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*The Character of Gollum in J.R.R. Tolkien's The Lord of the Rings*

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Čestné prohlášení

Prohlašuji, že jsem bakalářskou práci na téma “The character of Gollum in J.R.R. Tolkien’s *The Lord of the Rings*” vypracoval samostatně pod vedením doc. Mgr. Janky Kašćákové, Ph.D.s využitím pramenů, které jsou uvedeny v bibliografii.

V Olomouci dne .....

Podpis .....

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## Introduction

Tolkien's character of Gollum from both the trilogy of *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Hobbit* is a character like no other. He has captured the imagination of readers with his immensely complex persona and no-less complex character arc. From his introduction in *The Hobbit*, where he was just a Stoor-Hobbit, to his twisted, animalistic self of Gollum in the sequel of *The Lord of the Rings*. Gollum is a character, that has undergone perhaps the most complex metamorphosis out of all characters from Tolkien's fantasy universe. His character development, or rather transformation, is both physical and psychological. This transformation and the split between his former and current self are the interests of this analysis.

This thesis aims to closely study Gollum's character and journey in *The Lord of the Rings*. To aid this analysis, we will use multiple literary and psychological frameworks. Such works include concepts from E. M. Forster, Sean Glatch, Casey Lieb, Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung, and Joseph Campbell. These literary and psychological frameworks will serve to analyse Gollum and perhaps present him in a different light than he is typically. E.M. Forster's and Glatch's framework will serve to establish Gollum as a round and dynamic character. By using their theory, we will find out how complex and constantly evolving Gollum's character is. Freud's and Jung's concepts will help us to pinpoint the influences of Gollum and Sméagol and will help us differentiate between them more. These works will also help us to be able to psychologically evaluate him and perhaps relate to him more. By using Lieb's ideas, we will try to prove how Gollum can be seen as a hero in a certain way. His work focuses on unlikely heroes in literature, and he discussed some characters from *The Lord of the Rings* but didn't include Gollum, which we will do here. Lastly, by using Campbell's concept of a monomyth, we will investigate his path, which can be seen as heroic. Both of these frameworks will aim to prove how similar Gollum's story is to one of a hero and how he could perhaps be considered one.

By thoroughly analysing Gollum through these frameworks, we aim to arrive at a deeper understanding of Gollum's complex, nuanced character. This work will examine both internal and external forces shaping such a path and transformation. We will evaluate Sméagol's path through obstacles toward his redemption. Ultimately, this work will try to showcase Gollum's

complexity through both literary and psychological frameworks and perhaps present him in a completely different light than he normally is.

## 1. Round and Flat Characters

Forster in *Aspect of the Novel* writes about essential literary components, such as flat and round characters, which we will use to investigate Gollum's character. However, he talks about other tools that can cultivate interest in readers and keep the novel interesting and deep. Flat characters are usually constructed around a singular idea, characteristic or trait. They are easy to understand and can serve several roles for example as a comedic relief. Forster emphasises they are easily recognisable too. They don't surprise us. Forster proposes an idea that a flat character should be able to be described by a single idea or quality (Forster, 1927, p. 103-104).

Second type of characters Forster describes are round. Round characters are the exact opposite to flat ones. However, he still sees it still like a curve. Some characters can be very round, some can be very flat. Round characters therefore have multiple qualities. Forster proposes that a test to a roundness of a character is whether it can surprise us in a realistic way. If it doesn't surprise at all it is a flat character, if it is not convincing, it is flat, pretending to be round (Forster, 1927, p. 117).

This theory will prove useful to depict Gollum more accurately and to understand him better further on. We aim to prove that Gollum indeed is a round character in its fullest meaning. We will use Gollum's dual nature to prove his roundness.

The struggle between the often-nice hobbit-like creature, Sméagol, and his corrupt persona obsessed with the One Ring as an enslaved being named Gollum lies at the heart of this theme explored in *The Lord of The Rings'* narrative.

For studying this aspect, Forster's insights are crucially valuable. By utilizing concepts such as flatness and roundness, consistency, or inconsistency along with development or regression stemming from Foster's framework, I will evaluate how these attributes apply to unravelling Gollum's character arc.

The work *Aspects of the Novel* by Forster proposes a framework to understand complex character development. My thesis employs this approach to explore Smeagol's transformation into Gollum, highlighting his inner conflict that reflects Forster's duality concept. Through

exploring factors including the Ring's influence, isolation, relationship with Frodo, and destiny shaping his evolution, in-depth insights into Gollum's personality can be gained. In addition, this investigation will uncover literature-wide themes like metamorphosis and conflict, which are linked to fundamental human nature.

## 1.1 What Makes Gollum a Round Character

Forster believed that a character should be as complex as any living person, with the capacity for growth and change (Forster, 2002). Gollum is a prime example of this complexity. His transformation from Sméagol to Gollum is not just a physical alteration but a psychological journey that reflects his internal battle with greed and obsession. This journey is marked by moments of clarity, relapse, and something in-between, what Forster could argue is essential to the 'roundness' of the character.

Gollum's dialogue often reveals his internal conflict, as seen in his monologues, where Gollum and Sméagol go back and forth. These moments provide insight into his psyche and serve as a powerful narrative technique to showcase his divided self. For instance, when Gollum debates with his Sméagol persona, he says:

"Where iss it, where iss it: my Precious, my Precious? It's ours, it is, and we want it. The thieves, the thieves, the filthy little thieves. Where are they with my Precious? Curse them! We hate them." (Tolkien, 2008, p. 613)

This quote illustrates the possessiveness and paranoia that the Ring instills in him, highlighting the depth of his corruption. It also reflects Forster's idea that a character's speech can reveal their underlying traits and conflicts.

Another quote that helps us support the idea of inner conflict between Gollum and Sméagol could be when he was trying to attack Samwise and Frodo. In this quote, after being threatened by Frodo with his Sting to cut Gollum's neck, he says:

"Don't hurt us! Don't let them hurt us, precious! They won't hurt us, will they, nice little hobbitses? We didn't mean no harm, but they jumps on us like cats on poor mices, they did, precious. And we're so lonely, gollum. We'll be nice to them, very nice, if they'll be nice to us, won't we, yes, yess." (Tolkien, 2008, p. 614,)

Here, we can see the split personality, especially when Gollum is referring to himself as "us" and "we." This happens multiple times throughout the story.

The last quote will be one that supports the idea that Sméagol is the good part. The first one was his evil side, Gollum, the second one highlighted his split personality and even his considering himself as two personas rather than one. The quote comes from the passage of the marshes, where they are passing through the remains of the old battlefield where Humans, Elves, and Orcs fought a hard battle, and many lives were lost. Sméagol warns hobbits about the lights and how dangerous they can be; however, Frodo, who is lagging behind, doesn't hear him and almost loses his mind; luckily, Samwise listens and, therefore, warns Frodo and helps him.

"But slowly, very slowly. Very carefully! Or hobbits go down to join the Dead ones and light little candles. Follow Sméagol! Don't look at lights!" (Tolkien, 2008, p. 628)

This quote contrasts the others by how unselfish it is. Sméagol here seems to care about the well-being of the hobbits. It would probably be possible to get rid of them here and claim the Ring for himself. However, he decided to help them instead and guide them through such a dangerous area safely. This sharply contrasts with his intentions as Gollum, especially since he refers to himself as Sméagol here, which often means that he is the nice and kind remnant of the hobbit he was.

The first and the last quotes almost directly contradict one another, whereas, in the first, Gollum is the one speaking and wanting the One Ring for himself, even referring to Samwise and Frodo as thieves and saying he hates them. In the second one, however, he refers to himself as "us" and "we," which supports the argument that split personalities are two different entities. All of this happening in a span of just 15 pages makes the dynamic even more fast-paced and stronger. His unpredictable nature keeps readers on edge, wondering whether he will aid or hinder Frodo's quest. This unpredictability exists throughout the whole story, but the quotes highlight his switching between personalities and their being able to even coexist at the same time.

Forster also discusses the importance of a character's relationship with other characters. And how they are supposed to be dynamic (Forster, 1927). Gollum's interactions with Frodo and Sam are complex and layered, oscillating between hostility, servitude, and camaraderie. This is

evident when Gollum leads the hobbits through the Dead Marshes, showing moments of genuine guidance.

In conclusion, Gollum's character is a rich tapestry of contradictions, internal conflicts, and interactions with others that align with Forster's principles of character development. His evolution throughout the narrative from Smeagol to Gollum and his ultimate fate is a testament to the power of complex character construction in literature. All of this can surely make him a round character.

## 2 Dynamic and Static Characters

Glatch in his article provides a divides character into two types. Dynamic characters can be understood as characters that evolve or change throughout the story, while static characters don't. He argues that even though other categorizations of characters exist, his one centers around character development, which is crucial for good literature. There are multiple ways in which the characters can change. Some of the characters Glatch uses to highlight his concept are Shakespeare's Prince Hamlet or Jack from *Lord of the Flies*. These two can be considered dynamic due to both characters undergoing significant change throughout the story.

The two examples for static characters are Mercutio from *Romeo and Juliet* and Jay Gatsby from *The Great Gatsby*. Neither of these characters undergo significant change or any change at all. Their qualities served in their respective stories the same role from the beginning until the end.

“Dynamic character definition: a character who changes as a result of the story's conflicts and plot.” (Glatch, 2021)

He argues that every story should have mostly static character due to the difficulty of making character dynamic. One of the reasons he proposes is that it would take many arcs for each character to be dynamic. He understands that all characters play a certain role even if they are static or dynamic (Glatch, 2021).

Using his work as a reference, I will illustrate how Gollum's internal conflict, narrative progression, and external factors contribute to his evolution. I aim to examine which aspects demonstrate Gollum's shift resulting from his history that makes him an excellent example of a dynamic figure in J.R.R. Tolkien's brilliant saga and also trilogy, *The Lord Of The Rings*. This analysis explores the changes in Gollum's persona from a regular hobbit-like creature living with family and friends to becoming evil and traitorous before concluding pitiful yet redeemed. The path of this transformation is intricately influenced by various aspects such as obsession for the One Ring, detachment from society, and association with Frodo and Sam, among other key factors that lead up to their mission completion. By delving into these components comprehensively, it is evident that Gollum yields great merit in embodying what constitutes dynamic characters who are undergoing complex character development over time.



## 2.1 What Makes Gollum a Dynamic Character

In the opening of *The Hobbit*, Gollum - or back then rather Sméagol, as he used to be called, entices readers with his saddening transformation from a harmless hobbit to a wretched creature called Gollum. This span of many years throughout Tolkien's saga encompasses a character development that is not only dynamic but also vivid. Created from various external and internal factors, Gollum is the character who has undergone perhaps the biggest change out of all characters in Tolkien's universe.

The focal event in Sméagol's downhill transformation involved stealing the Ring from his cousin, Déagol, and killing him in the process. It was at this moment that the Ring began an evil transformation of his soul, or the Ring perhaps had already begun the transformation even before by influencing Sméagol to take it from Déagol, leading him down a path to the dark side. Its influence from within had already been discerned as his personality fragmented, represented by debates between his two characters, Gollum and Sméagol. Under the influence of the precious Ring, the two sides fell into a constant battle. The first was Sméagol's past self, battling with the shameful and corrupted present. It is well possible, that Sméagol was never truly great person and the Ring only amplified his urges, but it is still up to debate.

Once he is exiled from his community and forced to live in a cave in the Misty Mountains, Gollum's mental condition becomes fatal since the Ring controls him and his actions, both dark and evil. When he experiences first-hand the exile by his community, he eventually falls into the absolute worship of the Ring, with it forming his only absolute goal as the reason for his existence. The darkness of great ages over the centuries starts with his face starting to have skeletal features, which merge with his destroyed mind. Free from any connection that links to the world of light and regularity, Gollum starts to behave like a wild animal by becoming increasingly untrustworthy and suspicious. Even his eating attitude shifts as he doesn't even bother to cook his fish anymore, but his often depicted consumption of fish can also be seen as a remnant of his former Stoor self since they were known for their fishing.

His interactions with Frodo and Sam, however, reawakened his old self. Sometimes, Sméagol's qualities are seen as those of thoughtful acts, such as kindness out of loneliness, rather than being altruistic. During the quest, there were moments where the hobbits felt empathetic

towards Gollum. It is no surprise that they would feel such a way, especially Frodo, who during that time shared the fate of carrying the Ring just like Gollum had in the past.

Accompanying Frodo and Sam on their journey to Mordor, Gollum reaches the pinnacle of complexity in his human relationships. His soul yearns for repentance and betterment of himself, but the temptation to turn against the good parts persists. As Smeagol observes Frodo more closely, the Ring takes a stronger hold on him. Despite all the temptations, he continues to strengthen his grip as his true nature emerges before him. There are parts of the story, however, where temptations are stronger and Gollum "takes over," as we can see in this example:

"He doesn't know what we minds, does he, precious? No, he doesn't. But Sme'agol can bear things. Yes. He's been through. O yes, right through. It's the only way." (Tolkien, 2008 p. 717)

This inner conversation takes place when Gollum leads Frodo and Sam into Shelob's Lair, trying to get rid of them and claim the Ring for himself.

At Cracks of Doom, the climax occurs when he bites off Frodo's finger to claim the Ring for himself. Then during celebration of that he trips and falls along with the Ring. This ultimately destroys the Ring, kills him while also freeing him from the Ring and last but not least, saves Middle Earth. Through the unintentional self-sacrificing act of destroying the Ring, redemption is achieved, leading to peace after generations of battles fighting evil. Gollum's bittersweet ending is a redeeming factor because, finally, in performing the duty of defeating ultimate evil, he can obtain nuanced absolution, even though it might not have been intentional.

This chapter will conclude using the framework from Glatch's (2021) article, where he shortly analyses the character traits of a character at the beginning and the end of the story. However, since Gollum's transformation is not as straight, we will rather consider the proportions of Sméagol's involvement before and after he joins Frodo's and Sam's journey (Glatch, 2021).

In the beginning, Gollum was isolated and feral. He acted like an animal treasuring the Ring. He was not trustful towards anybody and willing to resort to violence. His sole intention was to treasure the Ring and keep it. Nothing else really piqued his interest that much. During this



time, he could be considered static. Even after losing the Ring, he was obsessed solely with getting hold of it again.

However, after joining Frodo and Sam, his character became much more nuanced and complex. His desire for the Ring was everlasting, however there were many more characteristics that resurfaced by their influence. The focal characteristic was his conflict between his former self, Sméagol, and Ring-obsessed Gollum. On multiple occasions, these two personas clashed, creating incredibly unpredictable and complex character. The underlying theme throughout Tolkien's saga was also redemption. This theme was one of the main themes of Gollum specifically. Despite his deeds as Gollum, Sméagol showed moments of redemption in the story. His help was focal and could be considered as one of the few most important figures in completing the ultimate quest of destroying the One Ring, ironically to Gollum's obsession with it. He could be considered a tragic figure for him being so strongly torn inside between getting the Ring, his yearning for freedom from its corruption, and his desire to be redeemed. In the ultimate end at the Cracks of Doom, Gollum serves perhaps the most important role unintentionally, when after biting the Ring off Frodo's finger, he trips and falls into the lava where he's figuratively released from his chains of the Ring while also keeping it and being redeemed by him doing something nobody before him could. This ending alone is so complex it could make him a dynamic character by itself, even if it was not intentional. And all of this is what makes Gollum a dynamic character.

### **3 Unlikely Hero**

In his article "Unlikely Heroes and their Role in Fantasy Literature," Casey Lieb (2004) explores unconventional heroes within the genre. Rather than conforming to traditional heroic ideals, these characters possess flaws or are even antagonists but end up serving as impactful protagonists. Lieb argues that while a traditional hero like a Knight embodies traits like bravery, loyalty, strength, selflessness, and valuing the common good, unlikely heroes bring realism, diversity, and complexity to tales such as Lord of The Rings with examples from Aragorn, Frodo, Samwise, and Éowyn, who do not fit into typical hero checkboxes yet remain vitally important in challenging reader expectations (Lieb, 2004).

This thesis aims to argue that Gollum can be viewed as an unlikely hero, much like the examples provided by the author. The thesis will explore Gollum's unconventional characteristics and his role as a heroic figure who defies expectations. Although not purely good or evil, he is a tragic character driven by his dependence on the One Ring. His weakly hobbit lineage makes him even more improbable as a hero; however, it is ultimately through his actions that Middle-earth is saved when he destroys the Ring. Using Lieb's article for support, this analysis will focus on how Gollum's unexpected heroism drives the narrative toward its ultimate quest completion and assists Frodo in achieving their goal. We'll examine key moments, such as leading Frodo and Sam to Mordor or biting off Frodo's finger, to demonstrate why these actions are essential for both plot development and thematic resonance. Through scrutinizing Gollum's critical involvement in defeating Sauron, this study intends to establish him as an unprecedented example of the concept of an "Unlikely Hero."

#### **3.1 What Makes Gollum an Unlikely Hero**

Through Casey Lieb's analysis, it is apparent Gollum could not be considered a traditional knight-like hero. However, he also shows many heroic qualities in multiple parts of the story. Though he may have an evil nature, he is still one of the most important characters who helped destroy the One Ring to protect Middle Earth.

Gollum doesn't resemble a knight at all. He's not loyal or courageous, and he doesn't commit selfless acts. His stature and looks do not look virtuous or heroic, but rather the opposite. He

can hardly be considered brave, and he is truly selfish. However, he cannot be called a villain in its full meaning, either. He is showing some of these traits throughout the story, even if every so often. This imbalance is created mainly by his two conflicting personas of Gollum and Sméagol, where Sméagol could fit into the role of a hero much better, while Gollum could be considered a purely evil villain. And this is the interesting dynamic Gollum has that can make him an even better example of an unlikely hero than the other mentioned characters.

Gollum displays unforeseen courage when he exhibits the unusual trait of helping Frodo and Sam in reaching Mordor. Despite his tricky nature and inner confusion, Gollum proves himself to be a great navigator who understands the ominous paths leading to the deadly Mount Doom. His navigation skills prove to be vital when it comes to going forward without being detected by Sauron's enemy troops, therefore propelling them closer to their target, the destruction of the One Ring.

It is Gollum's heroic nature, seeking redemption, that we witness when he's helping Frodo and Sam by guiding them to Mordor to destroy the Ring. His obsession with the Ring pushes him to trying to stop them from doing so multiple times and even to biting off Frodo's finger, which seems to be selfish from the outside. This action causes the Ring to eventually be destroyed when Gollum is overwhelmed by his happiness over reclaiming it and, after tripping, falls into the lava of Mount Doom, causing it to be destroyed. Here, the idea of the doomed hero comes to confirm his tragic character development through selfless heroism, where he unintentionally sacrifices himself in order to save Middle Earth.

Throughout the course of the story, Gollum engages in a complex circle of emotions and motives that leads him to an atypical hero persona. His rageful agitation in moments of interaction with Samwise Gamgee symbolizes the battle between his urge to gain complete possession of the Ring and the seconds of regret that hit him. Although Gollum serves as a mere guide and often hinders them, he is still involved in their adventure, and he is a clear example that heroism comes in many ways and that there is room for change for everyone to be saved.

To summarize, Gollum from 'The Lord of the Rings' fits Casey Lieb's unlikely hero framework. Through his actions, struggles, and unintentional selfless acts, he develops into an essential character in terms of the norms of the traditional hero and helps the story reach its climax.

## 4 Freud's "Id, superego, and ego."

In his works, Freud adopted that the behavior has different points in the perspective of psychological forces. What he adds is that people's choice is not determined by a single principle or motivation but along as many lines, both the conscious and the unconscious ones being not less important and beyond our control. Freud splits these wishes and motives into three categories: the superego, the id, and the ego. These categories, however, are just theoretical sections that do not exist in the mental structure but rather represent different personality traits.

The id is the part of our mind that is unconscious and which houses the most basic and the most extreme animal impulses - thirst, hunger, and aggression. The unrefined and unorganized wishes of the id come from the primeval part of the psyche. They are our most confused desires, which we could never carry out because of the absence of such upbringing and values in our lives. The id follows the pleasure principle which aims at a satisfaction of the needs and desires, even against the possible consequences.

The superego, in contrast, is the exact antipole of the id to some extent. The superego is that part of the mind that is the embodiment of the moral standards and ideals that are passed as inheritance from our environment, primarily by our parents and society. The superego can be split into two parts: first is our conscience, which is our guide about what is right and wrong, and the other is our ego ideal, which tells us what we are going to ideally be. The superego functions on the principle of morality, which alludes to ethical values and morals. Superego wish can be represented by a person who wishes to be fair, generous, and charitable. The superego emerges during childhood and can be changed by external factors like upbringing, education, and religion.

The ego is the highest and most rational of the three central elements of our mind. Other times, its function is that of a compromise between the superego and the id. The ego represents the operation of the mind between the conflicting demands of the id, the superego, and the external reality. The reality principle works for the ego, which is derived from the id's desires and fulfills them in a realistic and socially acceptable way. A wish for the ego may appear in the form of a person wanting to eat a healthy meal while still having a dessert. This ego is developed during early childhood and functions as a leader of the personality (McLeod, 2024).

These concepts will help in the analysis of the behavior of Gollum, one of the most complex and intriguing characters in J.R.R. Tolkien's "The Lord of the Rings" series. This thesis will use mostly the id and the superego. This work aims to pinpoint and examine moments where superego was the primary decision maker, therefore it was majorly Sméagol's moral decision. At the same time it aims to do the same with id, where it was majorly Gollum's ill intention. This conflict is ever-present throughout the story, and this work will explore and analyze it. Some of the major points of examination will be moments of id's or superego's dominance and reasons behind such behavior, and at the end of this chapter, this thesis will provide a summary of the character's actions in the scope of Freud's theory of parts of our psyche.

## **4.1 Gollum, Sméagol and Their Conflict**

Using Freud's concept, we will split Gollum's persona into three parts. We will consider Gollum to be the id because he's the one making the evil decisions, obsessed with the Ring, and trying to reclaim it. We will consider Sméagol to be the superego because he's the one seeking out redemption, suppressing Gollum, and trying to help Frodo and Sam. With this, we can consider the ego to be his overall actions throughout the story. These compromises were made by either Gollum or Sméagol. We will not elaborate on that as much as on the id and superego since we are mainly trying to highlight the vast differences between his Gollum and Sméagol personas. There are many traits that are more or less exclusive to each persona, and those will guide us in the differentiation between the personas.

### **4.1.1 Obsession with the Ring**

Gollum's absolute determination to regain the One Ring exemplifies the power of his id. The Ring becomes an overwhelming obsession, ignoring any rational thought or consideration, completely stripping away his former self, Sméagol. Gollum's existence revolves around this precious artifact, and he will stop at nothing to reclaim it. We can see this as a rather outside source as even Bilbo refers to the Ring in a similar manner.

"It is mine, I tell you. My own. My Precious. Yes, my Precious." (Tolkien, 2008, p.33)



We can easily point out the similarity between Bilbo's line and Gollum's line by just putting them side by side.

"Where iss it, where iss it: my Precious, my Precious? It's ours, it is, and we wants it." (Tolkien, 2008, p. 613)

Both of these quotes portray obsession with the Ring and show its bad influence. This is a great example to showcase the id. However, it could also be a factor in considering how bad Gollum was; since most of his actions were motivated by this influence, it definitely adds layers and complexity to his character, which is what this paper is showcasing.

#### **4.1.2 Aggression and Violence**

There are many instances where Gollum's behavior could be interpreted as aggressive or violent. Such examples could be his attacks against Sam, where he often rightfully sees him as a threat to either his relationship with Frodo or as an obstacle to reclaiming the Ring. He often debates about his murderous intentions; there are parts in the story where he thinks about killing both Frodo and Sam, but luckily to the fate of Middle Earth, he never does. During these moments, he was often in direct clash with Sméagol, who didn't want to commit such atrocity. The best example, however, could be his final attack on Frodo in an attempt to claim the Ring for himself before it is destroyed. Gollum's aggression is a manifestation of his id, unaccompanied by reason or empathy.

#### **4.1.3 Selfishness and Greed**

His selfishness and greed can be highlighted through his deceptive actions, for example, when he lures Frodo and Sam to the lair of Shelob in an attempt to regain the Ring for himself, which is eventually unsuccessful. His overall lust for the Ring to be in his possession is an everlasting theme throughout the entire story, even at the story climax, where he ultimately bites off Frodo's finger to claim the Ring for himself, even a few moments after, when he topples over and falls into the lava, finally having the One Ring for himself.

Now, we can move on to the superego, in which we will primarily consider Sméagol's involvement. The traits we considered here are his internal struggle, along with his kindness, empathy, and self-loathing.

#### **4.1.4 Internal Struggle**

Inside Sméagol's mind, the superego wages war against his nefarious id tendencies. This internal conflict is embodied by His superego as a manifestation of morality, guilt, and introspection. By acknowledging the moral implications of his actions, Sméagol becomes embroiled in an intense mental struggle that centers around confronting past misdeeds and grappling with feelings of remorse. The pinnacle expression of this turmoil can be seen here:

"Sméagol promised,' said the first thought. 'Yes, yes, my precious,' came the answer, 'we promised: to save our Precious, not to let Him have it – never. But it's going to Him, yes, nearer every step. What's the hobbit going to do with it, we wonders, yes we wonders.' 'I don't know. I can't help it. Master's got it. Sméagol promised to help the master.' 'Yes, yes, to help the master: the master of the Precious. But if we was master, then we could help ourselves, yes, and still keep promises.' 'But Sméagol said he would be very, very good. Nice hobbit! He took cruel rope off Sméagol's leg. He speaks nicely to me.' 'Very very good, eh, my precious? Let's be good, good as fish, sweet one, but to ourselves. Not hurt the nice hobbit, of course, no, no.' 'But the Precious holds the promise,' the voice of Sméagol objected." (Tolkien, 2008, p. 632-633)

This is the conversation that Sam overheard. It is longer, but this much would be enough for our purposes to showcase the struggle between balancing these two personas. In this quote, Gollum is considering taking the Ring for himself, while Sméagol, who we consider as superego, is trying to stop him here.

#### **4.1.5 Kindness and Empathy**

Despite his struggles, Sméagol retains a flicker of compassion. His superego-driven behavior emerges when he shows kindness and empathy toward Frodo and Sam. Guiding them through the treacherous Dead Marshes, he warns them about the dangers ahead. Sméagol's superego tempers the darkness within him.

#### 4.1.6 Self-Loathing

One of the aspects, considerable as Freud's superego, of Gollum's character is his intense self-loathing that roots in the conflict between his two almost opposite personas. This turmoil becomes visible as he struggles with internal conflict and constantly battles between these personas, always aware of how deeply corrupted he has become under the influence of the One Ring. Using derogatory terms to describe himself while agonizing over past mistakes only exacerbates this sense of guilt and shame. Despite such dark impulses, however, there are moments when Gollum displays vulnerability alongside a desire for redemption and acceptance, seeking validation, in particular from Frodo, to rekindle some lost spark within him. Such tension brought about by an inner battle adds complexity to his persona and informs many actions or interactions throughout much larger story arcs. Following such examples works well for both the "Kindness and Empathy" and "Self-Loathing" characteristics of Gollum's superego.

"Yess, wretched we are, precious,' he whined. 'Misery misery! Hobbits won't kill us, nice hobbits.' 'No, we won't,' said Frodo. 'But we won't let you go, either. You're full of wickedness and mischief, Gollum. You will have to come with us, that's all, while we keep an eye on you. But you must help us if you can. One good turn deserves another.' 'Yess, yes indeed,' said Gollum sitting up. 'Nice hobbits! We will come with them. Find them safe paths in the dark; yes, we will. And where are they going in these cold hard lands, we wonder, yes we wonders?" (Tolkien, 2008, p. 615)

Using Freud's model, we were able to analyse Gollum's personality. We portrayed the id as representing his obsession with reclaiming the One Ring. This obsession pushes him to act immorally and cruelly. We showcased the main aspects of aggression, violence, selfishness, and greed to support our claim.

Sméagol, on the other hand, showcases the superego. The battle against the negative impulses of his id could be considered the main characteristic of it. This inner conflict is characterized by traits such as internal struggle, kindness and empathy, and self-loathing. Despite Gollum's evil nature, Sméagol remains capable of genuine compassion and regret towards Frodo and Sam even amidst ongoing struggles with remorseful feelings.

Lastly, ego can be viewed as the final compromise between Sméagol and Gollum. These inner conversations and conflicts can be seen often throughout the story and shape him as a character and change the pace and path of the story.





## 5 Jungian Archetypes

Jungian archetypes are a theory popularized by analytic psychology's co-founder, Carl Jung, who is widely known as one of the pioneers of analytical psychology. They are motives, ideas, or patterns becoming understandable from the depths of the collective unconscious, which is a universal layer of the human mind where the ancestors' knowledge is stored. Thus, these archetypes get planted deep in our minds and manifest the extended patterns of culture, thought, and emotions across antiquity and culture. Just as for Jung, the concept of pre-natal archetypes does not rest on the notion of learning these in the course of mere life experience. Each archetype illustrates a specific branch of behavior, which is determined by a particular theme, role, or symbol. They turn out to be the archetypes, assigned either on the personal or collective level, which in turn affects the way we look at the world around us, interact with people, behave in society, and make decisions. Nevertheless, these archetypes are not, by nature, static types but rather adaptable and modifiable to suit particular circumstances for a whole lifetime. However, one person can have many archetypes, depending on the circumstances, situations or stages of life through which they might be going through. These archetypes can be transformed or altered with time (Main, 2023).

Although this might be an old psychological perspective, using it would be helpful to introduce the character Gollum and examine his character more accurately. Different archetypal forces influence Gollum's character. The figure of Gollum fits into multiple different traits that encompass different archetypes. The major archetypes that will be referenced to analyze Gollum's stance are the shadow, the trickster, the wounded healer, and the outcast. These terms are not exclusive, and Gollum manifests multiple attributes of each archetype simultaneously. This multi-sided and many-faced creature is accompanied by various archetypes of character that are used to characterize him as a person.

**"The Shadow"** is the personification of the inner depths of human nature that are the obscure, harmful, or rejected parts of us that we are afraid of or do not want to deal with. The shadow here is the embodiment of the bad emotions, urges, and inclinations that we condemn and distance ourselves from, really, in terms of our conscious values and morals. It can also repress the positive qualities that we refuse to accept or that we have ignored, such as imagination, spontaneity, and the ability to courageously take a stand. The dark side can bring trouble, fear, and shame into your life or may, at the same time, provide you an opportunity to grow, learn,

and eventually overcome these difficulties. Gollum's shadow is symbolized by the power of the One Ring that takes over his mind and body, thereby bringing it to ruin and making him do vicious acts. Additionally, Gollum's shadow not only reflects the lost Sméagol, who symbolizes innocence, sympathy, and humanity Gollum has lost but also exhibits the opposite of what he was (Feccomandi, 2023).

**"The Trickster"** is used to denote the lascivious, mischievous, or covert aspects of ourselves that spur the change or rule-altering. Frequently, the trickster entertains himself with mirth, irony, or deceit to bring about a mess, a muddle, or a change in the system. Through the trickster transformation, we face the potential disruption, chaos, danger, and new ideas, innovations, and freedom. Trickery is the main element of Gollum's personality, which is revealed in his skill to survive in diverse conditions, tendencies for adapting to situations, and use of riddles, tales and tricks involving manipulation of others. In the same manner, Sméagol's being a prankster helps him both to come to terms with his loneliness, pain, and guilt and to express his curiosity, intelligence, and wit. This archetype, however, lacks ground a bit compared to the others (Feccomandi, 2023).

**"The Wounded Healer"** is the term used to demonstrate our compassionate, empathetic, or healing instincts that are born out of injury and suffering. The wounded healer commonly weaves their vulnerability or experience of hardships, pain, or loss into healing other people who encounter such experiences, too. Because the ideals of the wounded healer can lay not only the road to wisdom and support that the hero needs but also the open road to insecurity and self-sacrifice. A wounded healer shows itself in Gollum's attached affection to Frodo, whom he sees as his equal fellow in burden, and he often tries to do something good to help Frodo. Presumably, Gollum's damaged older self, which is near death, is also able to be healed either to obtain redemption, absolution, peace, or his capability for recovery (Mehta, 2024).

**"The Outcast"** is the figure who embodies all the repressed, cast aside, or dispossessed elements of ourselves that do not have a place in the society or group that is acceptable and fitting according to its mainstream culture. The alienated outcast may feel like an oddity, outsider, or even persecuted by others, which often culminates into such feelings as resentment, violation, or even revolt. The outcast could be an originator of lonesomeness and desolation. Gollum's outcast is pronounced in his condition as an outsider whom most of the characters of the story hate that he himself lives in Middle-Earth's dark and gloomy wilderness. While he

stands separate from the others, Gollum demonstrates that he is resilient and resourceful and that he is also a great example of not conforming to the rules and traditions. Living alone, not bothered by anything besides the Ring, portrays him greatly as an outcast (Allen, 2005).

## **5.1 Gollum, Sméagol and Their Archetypes**

To demonstrate the impact of Jungian archetypes on the character of Gollum, we will delve into archetypes of the shadow, the trickster, the wounded healer, and the outcast. Through this, we will see how each of these archetypes fits into Gollum's complex persona. These archetypes mostly fit only one persona between Gollum and Sméagol. However, that is what adds layers and complexity to his character and helps us to better understand the duality of his character and possible excuses for his actions.

### **5.1.1 The Shadow**

Gollum's alignment with the Shadow archetype is evident through his relentless fixation on the One Ring. The Ring symbolizes authority and corruption, exerting a malevolent influence over Gollum that slowly deteriorates his sanity while transforming him into an entity consumed by desire. It exemplifies Gollum's restrained impulses of darkness, intensifying his envy and greed, as well as possessiveness, which forces him to commit unspeakable atrocities just to obtain it. The internal struggle between longing for the Ring, and retaining humanity represented by Sméagol showcases his conflict within him. We can see this manifestation throughout the story, where these actions are attributed mostly to Gollum's influence on the Ring. This notion almost exclusively adheres with Gollum because Sméagol often attempts to intervene before these acts are fully executed. Overall, it seems like a battle is taking place inside a character in such moments.

### **5.1.2 The Trickster**

The Trickster in Gollum is represented by his cleverness, resourcefulness, and slyness. He depicts his survival skills in the most challenging circumstances by applying his intelligence and cleverness during a rather difficult period to overcome hardships. Gollum very often uses cunning and manipulation, resulting in tricks and deceit in order to defeat people and get what

he wants. Gollum's cleverness in riddle-making and engagement in verbal sparring point to his unruliness. He even manages to deceive Frodo into mistrusting Sam, thus illustrating how excellently the trickster played with their relationship dynamics.

### **5.1.3 The Wounded Healer**

Sméagol's bond with Frodo serves as an example of his affinity for the Wounded Healer archetype. Sméagol forms a complex relationship with Frodo while going through pain and mental anguish since they both bear the weight of the Ring. Because of the suffering, grief, and betrayal he experiences, he is better able to understand and feel compassion for the problems of others. Though primarily motivated by his desire for self-healing rather than philanthropy, Sméagol helps by guiding Frodo on this path as he tries to find redemption and comfort for himself by helping others along the difficult path of destroying the Ring. Trapped between these opposing personas of Gollum and Sméagol.

### **5.1.4 The Outcast**

Gollum being an outcast is highlighted by being an isolated and despised person within the story ever since he got the Ring. After claiming it by killing Déagol, he was eventually exiled from his community by his grandmother. This, however, happened before the story of Lord of the Rings. Even as an outsider, however, he still demonstrates qualities such as resilience and resourcefulness. He manages to survive in the harsh wilderness alone for numerous years. He is mostly relying on his animalistic instincts and adaptability. His refusal of norms and determination to pave his own path even through such hurdles showcase his archetype of the outcast.

By analyzing how these archetypes coexist inside Gollum, we can get a better understanding of how his decisions are being shaped in certain parts of the story. The dynamic of having two distinct personas is highlighted by some of the archetypes being exclusive to one or the other persona. By looking at these archetypes, we can see both his evil and nice side. We can clearly see the distinction between evil Gollum and nice and helpful Sméagol yearning for redemption. Sméagol tries to help the hobbits destroy the Ring; he aids them throughout the quest and tries to make sure they are safe. An often underestimated factor is Sméagol resisting Gollum's

temptation and, therefore, saving Frodo from his evil Gollum persona numerous times. The Gollum, on the other hand, as the evil character, is the character being born from the influence of the Ring. The interplay between these two personas adds unexpected events to the story and visualizes the internal struggle between lust and morality.

## **6 Hero's Journey**

Joseph Campbell's concept of the Hero's Journey or Monomyth is an adaptation of a universal story structure that explains the stages and transitions that a hero goes through in their epic journey. According to Campbell, a Hero's Journey consists of three main chapters: departure, call to action, and return. Not all protagonists and/or heroes follow all parts of this Monomyth, but that wouldn't make them any less of heroes. Using this framework will help to show how complex of a character Gollum truly is and how similar he and his story can be to one of a hero (Campbell, 2004).

Unlikely as it may seem, Gollum is capable of following some parts of Monomyth because he leaves his ordinary life and approaches a realm of trials and challenges, and also earns certain accomplishments or must face some sacrifices. Moreover, it leaves room for the possibility of seeing Gollum as a hero since he is one of the main characters who helped the story reach its ultimate climax. Gollum is one of the characters without whom the story couldn't end in such a happy ending it did. Gollum is a multi-faceted character who can be viewed both as the hero and the villain, mostly due to his constant inner conflict between the two different personas inside of him. Yet, in the end, he is the very one who brings Frodo and Sam to Mount Doom and then unintentionally destroys the Ring when Frodo wavers, but that is what ultimately saves the world.

### **6.1 Stages of Sméagol's Journey**

#### **6.1.1 The Call to Adventure**

Joseph Campbell's Monomyth, also called The Hero's Journey, puts an emphasis on "the Call to Adventure." This important stage can be seen as the protagonist receiving a call to join a journey that typically involves struggles and challenges. This call often disturbs their everyday life. By answering this call to adventure, heroes are propelled into uncertain territory, where they begin discovering themselves while progressing towards fulfilling their destiny.

This part of the Monomyth can be seen in Sméagol as a moment when he and Déagol find The One Ring in a river. This sets Gollum on an unenviable journey of isolation and despair and almost completely strips him of his former sanity and humanity.



### **6.1.2 The Threshold Guardian**

The Threshold Guardian archetype marks the hero's passage from ordinary reality to the world of adventure and self-discovery. It serves multiple purposes, such as being an obstacle as well as a helper or mentor to the hero in their pursuit. When cast as an obstacle, the Guardian is meant to divert the hero away from entering the adventure and force the protagonist to demonstrate one's bravery, tenacity, and readiness for the journey. These obstacles between the hero and their end goal may take many forms. This will push the hero to fight their fears and limits, ultimately forcing them to grow. The Guardian can fulfill the role of a mentor, give advice, share knowledge, or warn the hero. Bypassing the Guardian marks the transformation of the hero and preparedness for them to embark on their journey.

Gollum, on his journey to redeem himself and self-discovery, is met with many obstacles in the form of internal conflicts and external forces.

Threshold Guardian, in Gollum's case, showcases his dual nature. The nice, innocent, and compassionate Stoor Hobbit Sméagol is facing his corrupted, Ring-obsessed, twisted Gollum side. These two personalities clash on a regular basis, being The Threshold Guardian to one another in a way. Sméagol is preventing Gollum from his nefarious schemes to reobtain the Ring, while Gollum is holding Sméagol back from redemption, often causing unfortunate events Sméagol would not wish to happen. While this dynamic of dual Guardians seems interesting, the evil Gollum persona is very far from being a hero and, therefore, being able to be analyzed using Hero's Journey. Meanwhile, Sméagol, trying to redeem himself, showcases many qualities of a hero, as showcased in previous chapters; therefore, he could be considered to be taking a Hero's Journey. Also, Sméagol's help in destroying the Ring adds to the fact.

Some of the external forces could be his lonesome journey through Middle-Earth, which is forced by his exile. This exile forces him to adapt to a completely different environment. Another external force could be The One Ring. The influence of the Ring is making no exception, everybody who had it was influenced by it just in different scale. It brought out inner evil and desires. It was impossible for anybody to destroy it besides Gollum, even if, by chance, this could be viewed as an achievement. Even if Sméagol seemed to have failed in overcoming



this Guardian, as said, he defeated it in the end and redeemed himself as an ironic or an unlikely hero.

His journey overall was a showcase of his ability to fight both his evil side and external forces. His role as a guide to Frodo and Sam was an example of his attempt to redeem himself. In moments when his personalities were clashing, he often realized what kind of creature he had become and loathed himself for it. However, in the climax, where his evil persona won, he ironically became the hero of Middle-Earth. This accomplishment could make him considerable for the status of a hero.

### **6.1.3 The Road of Trials**

Road of Trials is another stage of the Hero's Journey that is well applicable to Gollum. It consists of various challenges and tests for the hero to overcome in their quest. These challenges can have various forms. They serve as a mechanism to push the hero to overcome themselves and as a tool for them to grow. It represents a period of learning and transformation. It ultimately prepares them for the Supreme Ordeal.

Gollum's road of trials takes place mainly during his quest with Frodo and Sam. He is put up against multiple obstacles, both as a navigator and as a person. Sméagol's will to subdue evil Gollum serves as a great example of a psychological trial and tests his resolve for redemption against the ultimate temptations of the Ring. These two personas create an oscillating dynamic during their journey. Going from cooperation to betrayal and back to cooperation again. In some of the trials he failed, he managed to clear later, while in some of the trials he accomplished before, he later failed to accomplish again. These moments force him to think about his past and what he truly is as a person.

His Road of Trials is a transformative process of growth, redemption, and self-discovery. By overcoming challenges, Gollum changes. While there are moments where he's too weak to resist temptations, we can see how much Sméagol is trying to be redeemed and become a good person, even for now.

### **6.1.4 The Supreme Ordeal**

Supreme Ordeal represents the biggest challenge that the hero gets to face. This is usually a high-stakes moment, where the hero faces their fears and obstacles. It serves as a climactic moment within the story. It tests the hero's bravery, resilience, and how committed they are to the quest. If the hero overcomes this challenge, it usually results in their transformation or victory.

Gollum's last moments at Mount Doom can be considered his Supreme Ordeal. He faces the Supreme Ordeal as he, Sam, and Frodo reach the inside of the mountain, which is the only place where the One Ring can be destroyed. This is a decisive moment that will become a resolution of his internal battle and struggles. It is not a physical challenge like it might be in other literature; it is rather a psychological and moral challenge. He is presented with two choices, following his lifelong obsession with having the Ring and his desire for redemption and becoming the person he once was, perhaps. This battle is perhaps intensified by Frodo and Sam being present because they are the ones inhibiting his process of redemption. In the climax, this conflict reaches the pinnacle. While he ultimately fails to resist these temptations, which we can see as failing the Supreme Ordeal, this sole action is the reason for the happy ending we got in the books.

### **6.1.5 The Reward**

The second to last part of the journey, which often follows the Supreme Ordeal, is the Reward. It is achieved through the hero's continuous effort and is seen as obtaining the ultimate goal or prize. The Reward can be multiple things, such as a treasure, knowledge, or saving somebody, that all depends on the nature of the hero and the journey. This serves as an important achievement for the hero and often fulfills the journey. The Reward serves as a validation of the efforts of the hero.

This Reward, in the case of Gollum, can be two things. For the evil Gollum persona, it can be the acquisition of the One Ring, even for a short while. He obtains it after biting it off Frodo's finger. As he finally reclaims it, we could consider that to be the Reward for his long-lasting efforts to reclaim it, which is why he celebrates by dancing near the edge of the cliff inside the mountain. However, since the persona of evil Gollum can hardly be seen as a hero by anybody except himself, we should rather focus on the Reward of Sméagol's persona. Perhaps by sheer

chance, while dancing, Gollum trips and falls into the pits of the mountain. This moment can symbolize his final redemption by destroying the Ring and saving Middle-Earth while, at the same time, freeing himself from the shackles of the Ring.

### **6.1.6 The Return**

The phase of return usually comes after acquiring the Reward. It brings the hero back into a regular, non-hero world. The hero usually comes back richer with knowledge, wisdom, and other traits he has gained throughout the adventure. It signifies the fulfilment of their quest and its contribution to the greater good. Hero, in most cases, returns back to their former setting and either reintegrates themselves or faces the consequences of their journey.

In Gollum's case, there is no physical return since he dies by the end of his journey. However, there is a strong symbolic return. Return to Sméagol, his former Stoor-Hobbit self. He completes the journey in a different way than expected, but in doing so, saves the Middle Earth when Frodo couldn't.

## **The Conclusion**

To conclude, this thesis delved into the character of Gollum from J.R.R Tolkien's Saga to prove an in-depth analysis of his character. This thesis used various frameworks, from literary to psychological, to evaluate Gollum from a new perspective and arrive at a deeper understanding of his enormous complexity.

Examining Gollum through the framework of Forster and Glatch established him as an incredibly round and dynamic character due to his split persona, conflicts between these personas, their interactions with others, and their dynamic changes. Jung's and Freud's frameworks allowed us to understand this split between personas deeper from a psychological standpoint. It also helped us to understand the roles of both of his personas, shaping him as a character or person. Furthermore, applying Campbell's framework of Monomyth and supporting it with an idea from Lieb of an unlikely hero, helped us to understand how complicated and complex his role and path in the story was.

The corruption of the Ring, isolation, redemption, and sacrifice were common factors influencing the path this character took. This study showed Gollum's psychological depth and how he pushed the narrative forward. His transformation from innocent Stoor-Hobbit into such a being like Gollum served as an interesting exploration of humanity's capacity for corruption and also redemption.

Ultimately, analysing his character deeply showcased why he is one of the most compelling and interesting characters in the genre. This thesis aimed to provide a different perspective on this complex character.

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## Resumé

Tato práce se zabývá několika literárními a psychologickými teoriemi, které aplikuje na postavu Gluma z Pána Prstenů od J.R.R. Tolkiena. V první kapitole se zkoumá koncept druhů postav od E.M. Forstera ve které zjišťuji, že Glum je „round“ postava, což vypovídá o jeho komplexnosti. V další kapitole využívám rámec dynamických a statických postav od Seana Glatche, kde zjistíme, že Glum je postavou dynamickou, což znamená, že se v průběhu děje vyvíjí. Třetí kapitola pojednává o konceptu nepravděpodobných hrdinů od Caseyho Lieba, kde zjišťujeme, že Gluma lze považovat, za tento typ hrdiny. V další kapitole využíváme Freudovu teorii o egu, superegu a idu. Zde jsme zjistili, že Glum jakožto složka osobnosti se dá považovat za id a Smígl odpovídá superegu, jejich finální kompromis akce se lze vnímat za ego. Další kapitola aplikuje vybrané archetypy od Carla Junga na postavu Gluma. Tyto vybrané archetypy na Gluma pasují, nicméně některé pouze v určitých situacích, či pasážích v ději, či pouze na jednu z jeho dvou osobností. Poslední využíváme koncept Monomýtu od Josepha Campbella, kde zjišťuje, že postava Gluma si prochází některými pasážemi tohoto procesu, ať už fyzicky nebo symbolicky.

## Anotace

<b>Jméno a příjmení:</b>	Robin Ordoš
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<b>Rok obhajoby:</b>	2024

<b>Název práce:</b>	Postava Gluma v Tolkienově Pánu Prstenů
<b>Název v angličtině:</b>	The Character of Gollum in J.R.R. Tolkien's The Lord of the Rings
<b>Zvolený typ práce:</b>	Literární analýza
<b>Anotace práce:</b>	Cílem této bakalářské práce je analýza postavy Gluma z Pána Prstenů za pomoci řady literárních a psychologických teorií. Autoři těchto teorií jsou E. M. Forster, Sean Glatch, Casey Lieb, Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung a Joseph Campbell.
<b>Klíčová slova:</b>	Glum, Pán Prstenů, J.R.R. Tolkien, dynamické postavy, rozdvojená osobnost, archetypy, Monomýtus, nepravděpodobný hrdina
<b>Anotace v angličtině:</b>	Aim of this bachelor thesis is analysis of Gollum from The Lord of the Rings using literary and psychological theories. Authors of these theories are E. M. Forster, Sean Glatch, Casey Lieb, Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung, and Joseph Campbell.
<b>Klíčová slova v angličtině:</b>	Gollum, The Lord of the Rings, J.R.R. Tolkien, dynamic characters, split personality, archetypes, Monomyth, Unlikely hero
<b>Přílohy vázané v práci:</b>	-
<b>Rozsah práce:</b>	32 normostran
<b>Jazyk práce:</b>	Anglický