture= Tolkien's mythology, Niggle's duties, especially keeping a neat garden= the duties of Tolkien's scholarship (Shippey 43-54).<sup>1</sup> Humphrey Carpenter also records in his biography of Tolkien that when Tolkien saw his favorite tree cut down, "[h]e was after all 'anxious about my [Tolkien's] own internal Tree', his mythology" and created a short story expressing "his worst fears for his mythological Tree" (261). Tolkien, like Niggle, could not concentrate on his creation because of his neighbors' antipathy and many other trifles, so he was afraid that he would not be able to complete his mythology. Therefore, Tolkien scholars concur with the opinion that

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<sup>1</sup> While Shippey associates the tasks of the town only with those of Tolkien's scholarship, other scholars such as Paul Kocher expands the duties into those which life itself, not just his profession, requires of Tolkien. Hereafter I accept Kocher's proposal because Shippey does not explain the meanings of tasks other than keeping a neat garden, which Shippey especially links to Tolkien's philology.

the ending, in which the painting becomes perfect and real, reflects the author's own hope.

This article does not oppose the allegorical explanation (Niggle= Tolkien, the picture= Tolkien's mythology, and so on). My argument, however, is that the creation by Niggle is not as complete as has been claimed. Of course, it is impossible that the readers do not find delight in the concluding scene, but they also feel some sense of limit. For Niggle does not return from his journey after all and his picture has no influence on the town.

The critical tradition, I am arguing, has laid too much stress on the completion of Niggle's creation after his death and, as a result, it underestimates the importance of the town life, which seems to be the main obstacle to Niggle's painting. Of course Paul Kocher and J.S. Ryan analyze Niggle's relationship with Parish as an embodiment of the town's practicalism and recognize that Parish has a positive effect on the painter's creation. However, their valuation of the town life is actually not so high. Kocher says that Parish's gift to Niggle is "to provide the frustrating dreariness that pricked his [Niggle's] imagination to frame ('glimpse') a greener, more spacious world for the refreshment of himself and others" (150).<sup>2</sup> In their opinion, creation seems to stand at an advantage over the town life, so they too do not fully appreciate the worth of the "dreary" town life.

This article tries to discover a deeper significance in the relationship between Niggle's creation and the town life. My conclusion will be that an ultimate creation should be always based on everyday life, and that Niggle's creation is not so perfect because his country has no connection to the everyday town life.

We will have two sections. The first section considers the hopeful aspect of

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<sup>2</sup> Kocher and Ryan's arguments are connected to the concept of "sub-creation," which Tolkien offered in his essay "On Fairy-Stories" (1947). That Niggle finishes his creation in collaboration with Parish, Kocher says, exemplifies a doctrine of Tolkien's: a doctrine "that no writer can sub-create a secondary world successfully without first having a clear-eyed knowledge of life in our primary world" (150).

"On Fairy-Stories" and "Leaf by Niggle" are collected in a book, *Tree and Leaf*. The essay was first published in 1947 while the story appeared in 1945. *Tree and Leaf* originally consisted of these two writings published in 1964. The second section of this article will discuss the concept of "sub-creation" in more detail.

the story. We will review how Niggle changes ideally in his journey and can make his picture "complete." Although the two interesting features of Niggle's creation, that is, that Niggle finishes his creation in collaboration with Parish and that Niggle's country becomes the place for his and others' convalescence, have attracted scholarly attention,<sup>3</sup> this paper considers these points from a new viewpoint: double "re(-)creations:" re-creation by others and recreation based on work. Thus we will find what a creative activity needs in this story. Second section, on the other hand, takes up the aspect of limit. At first sight, Niggle achieves an ultimate creation because his picture becomes real and gives the people in the journey consolation. He, however, actually never realizes the highest creation as a human because of his lack of the above two factors in a real sense. Sub-creation, which is the term that the author used to represent human creative activities, needs a connection to the working everyday life, but Niggle's picture misses it. His painting is never re-created in the life world. Niggle makes his creation complete only in a narrow and never-ending holiday world. If the readers interpret this story as an allegory about an author's creative activities, they should understand not only his hope but also his sense of limit.

## 1. A Complete Creation: The Double Re(-)creations

Section one focuses on how Niggle has changed in the journey to complete his picture and considers what is necessary for creation in this story. There are especially two re(-)creations worth attention: re-creation by others and recreation based on work.

We will begin with one factor, collaboration with or re-creation by others. In this story there are expressions about cooperation. First, the town to which Niggle

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<sup>3</sup> As for collaboration, I have quoted Kocher's comments above. As well as Kocher, Ryan applies the theories in "On Fairy-Stories" to the story. Concerning the second point of Niggle's creation (that Niggle's country becomes a place for refreshment), he associates this with Tolkien's theory of "Recovery" (I will make a detailed explanation of this theory in the second section). Still, especially about this second point, the critics only point out the fact that a perfect creation helps the "recovery" of people and do not consider how this "recovery" is realized in this story. I will give an explanation about the nature of Niggle's recovery while placing a higher value on the influence which the town life has upon Niggle's creation.

belongs seems to be a cooperative society. When there is a storm and Niggle's neighbor's house needs some repairs, the town Inspector comes not to the neighbor himself but to Niggle, blaming him: "You should have helped your neighbour to make temporary repairs and prevent the damage from getting more costly to mend than necessary. That is the law" (101). Tompkins, who is the last person to see any value in Niggle's picture, also considers that useless people such as the painter should go to "a communal kitchen or something" and work for other people (116). Although the town law appears to be a negative aspect of the life world, it is worth noting that cooperation is an important part in this story.<sup>4</sup>

Cooperation thus seems to play a key role, but there is no understanding about the importance of others between Niggle and his neighbor Parish. Niggle is a sort of kind-hearted man, so maybe without the law he would help his lame neighbor. The narrator, however, supplements Niggle's "kindness" with his comments: "You know the sort of kind heart: it made him uncomfortable more often than it made him do anything; and even when he did anything, it did not prevent him from grumbling, losing his temper, and swearing (mostly to himself)" (93). So Niggle is never glad to help Parish while actually Parish sells him potatoes cheap and assists him though not in painting. Parish too is not grateful of Niggle's help. He also thinks that the picture is nonsense, and his conscience does not prick him for claiming his neighbor's assistance and preventing his painting. These two neighbors (for Niggle, Parish is his only neighbor in the literal sense of the word "neighbor" because their houses are far from the town) do not have any genuine respect for each other.

Still, Niggle collaborates with *himself* in a sense. When he needs some advice from a friend about the picture, he wishes that he would "see himself walk in [into the picture], and slap him on the back, and say (with obvious sincerity): 'Absolutely magnificent! [...]' (95). Also his manner of creation is peculiar. His creation can be called "re-creation" because he creates his great picture by recycling small sketches

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<sup>4</sup> We will review the value of this law in the second section and find that it too has a meaning in Niggle's creation after all.

which he has already drawn.<sup>5</sup> It is as if Niggle collaborated with other Niggles. He, meanwhile, lacks the advice of other people and, in this way, lives in a circle of self-satisfaction.

Before long, he is forced to go on a journey and arrives at the Workhouse (=purgatory). After a period, two voices discuss his treatment. The gentle Second Voice insists that he should deserve generous treatment because there are some good points in him, especially his having gone to the town in the storm for Parish. Niggle feels ashamed thinking that he is not worth this kind judgment. He, meanwhile, argues for the sake of Parish saying that his neighbor was kind to him too. In the end, he comes out of the workhouse into the country that is his uncompleted picture.

There Niggle finds an odd thing. He not only discovers the much-loved tree as he has imagined it during his lifetime but also understands that "[s]ome of the most beautiful [of the leaves] ---and the most characteristic, the most perfect examples of the Niggle style--- were seen to have been produced in collaboration with Mr Parish: there was no other way of putting it" (110). This is a very peculiar phrase indeed. To be sure, the Niggle style of creation has been to combine diverse ideas at different times, but Niggle has not asked any idea from Parish and Parish has taken little notice of his picture. He, however, has recognized his neighbor's help in the judgment of the two voices. Likewise, here he finds that Parish, the gardener, has influenced his tree unconsciously and beautifully.

Parish comes into the picture country saying that he is there thanks to Niggle's defense of him against the voices. Then they begin to collaborate to complete the scenery: "At such times [when they have some refreshment and make their heads clear] Niggle would think of wonderful new flowers and plants, and Parish always knew exactly how to set them and where they would do best" (113). Parish assists Niggle to enrich his picture country. The picture is given a new life and really re-created by their hands.

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<sup>5</sup> "Re-creation" here means simply "to create what already has been created into some new or at least different forms." Niggle's style of creation was characteristic of the author Tolkien, and that is one reason why Niggle is considered as Tolkien.

In this way, they make the land very beautiful. These show that creation does not mature by one hand, but it is made richer by the repetition of re-creation by others too. Niggle's painting is first created by Niggle in life, and is reborn and re-created by God as a real country (it is a special case indeed). The reborn or, say, re-created Niggle and Parish repeat the re-creation of the picture as a more splendid one. It is worth mentioning that while Niggle gets to have an intention to go over the Mountains (i.e. to true heaven), Parish remains to wait for his wife saying that she can come there when she is ready and he gets things ready for her (this is another case of helping others) and that she may be able to make the house of the country better. Others continue to enrich or re-create Niggle's land in their own fashions.

Niggle lived in a circle of self-satisfaction and re-created his own drawings again and again to make a great picture by himself. He, however, gets to know that one's creation is completed not by oneself alone but by others adding their ideas and knowledge. His change tells that a rich creation needs collaboration with others, or re-creation by other hands.

Another "recreation" is also a key word of "Leaf by Niggle."<sup>6</sup> Work and rest are dominant factors in this story, and Niggle's picture gets finished when his creative activity blends the two.

In the first few pages, the narrator explains why the painter cannot achieve his ideal painting. There are obstacles; for example, his fear of the coming journey and the trifles which Parish and the town people require of him. One of the barriers, moreover, is his own idleness, and he does not manage time well. It happens consequently that "one thing he could see: it would need some concentration, some *work*, hard uninterrupted work, to finish the picture, even at its present size" (95 italics original). Niggle cannot work in a satisfactory way.

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<sup>6</sup> "Recreation" means usually "activity done for enjoyment when one is not working," but this article does not include the sense of "when one is not working" for reasons we will consider below in this section. I, therefore, use it here with a similar meaning to "refreshment," and make it have a relationship to the other re-creation. People who have this recreation (refreshment) recover their health and re-create themselves in a sense.

Still, he does not take even good rest. A free tea party, which he himself has planned before, annoys him as a nuisance because the picture and the coming journey assert themselves in his mind. Time always presses on him. In this way, Niggle does not get satisfaction out of his work nor take good rest in his life.

The painter changes so that he appreciates the real value of work or duties. The workhouse compels him to "work hard" (103) without any diversion. He concentrates on digging, carpentry and painting bare boards all in a plain color. Although he may not like such work as this because it reminds him of the town duties,<sup>7</sup> he becomes useful and feels satisfied during these labors.

At any rate, poor Niggle got no pleasure out of life, not what he had been used to call pleasure. He was certainly not amused. But it could not be denied that he began to have a feeling of--- well satisfaction: bread rather than jam. [...]. He had no "time of his own" (except alone in his bed-cell), and yet he was becoming master of his time [...]. There was no sense of rush. He was quieter inside now, and at resting-time he could really rest. (104)

The compulsive method has re-created Niggle.

Niggle and Parish work together to make the picture country better. At first, the narrator says, they sometimes feel tired and need the tonic which the workhouse doctors have given them. Before long, however, they cease to want it. Why do they quit drinking the invigorating medicine? The narrator also tells that when the two feel weary, they disagree. In other words, they require some healing when their work does not go well or give satisfaction to them. Maybe the sense of contentment serves as refreshment for them.

Of course Niggle has not been able to continue to fulfill the duties without rest

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<sup>7</sup> Digging reminds us of gardening, which he has often neglected, while carpentry has some connection to the town life (we will come back to this point in the next section). Painting in a plain color has a relationship to his job, but he as a painter may feel this work only as a nonsensical duty.



in the workhouse even if he has found contentment in his labors. There is a difference between the workhouse duties and the creation of the country. The creation itself leads to their healing. The two neighbors walk together and sing in their land. Moreover, in the last page of the story, the Second Voice tells that the country is “proving very useful indeed [...]. As a holiday, and a refreshment. It is splendid for convalescence [...]” (118). The creative activity is thus a combination of work and recreation, or recreation based on satisfactory work.

Niggle’s changed creation has two aspects. First, creation should be re-created by others. Niggle’s picture has not come to completion by the painter’s hand alone, but it has become rich with Parish’s knowledge. Second, creation might be recreation inseparable from good work. Originally Niggle felt that tasks other than painting, or even painting too as a mere obsession with completing something, were nuisances. In the workhouse, however, he cannot help concentrating on such “work” as he has disliked, and gets to know the satisfaction of good work. It is interesting that the duties or work, for example gardening, enable him to enrich his picture after all. In addition, when he does fine work, he naturally gets enough rest too. In the end, the creative activity based on such work produces a place for his and others’ convalescence as well.

## 2. A Never-Ending Holiday: The Limit of Creation

In the first section, we have considered how Niggle finishes his creation in this story. This second section, on the other hand, sees that even his splendid creation has a limit. We will begin with an analysis of the relationship between the creation as discussed above and “sub-creation” which the author presented as the best possible creation as a human. After the review of the nature of Niggle’s creation in that way, we will see that his creation is actually different from the one intended by the author although it does not seem so at first sight. The reason is that the picture country is, so to speak, a never-ending holiday world while the world by sub-creation only offers a temporary one for the working days.

We will start with our survey of the concept of “sub-creation.”

As I have mentioned in the introduction, Tolkien used the term "sub-creation" in his essay "On Fairy-Stories." This essay shows clearly (or often equivocally) what the author thought a fairy-story was; for example, a fairy-story is not about fairies but about their realm or a human's adventure in their land. There are, the essay says, especially four important effects in a fairy-story: Fantasy, Recovery, Escape and Consolation. "Fantasy" means here a faculty to catch the wonder of things, and "Recovery" is to recover from the drabness of life. One "Escape[s]" into a more fundamental world than this ever-changing present world, while "Consolation" provides hope that all things must end well in God's world. The four aspects are related to each other. In the author's opinion, a man's eyes have become too clouded to seize the essential beauty, terror and so on of all things about him because experience makes him misunderstand that he has known already all about them. The Fantasy of a fairy-tale, therefore, presents a world in which things keep their original wonder more distinctly and so heals the readers from their blurred view. The recovered readers, as a result, may take a new hopeful look at their own world and lives. This is the main fruit of a fairy-story.

The term sub-creation is known so widely that even researchers outside Tolkien's studies sometimes refer to it. It actually does not have a clear definition, though. Still, if one tries to interpret it in short, it will go as follows: sub-creation is the creative activity of humans based on or imitating God's Creation; and, a sub-creator makes a Secondary world with an order not different from the one of God's Primary world. Sub-creation is an ability or right to create mainly a fairy-story, and a sub-created fairy-tale opens the readers' eyes to the truths of their own Primary world.

These are Tolkien's ideas about creation. Niggle's creation has a connection to these though it is painting not writing stories.<sup>8</sup> His strong point in creation is to try "to catch its [a leaf's] shape, and its sheen, and the glistening of dewdrops on its edges" (94). Also the reason why he paints leaves and flowers is that he thinks that

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<sup>8</sup> We can also remember that Kocher and Ryan point out the connection. See the introduction of this article.

they are pretty, not that the painting of them is useful for a man as Tompkins expects. Niggle's attitude is to seize the essential marvels of leaves and flowers from a viewpoint detached from the human sense of domination over them, which leads to the clouding of the eyes. His country, as a result, offers the people in the journey a place for convalescence and also helps as an "introduction to the Mountains" (=heaven) (118). So, Niggle is a good sub-creator.

In addition, the two re(-)creations which we have reviewed in the previous section relate to sub-creation. A sub-creator gives people some occasion for their recovery and it reminds one that Niggle's (sub-)creation is recreation based on work. The experience of the country serves as refreshment or a holiday. As to re-creation or collaboration with others, sub-creation essentially has this aspect because it is based on God's creation. In short, a sub-creator always re-creates God's creation trying to enrich it in his own fashion.<sup>9</sup>

Niggle's creation thus embodies sub-creation. We, however, cannot conclude that this story shows only the realization of a sub-creator's ambition. One reason for this is that the ending puts two opposite perspectives side by side. In the last paragraph, the Second Voice tells the First Voice that Niggle's country serves well as a place for healing and that the two neighbors have laughed together when they heard that the land was called now "Niggle's Parish." On the other hand, the scene just before this consists of the talk between Tompkins and Atkins, and informs us that Niggle's picture has been used to repair the damages from the storm (this is a not-so-good re-creation) and, though Atkins has saved a small patch of the picture finding some value in it, even this piece is destroyed with the Museum in which it has been exhibited. The picture and the painter are quite forgotten in his old town. What is the meaning of this ominous episode?

Maybe one effect is to show the contrast between the two contrary facts and to

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<sup>9</sup> The concluding paragraph of Tolkien's essay says as follows:

The Christian has still to work, with mind as well as body, to suffer, hope, and die; but he may now perceive that all his bents and faculties have a purpose, which can be redeemed. So great is the bounty with which he has been treated that he may now, perhaps, fairly dare to guess that in Fantasy he may actually assist in the effoliation and multiple enrichment of creation. [...]. (73)

give an advantage to the world of after-death for its expectation which is wanted in the life world. Tolkien as a pious Christian believed in the happiness in heaven. It, however, certainly gives the readers an uncomfortable feeling if one sees this fiction not as a purely religious story but as a tale about creation, though this too includes a religious touch. Away from the religious view, one can consider the death world or the picture country as a story-world. The author often analogized the experience of reading fairy-stories to journeys. For example, in *The Hobbit* (1937), Bilbo goes on a journey from his everyday life to an epic world. In addition, Tompkins' words that he should have driven the painter into his journey before his time came and "[p]ush[ed] him through the tunnel into the great Rubbish Heap" (116) reminds one that the contemporaries of Tolkien took fairy-stories as some odds and ends (at least in the author's opinion). Finally, as mentioned repeatedly, Niggle's country embodies the concepts of a fairy-story very well.

When we so compare the death world to a story world and, as a result, the life world to the everyday world, a difference appears in "Leaf by Niggle" from other stories by the author. In most stories of the writer, the heroes or near heroes travel through worlds which are considered as story circles in some way or other, but they return to their own societies and their experiences make them take a new look at their everyday lives. That is, they are healed by taking a holiday (or recreation) and re-create their original lives by absorbing their experiences into everyday business. Again this is ruled by the concept of sub-creation. A Secondary world must not divert from the reason or truth of the Primary world so that the readers find new aspects of this first world.<sup>10</sup> For a sub-creator, therefore, the Primary world is more important than his imaginary world. Most heroes hence return to their everyday societies. Niggle, meanwhile, never comes back to his daily society. It may be said that he succeeds in his creation because his country presents the four aspects of a

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<sup>10</sup> As referred to repeatedly, Kocher and Ryan emphasize this feature of sub-creation. This basic and prominent feature of sub-creation has also attracted public attention. Terri Windling, not a scholar but rather a writer herself, records in an essay that she was impressed by this theory of Tolkien's (that is, the theory about the connection between a Secondary world and the Primary World).

good fairy-story, but he also partly fails to sub-create a world which is able to influence the daily world since the people do not return with their experiences to their previous lives.<sup>11</sup>

It is more understandable that Niggle's creation has a limit when one reviews it from the perspectives of the re(-)creations. To be sure, as the first section has argued, Niggle attains both re-creation by others and recreation based on work, but in fact his achievement has a limit because his creation lacks the connection with everyday life in a real sense. His picture is never re-created by the town's people (and the picture too does not re-create their lives). Also Niggle can complete his picture land only when he has thrown away his other work/duties in the town. However much his creative activity is based on his labors, his work essentially is different from that of the world of workdays, and his picture only functions as the world of a never-ending holiday.<sup>12</sup>

The town stands for the world of working days. Without doubt, Parish is the main impediment to Niggle's painting, yet the town duties play the same role as well:

Things went wrong in his [Niggle's] house; he had to go and serve on a jury in the town; a distant friend fell ill; Mr Parish was laid up with lumbago; and visitors kept on coming [...] and there were some things he was compelled to do, whatever he thought. Some of his visitors hinted that his garden was rather neglected, and that he might get a visit from an Inspector. (96)

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<sup>11</sup> Of course, it is a difficult point that in this story the death world is not a pure Secondary world but a part of the Primary world. We will come back to this problem below.

<sup>12</sup> I owe the concept of "holiday" to the analysis of Toshio Akai. He points out that people have a "holiday" when they are to come back to their everyday lives. In short, there cannot be a holiday when people do not have workdays. Akai compares Frodo of *The Lord of the Rings* (1954-55) with Bilbo of *The Hobbit*. The latter comes back to his village and calls his adventure a "holiday," while the former "remains inside the story" (in *The Lord of the Rings*, Sam, the servant of Frodo, plays the same role as Bilbo) (see Akai, 197-99). People must return from their "holidays" to their "working days." I, therefore, use the term of "never-ending holiday" to emphasize the lack of the connection between Niggle's picture and the everyday life.

The strict laws of the town force the painter to do things which he dislikes as nuisances, but which maybe have more connections to everyday life than painting, even if painting also has an aspect of work.

It is interesting that Niggle and Parish too live at a distance from the town. If the town symbolizes an everyday working world, Niggle's house stands for the world of leisure. It is "a pleasant little house" (96) and people come there for a free tea party in spring time. That Parish is lame enhances this feature. It is as if this part of the nation were a health resort. Thus Niggle and Parish live as the only two neighbors in the area, and Niggle goes to the town by bicycle when he has some business (for example, to fetch a doctor or carpenter).

Strictly speaking, the painter lives not in the furthest resort but a middle point between it and the town, so to speak, because the true place for convalescence is the country which the neighbors make, or rather beyond "the Mountains." Parish truly heals his lameness in the country. It is worth noting that this story begins with the phrase "There was once a little man called Niggle, who had a long journey to make" (93). In Tolkien's works, a journey is often compared to a holiday. As mentioned already, the best example is *The Hobbit*, in which the hero makes his trip reluctantly, returns, and writes his memoirs titled "There and Back Again, a Hobbit's Holiday" (*The Hobbit* 361-62). Also we can remember that the Second Voice says that Niggle's picture country is useful as "a holiday" (118). Niggle's "pleasant" house serves thus as a middle point between the everyday working world of the town and the picture country which provides true rest.

Characters who intermedate between the everyday world and story worlds are found often in Tolkien's stories. As Verlyn Flieger points out, the hero of another short story "Smith of Wootton Major" (1967) lives at the furthest end of the village and goes to the fairy forest from there (Flieger 227-53). Flieger focuses on Smith, but there are others like him, such as Bilbo. The hobbit does not live precisely at the end of the village, yet it is interesting that his house is named "Bag End." These characters make a journey to a not-ordinary world and return with their experiences so that they not only re-create their lives but also influence other villagers in some

way or other.

One more common feature in these persons is that the people about them often consider them as eccentrics. As for the hobbit, one can see this immediately. Smith, on the other hand, looks ordinary at first sight. He, however, cares to tell his stories about the fairy land to some selected people because most of his villagers do not believe them. So even Smith has some singularity.

Niggle too lives on the borderline between an ordinary world and a not-ordinary world, and also the people regard him with some contempt. He lives not exactly at the end of the town but miles away from its center. Also Tompkins disdains the painter for not only his useless painting but also for the reason that he “did not live in town” (117). Thus Niggle has a right to assume that he is one of the intermediators between the everyday life and an insane (for people like Tompkins) but truly refreshing holiday world.

Niggle’s job, moreover, is fit for his role as an intermediator. As the first section has reviewed, sub-creation is a combination of recreation and work though the painter fails to achieve this state in his life. A sub-creator should fuse work with recreation, or rather the everyday life with a more fundamental story world, in order to show the readers a more positive aspect of their working world. This is the object of the four elements of a fairy-story (Fantasy, Recovery, Escape and Consolation).

Niggle has not been able to appreciate the value of his duties/work nor to take enough rest during his lifetime. He himself needs a holiday, so to speak. In the holiday world, he gets to know how he can finish his creation by understanding the importance of daily work and combining work itself with satisfaction and refreshment. He does carpentry by himself. Incidentally, the work of building is one motif related to everyday life in this story. In the storm, Niggle goes to the town in order to fetch a builder for Parish (and fails). He is also compelled to do carpentry in the workhouse, and with the skills which he has gotten there he makes a good house in the picture country. The events of the journey enable him to recognize that the things which he has looked down on as mere obstacles to painting have their own merits.

Re-creation by others too has some relationship to this fusion of everyday work and refreshing recreation. The fact that Niggle collaborates with Parish introduces this connection. When Shippey allegorizes this story, he labels Parish with his gardening as a practical aspect of Tolkien. He considers Parish too as part of the author, but anyway Parish represents an aspect of everyday practical life.<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, as this paper has already quoted, their way of creation is important: "At such times Niggle would think of wonderful new flowers and plants, and Parish always knew exactly how to set them and where they would do best" (113). If the creation of a Secondary imaginary world belongs to the imagination, Niggle's thinking may be equated to that, while Parish's making this imagination into a real form has some connection to how the readers bring their experiences into their own world and re-create them in their own fashions.

Thus Niggle's creation needs the viewpoints of everyday life. The town society appears to be too severe in this story, though. Still, the laws are also founded on God's rule, which grants Niggle the country as gift. The First Voice and even the gentle Second Voice, both of whom are some servants of God, stress the authority of the laws. Even the gentle Second voice does not dismiss the criteria which the laws lay down. The journey of death, moreover, is related to the laws after all. The Driver of the journey resembles so much the town Inspector, a personification of the severity of the laws, that he is "almost his double" (102). The journey itself seems to be as harsh as the laws, but it has its own meaning though most of the people including the original Niggle and Tompkins misunderstand it.<sup>14</sup>

Sub-creation should be the fusion of everyday life and special recreation, and

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<sup>13</sup> Shippey's analysis that Parish is part of Tolkien may also explain why Parish and Niggle are the only two neighbors in their area. I agree with this analysis (Parish= part of Tolkien) to the extent that he embodies practicality, so a sub-creator needs the two points of view (everyday aspect (Parish) and holiday aspect (Niggle, a painter)). It, however, cannot entirely clarify certain features of Parish (for example, his lameness). In addition, as I have mentioned in the first section, there is his wife, who also shall re-create the country. I, therefore, keep my opinion that sub-creation is made complete not by one sub-creator but by the hands of other people.

<sup>14</sup> It is worth remembering that the laws encourage cooperation. It hints that re-creation or enrichment by others exists in the ultimate creation.



should heal the readers so that they discover new aspects of their working days. Parish is surprised when he hears that the country which he and his neighbor have finished is “Niggle’s Picture” and says that he and his wife used to call it “Niggle’s Nonsense” because “it did not look like this then, not *real*” (115). Of course, the picture has become truly “real” now, but this “real” may include more sense than that. The shepherd answers him, “No, it was only a glimpse then, [...] but you might have caught the glimpse, if you had ever thought it worth while to try” (115). The thing sub-created has a glimpse of “reality,” or “real life,” even if it has flaws.

This story, however, betrays itself after all in the sense that Niggle’s picture does not have an actual connection to the real life, however much it values it. Niggle, the intermediary, goes on a journey and never returns. Similarly, the people (or the readers) may experience his picture, know some truths about their world and their God’s intention (the country serves as an introduction to heaven) and heal themselves, but they do not re-create their lives by their experiences.

Actually, in this story, Niggle’s country is not a mere Secondary world but part of God’s Primary world, so the people may not come back to their original (another) Primary world. How about the everyday life of the town then, which is also part of the Primary world? However much Niggle can manage time and work well, his labors do not have the same meaning as the life world any more since there is not the concept of time itself in the country indeed (the narrator says that he does not know how long the two neighbors go on living and working together). “Niggle’s Parish” is not connected, at least, to the everyday working-life town.<sup>15</sup>

There is hope in the ending without doubt. We, however, cannot help feeling some sense of limit as well because this hope is restricted to a narrow country. The Driver says to Niggle that his painting is “finished with, as far as you’re concerned, at any rate” (102). This means just that Niggle must go on his journey if he has regrets about his picture or not. It, meanwhile, reminds us of the nature of sub-creation that the things sub-created should be re-created by others in their own

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<sup>15</sup> That Niggle’s neighbor is named Parish (that is, a district) gives us a feeling that his country forms a limited district in a way, not opened to everybody in the town.

fashions. Niggle's picture, however, is burnt with the Museum, so it never can be re-created in the town. Atkins, who is beginning to catch a glimpse of the truth about his world which Niggle's picture provides, remains there shut out from its revelation. Tompkins, on the other hand, takes up Niggle's house in the suburbs as a villa, so work and recreation are completely divided without the midpoint such as Niggle, a sub-creator. Niggle, giving up this role, goes on a never-returning journey or never-ending holiday by train and his bicycle as he used to do between his house and the town.

"Leaf by Niggle" can be read as an allegory about creation. The way in which the painter completes his picture country shows us that creation needs the aspects of the double re(-)creations. The creation or sub-creation succeeds when it is re-created by others and also when it achieves recreation based on work. It is important for a sub-creator that his creation is connected to the everyday life. Niggle makes his creation complete at first sight and it forms hope in this story. There is resignation that sub-creation is never accomplished in the everyday world, however. Niggle never returns to the working-life world, so his creation actually lacks the view-point of working days, and the picture is never re-created in the town. Maybe this story is a mixture of the hope and sense of limit of a sub-creator.

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