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Sméagol Versus Gollum: The Bridge Between Fantasy and Reality

*Applying Jungian Psychology to Tolkien's The Lord
of the Rings*

Courtney Randall

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The Author and The Critics

J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* is a trilogy, preceded by the children's story, *The Hobbit*. The latter was intended for the author's children, but turned into more than he had planned with the release of the first book of *The Lord of the Rings* ten years after the end of World War II. It developed into "cult" literature that gained followers throughout the United States and Europe. This love of Middle Earth has clearly transcended time with Peter Jackson's film productions of the trilogy, the making of which spanned over the years 2001-2003. It may be the escapism that is offered in the world of Middle Earth that makes the literature so popular however, on the other hand, some critics deem Tolkien's work unscholarly *because* it is fantasy literature.

Before discussing criticism of *The Lord of the Rings*, the methods of criticism that Tolkien did not deem appropriate for his work must be addressed. In one of his letters addressed to a Deborah Webster on 25 October, 1958 Tolkien explains critics' biographical interpretation of his work and the detriments it causes. Tolkien writes, "...I also object to the contemporary trend in criticism, with its excessive interest in the details of the lives of authors and artists. They only distract attention from an author's works (if the works are in fact worthy of attention), and end, as one now often sees, in becoming the main interest" (Tolkien, Letters, 288). In other words, Tolkien did not want his critics and readers to scrutinize his work and try to connect it to the author simply as a way to analyze him as a person (Olsen, Tolkien's Secondary World). Looking for evidence of the author in their text draws attention away from the actual story being told,

which, in Tolkien's apparent opinion, negates the reason for reading the literary work in the first place.

The second lens of criticism that Tolkien particularly disliked for his work is allegorical. Professor Corey Olsen of Washington University in Maryland explains that all stories contain elements that are meant to strike the reader, but the interpretation of the reader is entirely subjective. In an allegorical piece of writing, the author intends to lead the reader to some particular point or message; in this case, Tolkien is responding to the widespread speculation that *The Lord of the Rings* was an allegory to World War II because of the time of its publication and the numerous parallels that may be drawn between orcs and war (Olsen). In his defense, Tolkien in the second addition of the trilogy states that the text is "neither allegorical nor topical" (Olsen). Here, Tolkien terminates the said connection between the plot of *The Lord of the Rings* with real-life events and acknowledges that the reader's interpretation should be entirely unique and outside the author's control (Olsen). This is not to say that Tolkien does not use allegorical elements; contrarily, Tolkien uses countless examples of symbolism (which will be discussed later) to intensify the reader's experience. He does not, however, consciously intend to send the reader a specific message or lead them to a specific conclusion through his writing.

The third and last method of criticism that should not be depended upon while reading *The Lord of the Rings* is the analysis of sources. Olsen states that Tolkien, as one of the world's best philologists and medievalists, experienced critics too readily looking for connections between plot points of his work with pieces of ancient literature, such as Beowulf or the

Kalevala, which Tolkien has worked with. Although many parallels may be drawn between *The Lord of the Rings* and other ancient books, readers must keep in mind that, like all other events and experiences in life, past influences may work themselves into present work. In his essay “On Fairy Stories” Tolkien explains that literature should be observed and judged as if it were a soup or a stew. As over-simplified as this analogy may seem, Tolkien further discusses that criticism should take into account all the parts that make up the whole (in other words, the components of the soup), but they must not be judged simply as the parts. In order to get the full taste of the soup, one must consider it as a whole (Tolkien, *Fairy Stories* 127). All the parts must be put together in order to create the full effect of taste, or in this case, of literary experience for the reader. Analyzing the sources that may have contributed to the whole draws attention away from the primary experience, as in biographical criticism, and should not be the primary mode of criticism of Tolkien’s work.

Additionally, Fantasy and fairy stories, according to Tolkien, are not limited to an audience predominantly made up of children. In his essay “On Fairy Stories” Tolkien explains that it is a result of our culture that children are associated with fairy tales because they are confined to the nursery. He then writes, “Children, as a class...neither like fairy-stories more, nor understand them better than adults do; and no more than they like many other things....But in fact only some children, and some adults, have any special taste for them...” (Tolkien, *Fairy Stories* 130). Tolkien subtly suggests that children may not comprehend fairy stories as anything more than stories and, more importantly, adults, who supposedly possess more logical and learned minds, have an understanding of the stories no better than the children for whom the

stories are created. In stating this, Tolkien explains that Fantasy as a genre should not be geared only towards children.

On the other hand, because of the association of children with fantasy, there have been difficulties with deeming Tolkien's work in *The Lord of the Rings* with literary merit or, more importantly, relevance to life today. One point of view states:

Nor does the fact that *The Lord of the Rings* and the domain of Middle-earth are eminently suitable for faddism and fannism, cultism and clubbism encourage scholarly activity. Tolkien's enormous current popularity itself acts as a deterrent to critical activity, as it has for other contemporary writers....The first reviewers were full of praise and awe but also full of contradiction and questions, particularly about genre and ultimate significance (Isaacs 1).

Tolkien's work has obviously been well received by his readers, but some scholars find difficulty in evaluating its literary content. Those of the Nobel Prize Jury maintain that fantasy literature (and Tolkien's work specifically) is lacking in quality. Dave Itzkoff of The New York Times reveals that Tolkien was nominated by friend C.S. Lewis for the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1961 for *The Lord of the Rings*. Tolkien was dismissed as a nominee because, in the words of the Jury "the result has not in any way measured up to storytelling of the highest quality" (Itzkoff). The winner (Ivo Andric), however, of the Nobel Prize that year was chosen for the "epic force with which he has traced themes and depicted human destinies" (Itzkoff). These same human destinies can, in fact, be found in Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*. They are not on the surface, but rather hidden in his characters. Frodo's destiny as ringbearer and Gollum's self-

actualization, which is much the same as this “human destiny,” can be found in Gollum’s death. Gollum’s fate is to die in Mount Doom and he takes the One Ring with him, thus saving Middle Earth from Sauron’s destruction.

Many critics who have studied J.R.R. Tolkien’s *The Lord of the Rings* have focused on these above methods of analysis and, in doing so, may not necessarily have reached the conclusions that Tolkien may have wanted based on the insight his letters provide. Instead, it is my goal to remove the attention from the author and replace it to his characters. The “most unlikely creature imaginable” to help reveal the significance and scholarly merit of *The Lord of the Rings* is Gollum, the one creature that is neither wholly good nor evil and seems to be an outlier in the larger scope of mystical creatures in Middle Earth. Gollum has a purpose, or a human destiny, not only in the outcome of the quest but in revealing why *The Lord of the Rings* is more than a simple fantasy. This purpose is obscure even to the other characters during the onset of the quest and even Gandalf exclaims to Frodo, “My heart tells me that he has some part to play yet, for good or ill, before the end” (Tolkien, *The Fellowship of the Ring*, 65). Through applying Jungian Psychology, it becomes evident that Gollum represents the Shadow archetype, or the repository of repressions. The Shadow is an embodiment of a person’s repressions which acts to both help the individual in order to obtain freedom from repression, and hinder the individual as a result of being repressed. In other words, Gollum wants the Ring and tries to help Sméagol obtain it, but simultaneously tortures Sméagol as punishment for trying to repress the Gollum personality.

Gollum also portrays the anima (masculine) and animus (feminine) sides of a human personality. According to Jungian psychology, every human must possess both of these and the anima and animus must be in relative balance in order to function as a whole. These aspects of the psyche is what makes Gollum's character so intriguing in comparison to the other fantastical creatures Tolkien creates and possesses the same human destiny that Ivo Andric is praised for. Gollum is unlike any other hobbit, man or dwarf, and it is the conflict presented in Gollum that connects Tolkien's fantasy to reality. Aside from providing an image of human internal conflicts at their worst, Gollum portrays these human destinies, emotions and internal conflicts in a seemingly inhuman character. We would not consider Gollum as a link between humanity and *The Lord of the Rings*, and this is one way that the trilogy is affected. But most importantly, Gollum provides a new interpretation of the end of *The Lord of the Rings*. It seems that Frodo and Sam are the heroes because they bring the Ring to Mount Doom, but Frodo, at the last minute, decides that he cannot let go of the Ring. If Gollum had not bitten the Ring off Frodo's finger, Middle Earth would not have been saved. The anima takes over Gollum's character and in his actualizing moment, Gollum becomes the hero of Middle Earth. Gollum's complexity and reflection of human emotions serves as the bridge between Middle Earth and our own realities, and provides a new interpretation of *The Lord of the Rings*.

Who was Sméagol and What is Gollum?

The creature the reader is introduced to as Gollum once had more in common with hobbits than anything else. In the Prologue of *The Hobbit*, Tolkien describes hobbits as creatures that "love peace and quiet and good tilled earth. They dislike machines, but they are

handy with tools. They are nimble but don't like to hurry. They have sharp ears and eyes...They like to laugh and eat (six meals a day) and drink. They like parties and they like to give and receive presents" (Tolkien, *The Hobbit*). Most hobbits like socializing and stay in the home and kitchen. In *The Hobbit*, Bilbo wishes multiple times during the company's misadventures throughout the novel that he was back in "his comfortable chair before the fire in his favorite sitting-room in his hobbit-hole, and of the kettle singing" (Tolkien, *The Hobbit*, 46). Frodo, Sam, Merry and Pippin are a few other concrete illustrations of Tolkien's original description; however, later in *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy, an outlier of hobbits is introduced.

In *The Fellowship of the Ring*, it is explained that Gollum begins as a "hobbit-like" creature called Sméagol, an effeminate and different hobbit from the Gladden Fields. He is unlike the rest of his hobbit kin because he prefers burrowing underneath trees to look at their roots and likes solitude (Tolkien, *The Fellowship of the Ring*, 57). Gandalf explains to Frodo that Sméagol's descent into what is commonly known as Gollum begins when Sméagol's friend, Déagol, finds the Ring while they are fishing together on Sméagol's birthday. Sméagol sees the Ring for the first time and covets it with such intensity that he strangles Déagol and takes the Ring for his own, calling it his "birthday present" (Robertson, *Tragic Failure*, 94). After he discovers that the magical Ring allows the wearer to be invisible, Sméagol uses the Ring toward thieving and is eventually cast out of the Stoors' society by his grandmother. Sméagol takes the Ring and wanders out into the wild, eventually taking refuge in the darkness of the Misty Mountains. Gandalf further explains:

One day it was very hot, and as he was bending over a pool, he felt a burning on the back of his head, and a dazzling light from the water pained his wet eyes. He wondered at it, for he had almost forgotten about the Sun. Then for the last time he looked up and shook his fist at her....The Ring went into the shadows with him, and even the maker, when his power had begun to grow again, could learn nothing of it (Tolkien, *The Fellowship of the Ring*, 59).

Sméagol is unwanted by the rest of the world, and is removed from it, thus causing the physical and mental transition into Gollum. He turns into an androgynous, sexually neutral creature in terms of physical characteristics with only remnants of the original hobbit-like creature (such as a love of riddles), and a new and more hostile, masculine personality. During the year 2470 of the third age, Gollum seeks refuge in the Misty Mountains and there, broods in the darkness alone with the Ring (Tolkien, *The Return of the King*, Appendix B, 406). When Bilbo first meets Gollum in *The Hobbit*, Tolkien describes Gollum as “dark as darkness, except for two big round pale eyes in his thin face” (Tolkien, *The Hobbit*, 71). Gollum is the opposite of the hobbit-like creature Sméagol, and certainly the opposite of Bilbo.

The differences between Sméagol and Gollum are further defined in *The Lord of the Rings* and are directly connected to how both personalities react to the One Ring. Sméagol, the less hostile and more optimistic of the two, is loyal to Master Frodo, loves and pursues the Ring, and wants to protect the Precious. As an aside, the very word ‘precious’ is a more effeminate word for ‘beloved,’ and is Gollum’s name for the Ring. This choice of word may be significant in that it subtly brings out the effeminate factor in Gollum. It may be more likely for a feminine

entity to use the word “precious” as a description. The Ring is precious to him and he cannot go on without it; he pursues the Ring to his death. More significantly, Gollum refers to himself as “Precious,” and often blurs the line between the Ring and himself. In doing this, Tolkien shows the reader that the Ring and Gollum are almost synonymous; because Gollum has had the Ring for so long in his possession, the two have become one. Gollum may also be referring to Sméagol in calling himself “Precious,” as well as calling the Ring “my precious” in other instances. For example, in *The Fellowship of the Ring* while talking to Frodo and Sam, Gollum says to himself, “What does it mean, Precious?” (Tolkien, *The Fellowship of the Ring*, 89), but in *The Two Towers* when he and Frodo agree that Gollum is to be their guide into Mordor, Gollum swears “on the Precious,” in reference to the Ring (Tolkien, *The Two Towers*, 157). Tolkien’s choice of this word is evidence of Sméagol as the gentler of the two personalities.

Furthermore, Sméagol emerges as separate from Gollum in *The Two Towers* when Frodo takes the elvish rope from around Gollum’s neck. It is plausible that Frodo’s sympathy for Gollum is what initiates this fleeting domination of the Sméagol part of the creature, and with the freedom that Frodo bestows upon him, Gollum transforms from the aggressor to the willing guide. Robert Robinson, an Oxford University graduate, illuminates that there is more depth to Gollum’s character when he states, “Some trace of the Hobbit inside has truly come to the surface following Frodo’s magical moment” (Robinson, *Tragic Failure*, 103). Although this transition for Sméagol as dominant over Gollum is only temporary, it does prove that there is still a reminiscent part of the hobbit in his character.

Gollum's personality, as created by Sauron's Ring, is not as complacent as Sméagol. Gollum is the antithesis of Sméagol in that he violently covets the Ring, tries to kill Frodo and Sam by taking them to Shelob's lair and plans to take the Ring for himself. Gollum does alternate between his loyalty to Frodo and his need for the Ring in his ongoing self-conflict, but his hostility and lust for the Ring overtakes him in the end. His last transition to Gollum from Sméagol occurs "when Gollum returned after making his bargain with Shelob, [and] saw Sam and Frodo asleep and for a moment 'the evil and malice died out of his face.' ...here 'is about to repent,' and Sam waking up spoiled his chance, but Gollum had no chance, 'because he'd been evil too long'" (Christopher & Bramlett 21). This is the last flicker of goodness in Gollum's character, and Sméagol is completely overthrown by Gollum and the Ring by this point.

Sauron Creates the Rings of Power and the One to Rule Them All

Sauron's One Ring and the evil will that is contained in it is what initiates Sméagol's descent into the character we know as Gollum. It is imperative to return to Tolkien's soup analogy and point out that Sauron, the One Ring and Gollum must be considered together as parts that make up a whole, which is Gollum. Without Sauron's will crafted into the Ring, Gollum may not have been created in the same way, if at all. Tolkien's *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* depict Sauron as the ultimate cruel and malicious being. By the time *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* occur, Morgoth (the original evil entity from the first Age) has been overthrown and Sauron, Morgoth's servant, has risen to power and seeks domination over Middle Earth. To do this, Sauron persuades Elven-smiths to forge the first Rings of Power during the Second Age C. 1500 (Tolkien, *The Return of the King*, Appendix B, 401). One thousand years

later, after the nineteen Rings of Power are distributed to Elves, Men and Dwarves, Sauron forges in secret the One Ring in Orodruin, Mount Doom, to rule the other Rings. In *The Fellowship of the Ring*, Gandalf explains to Frodo how the Rings of Power have come back to Sauron:

The Three, fairest of all, the Elf-lords hid from him, and his hand never touched them or sullied them. Seven the Dwarf-kings possessed, but three he has recovered, and the others the dragons have consumed. Nine he gave to Mortal Men, proud and great, and so ensnared them. Long ago they fell under the dominion of the One, and they became Ringwraiths, shadows under his great Shadow, his most terrible servants (Tolkien, *The Fellowship of the Ring*, 56).

Gandalf goes on to explain that the only Ring left to be found is the One controlling Ring, which Sauron makes for himself. If Sauron finds it, he will be able to control all the others no matter where they are in Middle Earth and Sauron will be more powerful than ever (56). This is the same Ring that falls in to Sméagol's hands and accentuates the darker aspects of his personality.

The Ring itself, although it was made with Sauron's malice inside it, possesses a will of its own. While it is governed by Sauron's power the Ring, while separated from its master, acts in order to find its way back to Sauron. Again, Gandalf explains that the Ring decides for itself when and where it wants to slip onto its bearer's finger or leave the bearer altogether. He states, "A Ring of Power looks after itself, Frodo. It may slip off treacherously, but its keeper never abandons it" (Tolkien, *The Fellowship of the Ring*, 60). His statement is proven when in

The Hobbit, the Ring slips onto Bilbo's finger during his flight from Gollum: "He put his left hand in his pocket. The ring felt very cold as it quietly slipped on to his groping forefinger" (Tolkien, *The Hobbit*, 83). Frodo also experiences the Ring slipping onto his finger of its own accord at the Prancing Pony in *The Fellowship of the Ring*: "How it came to be on his finger he could not tell. He could only suppose that he had been handling it in his pocket while he sang....For a moment he wondered if the Ring itself had not played him a trick; perhaps it had tried to reveal itself in response to some wish or command that was felt in the room" (Tolkien, *The Fellowship of the Ring*, 182). The Ring's intent is to make its way back to its maker and shows no allegiance to its bearer (Stanton 23).

In the case of Frodo throughout *The Lord of the Rings*, wearing the Ring enters the wearer into the realm of Shades, the same on which the Ringwraiths, or Nazgûl, walk in search of the Ring. Here, the Ring and bearer become visible to the Ringwraiths and Sauron himself and therefore easier to be found. It is in this way that the Ring betrays the bearer. Gandalf explains the will of the Ring and how it comes to Frodo's possession through such betrayals:

The Ring was trying to get back to its master. It has slipped from Isildur's hand and betrayed him; then when a chance came it caught poor Déagol, and he was murdered; and after that Gollum, and it had devoured him. It could make no further use of him: he was too small and mean; and as long as it stayed with him he would never leave his deep pool again. So now, when its master was awake once more and sending out his dark thought from Mirkwood, it abandoned Gollum (Tolkien, *The Fellowship of the Ring*, 61).

In order to make its way back to Sauron, the Ring chooses who wears and finds it. The Ring literally coerces its bearer into succumbing to its will, which is evident in Gollum with his arguments with Sméagol. The Gollum creature that we are introduced to has coerced Sméagol into succumbing to the darker desires of his character. Bilbo and Frodo, on the other hand, spend a relatively short time with the Ring which prevents their complete destruction under its power. Paul Kocher states, "Its method is the subtle one of gradually capturing the mind by radiating an incessant inflationary spell over whatever desires are dearest to it, however harmless or even noble they may seem....The Ring can work only by coercion of the will" (Kocher 61). Once in the bearer's possession, the Ring gains possession over the bearer. Although the Ring leaves Gollum in the caves of the Misty Mountains, its possession by Bilbo, however, is unexpected. The chain of events that follows in *The Hobbit* help determine the fates of Gollum and the Ring in *The Lord of the Rings*.

The ring bearers are influenced by Sauron because Sauron's evil will is in the Ring: Sauron's will is the initiation of Sméagol's split and ultimately turns him into Gollum and similar effects can be seen in Bilbo and Frodo. Gandalf explains to Frodo the physical effects of the Ring when explaining Gollum's history. Gollum never becomes unrecognizable from a hobbit, but men, however, become shadows under the control of the Ring. He states:

A mortal, Frodo, who keeps one of the Great Rings, does not die, but he does not grow or obtain more life, he merely continues, until at last every minute is a weariness. And if he often uses the Ring to make himself invisible, he *fades*: he becomes in the end invisible permanently, and walks in the twilight under the eye of the dark power that

rules the Rings. Yes, sooner or later – later, if he is strong or well-meaning to begin with, but neither strength nor good purpose will last – sooner or later the dark power will devour him (Tolkien, *The Fellowship of the Ring*, 51).

Here, Gandalf reveals the fate of Sauron's Ringwraiths, the Nine men that succumbed to the power of the One Ring, but Gollum never reaches this point. Because they are entirely mortal and, as stated previously, seeking power to begin with, they walk in the land of the Shades and become shades themselves. Sméagol, on the other hand, was too occupied with the darkness and solitude and therefore, only became Gollum.

Gollum, more importantly, has also been spared from becoming a Ringwraith-like entity because he began as a hobbit-like creature and originally lacked the desire or greed to control or dominate. Unlike men in the case of *The Lord of the Rings*, hobbits are content with what they have and do not care for adventures and least of all gaining power. Kocher explains, "The reason why Gollum has not succumbed completely is that as a hobbit he originally has lacked the lust to dominate others, deriving from Sauron himself, which the Ring is specially potent to implant and amplify. This is the same trait that makes Bilbo and Frodo so toughly resistant to its lure" (65). Again, Sméagol never desires anything but solitude in the Gladden Fields, but as he becomes Gollum he covets the Ring and nothing else. This change in desire becomes Gollum's defining obsession and it is all due to Sauron's will in the One Ring.

Connecting Gollum to Human Destiny

Gollum, as a creation of Sauron's Ring and second personality of Sméagol, serves as a bridge for the reader between the fantasy world that Tolkien has created and reality. The

constant conflict between Sméagol and Gollum, which we will discuss further, is a vast exaggeration of human internal conflict. Humans emote, desire, and covet and Gollum fulfills each of these in relation to the One Ring, but on a higher scale. Gollum's conflict is, in other words, an image to our own internal struggles, which makes Sméagol's transformation into Gollum plausible, however unlikely. The reader is able to understand and sympathize with Gollum even though he is an outcast of Middle Earth, and this theory may be a contribution to why *The Lord of the Rings* as a fantasy has become so popular.

To further explain Sméagol's switch into the Gollum character, Jungian Psychology proposes that *all* beings have both masculine and feminine parts, and a balance between the two must be found in order to function in life. It was Carl Jung's belief that there are masculine (anima) and feminine (animus) parts of all humans, and that part of our purpose is to find a balanced union or wholeness between the two (Mueller 74). The Ring accentuates this gender split in Sméagol, and his character presents both masculine and feminine halves (Sméagol versus Gollum) in conflict with each other. Gollum's anima lies in the personality of Gollum, and the animus, or feminine half, lies in Sméagol. The two opposing personalities in Gollum, exaggerated as they are, complete his character, yet their constant battle for domination of the creature himself shows an imbalance which cannot continue living in Middle Earth. For this reason, Gollum must die with the Ring. Gollum's expulsion from society and his fate in Mount Doom suggest that he cannot function any longer in Middle Earth due to this internal gender imbalance between his anima and animus. However amplified Gollum's internal torment is, the audience is still able to translate his hatred and love for the Ring as something personal on the

human plane, whether the relationship is with oneself, an object, or another person. An imbalance of the halves will lead to destruction.

More specifically, Gollum depicts the Jungian archetype called the Shadow. According to Jungian psychology, the shadow is the bearer, the repository (76) of repressions with “contrasexual” characteristics, or characteristics of the opposite gender (77). Professor Carl R. Mueller of UCLA explains, “The shadow operates in two ways: it desires to be freed from its repressed state and therefore tries to lead me out of these repressions by making me aware of them through dreams and it also, because it is made to suffer under my repressions, will fight against me, trying to undermine me for my actions against him. In effect, the shadow is ambivalent in its nature” (77). In different terms, the Shadow is an embodiment of the individual’s repressions which acts to both help the individual in order to obtain freedom from repression, and hinder the individual as a result of being repressed. When applied to Sméagol, Gollum is clearly the Shadow archetype in this character. Gollum is created as a result of bearing the Ring, and all Sméagol’s repressions are put into the Shadow, making Gollum a receptacle for all the emotions and conflicts Sméagol cannot handle. Their verbal arguments with each other reveal that Gollum pushes Sméagol to hurt Frodo and Sam in order to obtain the Ring for Sméagol/Gollum, but simultaneously Sméagol represses Gollum’s urge to do so because “Master Frodo” is nice to Sméagol (Tolkien, *The Two Towers*, 274).

In psychological terms (not strictly Jungian), Sméagol/Gollum also experiences individuation (or self-actualization). In observing Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs, it is evident that each human strives to reach self-actualization or transcendence which is at the top of the

pyramid. According to Jung, *all* humans also have a “myth” or higher purpose with which we are born and must discover ourselves (Robertson, Hero, 89). In *The Hobbit*, Gandalf makes a prediction that Gollum will find his “myth.” He says to Frodo, “I have not much hope that Gollum can be cured before he dies, but there is a chance of it. And he is bound up with the fate of the Ring. My heart tells me that he has some part to play yet, for good or ill, before the end; and when that comes, the pity of Bilbo may rule the fate of many – yours not least” (Tolkien, *The Fellowship of the Ring*, 65). Sméagol’s prolonged state in the Misty Mountains with the One Ring also contributes to his individuation. Jung argues that “we have to descend into that darkness, fight battles within....a person has to be alone if he is to find out what it is that supports him when he can no longer support himself” (Robertson, Hero, 89). During his 474 years alone with the Ring, Sméagol finds that it is the Ring that supports him (Tolkien, V, Appendix B).

Later in the trilogy, Sméagol does fail in repressing Gollum as a shadow when he chooses to “castrate” Frodo by biting off his finger as Frodo fails to throw the Ring into the fire at Mount Doom, but in so doing saves Middle Earth from Sauron’s domination. Gollum’s evil deed and death actually saves the world because it results in the destruction of the Ring. It is also important to state that Gollum’s decision to take the Ring from Frodo occurs in Frodo’s moment of weakness: Frodo cannot destroy the Ring and it can be argued that his anima dominates in choosing to keep the Ring, or his animus dominates because he no longer has the strength to fight against the Ring’s will. Instead, Gollum fulfills his destiny and, “though fated to fail personally, yet serves greater needs” (Robertson, Hero, 92). In the larger picture Gollum’s

conflict, individuation, and death after taking the Ring result in saving the world and fulfills Gandalf's original prediction.

Furthermore, observing Sméagol's transition into Gollum through more of a medical lens allows a deeper psychological understanding of the creature. A medical study conducted by Nadia Bashir and others in the British Medical Journal discuss two diagnoses for Tolkien's Gollum character. Bashir states that initially, Gollum's behavior may define a schizophrenic problem. She states, "On initial consideration, schizophrenia seems a reasonable diagnosis. However, in the context of the culture of the time it is unlikely Delusions are false, unshakeable beliefs, not in keeping with the patient's culture. In Middle Earth, the power of the ring is a reality" (Bashir, 1436). In other words, hallucinations and delusions characterize schizophrenia. The One Ring, on the other hand, influences Gollum, and his actions and behavior are manipulated by a tangible object rather than a delusion of the mind. In the Sméagol/Gollum case, both personalities occur together, are aware of each other and hold conversations together (1436). She explains, "Gollum displays pervasive maladaptive behavior that has been present since childhood with a persistent disease course. His odd interests and spiteful behavior have led to difficulty in forming friendships and have caused distress to others" (1436). After disproving Schizophrenia as a diagnosis for Gollum, Bashir concludes that he fulfills seven of the nine criteria for schizoid personality disorder (according to the ICD F60.1). Here, it must be pointed out that a *medical study* was conducted on a *fictional creature*, which is intriguing and unexpected.

Furthermore, Gollum is depicted numerous times throughout Tolkien's trilogy as having conversations with himself. In *The Two Towers*, he actually shows physical changes as he switches between his two personalities. Sam witnesses this change in Gollum, which is described as follows: "Gollum was talking to himself. Sméagol was holding a debate with some other thought that used the same voice but made it squeak and hiss. A pale light and a green light alternated in his eyes as he spoke" (Tolkien, *The Two Towers*, 267). This episode reinforces the diagnosis of Gollum as not schizophrenic and shows that there is a physical and tangible cause and change in his state. Robert Robinson, author of the Seven Paths series, clarifies Sméagol and Gollum's exchanges:

One person argues that he promised to obey Frodo. The other insists that their only loyalty is to the Ring, the Precious, and the Hobbits are taking it to Sauron. The first side says that he promised to obey the Master, meaning Frodo. The other side says if he had the Ring, he would be the Master. The first reminds him how kind Frodo has been, how he took away the Elven rope when he saw it hurt him, and always talks kindly to him. The other side says then don't hurt him, but get the Ring. And then he can make the nasty Hobbit Sam crawl before him. When the first side says again that they mustn't hurt Frodo, the second reminds him that Frodo is a Baggins, like Bilbo (Robinson, *Tragic Failure*, 106).

Here, an important point to be made is that the exchange between Sméagol and Gollum is more clearly defined as that between optimistic and pessimistic. Unlike Peter Jackson's films where these Sméagol and Gollum debates are mostly submissive versus dominant, Tolkien's

texts (especially *The Hobbit*) show an optimist/pessimist discussion between Sméagol and Gollum. In the chapter *Riddles in the Dark* of *The Hobbit* when Gollum has just discovered that Bilbo has the Ring, Gollum's discussion with Sméagol alternates between an optimistic view that the goblins will surely catch Bilbo before he reaches the back door, and the pessimistic view that if the Goblins find the Ring on Bilbo and discover the Ring's magical property (turning the wearer invisible), that would certainly be Gollum's end (Olsen, *At the Roots of the Mountain*). Although Gollum is portrayed later in *The Lord of the Rings* as having an evil and moral debate with Sméagol, the trilogy's predecessor depicts Gollum as slightly less malignant and uses optimism and pessimism as the foundation for his episode in *The Hobbit*.

The argument between Sméagol and Gollum in the Chapter "The Passage of the Marshes" is a perfect description of the imbalance of the anima and animus and the inner conflict of loyalty between the Ring and Frodo that Gollum's whole character endures. It also shows the difference between optimism and pessimism in terms of Sauron obtaining the Ring:

"...Still he's a Baggins, my precious, yes, a Baggins. A Baggins stole it. He found it and he said nothing, nothing. We hates Bagginses."

"No, not this Baggins."

"Yes, every Baggins. All peoples that keep the Precious. We must have it!"

But He'll see, He'll know. He'll take it from us!"

"He sees. He knows. He heard us make silly promises against His orders, yes. Must take it. The Wraiths are searching. Must take it."

"Not for Him!"

“No, sweet one. See, my precious; if we has it, then we can escape, even from Him, eh? Perhaps we grows very strong, stronger than Wraiths. Lord Sméagol? Gollum the Great? The Gollum! Eat fish every day, three times a day, fresh from the sea. Most Precious Gollum! Must have it. We wants it, we wants it, we wants it!” (Tolkien, *The Two Towers*, 267-269).

Sméagol speaks to defend Frodo Baggins and is fearful of Sauron. Gollum, on the other hand, is the forceful of the two, the anima, and is insistent on claiming the Ring for his own. More significantly, Gollum is both the Shadow and anima; he is the place in Sméagol’s mind where the deepest conflicts are stored, but is simultaneously the anima in which the Gollum personality arises to rebel against Sméagol.

Although Gollum as the Shadow works as the antithesis to Sméagol and works against the original hobbit-like creature to obtain what he wants, the Ring itself is also working towards an end. That end is to return to its master, whose evil power lies inside the Ring. The stimulus driving Gollum’s Shadow is the evil in the Ring; it works on Gollum as the Shadow in Gollum works on Sméagol. According to Wolfgang G. Wettach:

Evil must have someone or something to work upon; someone or something to corrupt, pervert, control, dominate and, in the process destroy....And there are two important aspects of evil - evil will and evil power. Evil will is the animus, the mental ingredient that considers the act of evil. It is totally corrupt, for it is of the mind and is ever present. Evil power is the ability to realize the desires of the evil will” (Wettach).

In this case, Gollum serves as evil will as well as the Shadow. The Ring’s will alters Gollum’s will (which was originally to seek solitude) and he covets the Ring. In the text, it seems that Sauron

puts both his evil will and power into the Ring, but the idea of his evil being both powerful and willful may be a parallel to Gollum's split character. Gandalf explains, "It is his, and he let a great part of his own former power pass into it, so that he could rule all the others" (Tolkien, *The Fellowship of the Ring*, 56). Sauron's evil will is to dominate all Middle Earth and his evil power is that with which he will control Middle Earth. Gollum's Shadow is Sméagol's evil will, ceaselessly searching for the Ring, and his evil power is directly connected to the Ring because, when considering Gollum alone, he and the Ring are tied. Both Gollum and the Ring are "Precious," thus making Gollum dependent on Sauron's power.

In order to fully understand the connection between Gollum, the Ring and Sauron, a sexual lens must also be applied to the Ring. In the section **Sauron Creates the Rings of Power and the One to Rule Them All**, the relationship between Sauron and the Ring as gender-symbolic was touched upon. To elaborate on the Ring's connection with Sauron and Gollum in this way, we must observe the sexual symbolism of the thing itself. The Ring is literally a feminine symbol; the infinite circular shape of the Ring is the opposite of a phallic symbol, symbolizing the woman's anatomy. The only beings that wear the One Ring in both *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* are male, thus portraying the symbolic act of a sexual relationship. When the Ring slips onto the bearer's finger, the wearer becomes invisible. This consequence is a parallel of sex between a man and a woman: the two beings are literally connected, one inside the other, mirroring the image of the ring on the wearer's finger. This is an example of Gilbert and Gubar's "analogous tensions between flesh and spirit;" (603) the Ring, in this case, symbolizes the masculine spirit embedded in the feminine, and the flesh is the masculine ring

bearer. The invisibility that results in putting the One Ring on the finger in *The Hobbit* is a metaphor of the blurring of the individual identity of the man and woman during sex while creating a union between the two.

The Ring as a Circle between Embodiment and Intent, and Fantasy and Reality

This Gollum/Sméagol creature can be considered the most complex character to arise in *The Lord of the Rings*. He possesses the darkest and most humanlike qualities, which may contribute to readers' fascination with him. The Ring, a physical and tangible object, has such a profound impact on Sméagol's psyche, and continues this torment of Gollum's mind as the trilogy progresses. But what is the significance of the Ring alone? Wettach later states that "To try to read too much into the Ring is a mistake" (Wettach). Whether or not Tolkien meant for the Ring to symbolize something other than a link between the evil and good world of Middle Earth is obscure, but the Ring is the physical embodiment of Sauron. Because Sauron does not have a body to himself, and is only depicted as the Great Eye atop a tower in Mordor, the reader may use the Ring as a physical substance of Sauron. Tolkien explains his meaning of the Ring further:

You cannot press the One Ring too hard, for it is, of course, a mythical feature, even though the world of the tales is conceived in more or less historical terms. The Ring of Sauron is only one of the various mythical treatments of the placing of one's life, or power, in some external object, which is thus exposed to capture or destruction with disastrous results to oneself. If I were to 'philosophise' this myth, or at least the Ring of Sauron, I should say it was a mythical way of representing the truth that potency (or

perhaps rather potentiality) if it is to be exercised, and produce results, has to be externalised and so as it were passes, to a greater or less degree, out of one's direct control. A man who wishes to exert 'power' must have subjects, who are not himself. But he then depends on them (Wettach 66).

Tolkien is discussing the significance of the Ring; Sauron has, in one sense, immortalized his will in the creation of the Ring, despite the fact that the Ring is destroyed. The destruction Sauron causes on Middle Earth results in the fall of the Third Age and the rise of man. Gollum, as ringbearer and possessor of this incarnation of Sauron, is directly affected. In a way, Gollum is the incarnation of Sméagol; Sméagol's darkest original character traits are enhanced while Gollum bears the Ring, and the personality that results becomes the Shadow of himself as Sméagol, forever changing his character.

The One Ring brings out all the negative aspects of Sméagol and enhances them. Instead of seeking solitude and burrowing under trees, Gollum spends his life alone with the Ring and dwells in the darkness far below the roots of the mountains. His solitude climaxes in forsaking the rest of the world, but the company of the Ring continues to destroy his mind and bind Gollum to its will. Gollum's split personality, the optimistic and pessimistic, the anima and animus, and the good and evil in him, are extremes of human emotions. His character exemplifies the same human destinies the Nobel Prize jury praised in Ivo Andric's work, on a deep psychological level. The complexity of Gollum's character allows for a counter argument to Wettach's belief that the significance of the Ring should not be contemplated. It is because of the Ring that Gollum's character develops, and the presence of these human destinies and

embellished human emotions may subsidize *The Lord of the Rings* becoming so popular. In Robert Robinson's words, "Within our own personalities, we often feel an opposition between our conscious personality, the person who we think we are, and our unconscious personality, which carries shadow qualities that we reject in ourselves" (Robinson, *Path of Opposites*, 277). Gollum's character portrays this same phenomenon in constant opposition between the masculine, pessimistic, evil anima and feminine, optimistic, good animus. All humans possess the anima and animus and aim to find a balance between the two, and Sméagol and Gollum continuously try and fail at finding a balance between them in the Gollum character. Gandalf is true in stating to Frodo that Gollum may serve some larger purpose in the story that remains unknown for most of the trilogy. It is possible that this purpose is to bridge the gap between Tolkien's fantasy and the fantasy world in general and our own lives in reality.

The admiration that *The Lord of the Rings* has earned since its publication may largely (but subtly) be due to Gollum's complex character. It is possible that Gollum, although he seems to be an extraneous and confusing character in *The Lord of the Rings*, is not so far removed from the psychology of Tolkien's audience. Tolkien's readers are able to relate to Gollum's push-pull relationship with himself and the hatred and internal struggle that he experiences with the Ring; it could be that we see reflections of ourselves in Gollum, albeit exaggerated, and find fear in seeing what we could potentially become if we let our desires, our Shadow, overtake us, or if we fail to find a balance between our anima and animus. Gollum's unhealthy obsession and preoccupation with the Ring ultimately destroys him, but simultaneously brings about his larger role in the trilogy in terms of the plot. Gollum's final

moment with the Ring is also his end; in other words, Gollum is reunited with the One Ring, but this reunion serves as Gollum's destruction and the final destruction of Sauron's will. Gollum may have been fated to die in order to bring about peace in Middle Earth. Gollum saves Middle Earth in his final act of desperation, and concurrently provides a link between fantasy, human destinies and fears.

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