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THE ASSEMBLAGE OF THE RINGS:
READING *LORD OF THE RINGS* THROUGH THE PHILOSOPHY OF GILLES DELEUZE
AND FÉLIX GUATTARI

by

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B.A. University of Central Florida, 2021

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
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ABSTRACT

J.R.R. Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* is a monument to literary achievement; a world built so completely that other literature, both canonical and not, attempts in vain to match its grandeur. Likewise, Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's body of philosophy is conspicuous not only for its thematic variation across books but also the profundity of its concepts. Given this, it is shocking then that the critical apparatuses of Deleuze and Guattari have not been used to explore Tolkien's novels, given the innate symmetry between the two bodies of work.

While ample research has been carried out regarding each separately, there is no conjoined study between the two. Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* provides ample ground for exploring numerous Deleuzoguattarian concepts including schizophrenia, desire-producing machines, the *ritournelle*, smooth and striated space, becoming, and the assemblage. This thesis illuminates the untouched relationship between the work of Tolkien and Deleuzoguattarian philosophy, particularly emphasizing how Sauron creates an assemblage— a working arrangement— from his desire, forming what I call the Sauron-assemblage. The Sauron-assemblage expands from a milieu— a center— constructed of Sauron, his territory of Mordor, and the One Ring which is both a piece of Sauron and a desiring-machine for the other characters of *Lord of the Rings*. As a Deleuzoguattarian desiring-machine, the One Ring creates in those who desire it a schizo-identity or becoming-Gollum, meaning they showcase characteristics similar to that of Gollum without ever fully being him: this becoming-Gollum is symptomatic of the schizophrenic desire the Ring instills in its subjects, causing characters to desire it for the object it is without a concept of lack or symbolism behind it, as Freud or Lacan might argue.

The character Frodo Baggins is a central piece in the application of Deleuzoguattarian philosophy to *Lord of the Rings*, as he pursues a radius of becoming-Gollum, -Sauron, and -Nazgûl to become-nomad. This becoming-nomad of Frodo is both nomadism in a spatial sense by escaping the control and segmentation of space— striated space— and in a magical sense by escaping magical investment in space. To examine Frodo’s nomadism, I invent and utilize the theory of *spatiomagus*, investigating how magic affects space in an isolated work of fantasy. Frodo’s divine mission to destroy the Ring, and thus the Sauron-assemblage, enables him to cut through both normal and magical striation of space and become-nomad.

Dedicated to Kelsey. Thank you for all your support during this process and being willing to listen to me ramble about *Lord of the Rings* and Deleuze. I love you.

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INTRODUCTION

*“One Ring to rule them all, One Ring to find them, One Ring to bring them all
and in the darkness bind them” (Fellowship vii)*

*“all we know are assemblages. And the only assemblages are mechanic
assemblages of desire and collective assemblages of enunciation” (A Thousand
Plateaus 24)*

Lord of the Rings is not an uncommon subject of scholarship and stands as a landmark achievement of both literature and fantasy, should the distinction be drawn between them. Popular in both mainstream culture and academic discourse— the former mainly due to Peter Jackson’s *Lord of the Rings* trilogy from the early 2000s— most of the research done into Tolkien’s works has centered around philology, mythology, and religion; a very notable example of this is Tom Shippey’s *The Road to Middle-Earth*.¹ Tolkien studies have branched out as the field has evolved, embracing post-structuralist,² psychoanalytic,³ and feminist⁴ readings. Up to this point, however, there has not been a strictly Deleuzoguattarian analysis of Tolkien’s *Lord of the Rings* saga.

Deleuze and Guattari’s philosophy resists easy categorization and cannot be succinctly summarized; they are watershed post-structural philosophers to rival the ingenuity of Michel

¹ Shippey’s book is mainly a philological study of Tolkien, alluding to *Lord of the Rings*’ medieval influences within this context. ¹ In addition to its philological study of *Lord of the Rings*, Shippey’s book also serves “to refute many adverse criticisms of Tolkien” (Yates 38-39) and establish it as a more legitimate subject of literary study. However, Verlyn Flieger’s *Splintered Light* is a more prominent example of the study of religious symbolism combined with philology in Tolkien’s corpus.

² Nagy (2006)

³ Rosegrant (2016)

⁴ Croft and Donovan (2015)

Foucault. Furthermore, there are distinct differences between Deleuze's independent, pre-Guattari philosophy and the philosophy that arose from their partnership: the latter is of the most concern here, particularly their books *Anti-Oedipus* and *A Thousand Plateaus*. The central idea that drives this argument, however, is that of the assemblage, a concept that "Deleuze and Guattari themselves treat... as a provisional concept for which much 'working out' remained to be done" (*Assemblage* 6). In this sense, the very count of the assemblage is one in and of itself, as the definition being used here is that an assemblage is "an arrangement, in the sense of a 'working arrangement,' provided it [is]... an ongoing process rather than a static situation. It could also be thought in terms of a 'musical arrangement,' which is a way of adapting an abstract plan of music to a particular performer and performance. Arrangement is in many ways my preferred translation [over assemblage]... but it also has its problems, not least the fact it obscures the fact that 'agency' is at its core" (20). A key to understanding the assemblage is another one of Deleuze and Guattari's concepts: the rhizome. The rhizome is, most simply put, a collection of lines that "connects any point to any other point... composed not of units but of dimensions, or rather directions in motion. It has neither beginning nor end, but always a middle... A rhizome is made of plateaus" (*Plateaus* 21-22).⁵ While the rhizome and assemblage are very similar in their construction, they should not be confused as the same; a rhizome is a collection of lines and "an assemblage is [not] always to be found; what we encounter may well lack purpose and structure and amount to nothing more than a proverbial 'heap of fragments.' Not everything we encounter is an assemblage, or part of an assemblage" (*Assemblage* 73). All

⁵ A plateau, as used here, is another word for the middle of a rhizome or assemblage, or the *milieu* "from which [the rhizome] grows and which it overflows" (*Plateaus* 22).

things are connected by lines and make a rhizome: they are only an assemblage if they serve some purpose by the connection. We do want to be careful, however, to not be “misled by considering any complicated machine as a single thing” (*Anti-Oedipus* 285). While “some stones are just stones, even the stones that happen to be in our pockets” (*Assemblage* 73) and may seem inconsequential, a simple overlooked stone could be the catalyst in a traffic-accident-assemblage, or poor sense of direction could result in the altering of many lives.⁶ Given that *Lord of the Rings* is a narrative driven by the likes of the former and seemingly trivial, “unobtrusive... well-ordered and well-farmed” people who “love peace and quiet and good tilled earth” (*Fellowship* 1), there is ample space to insert Deleuze and Guattari.

The proposition here is that the philosophy of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari is particularly apt for reading Tolkien’s *Lord of the Rings*. While most aspects of their philosophies are present throughout much of Tolkien’s writing,⁷ the most glaring staples of Deleuzo-Guattarian thought in Tolkien are the assemblage and desiring-production. The assemblage and desiring-production are both pervasive and elusive in literature; always existent but never quite locatable, the forces of desire are in constant production. Deleuze and Guattari’s idea of these desire-producing machines is that desire is *productive* not a lack, as Freud argues⁸; it is a real, tangible force with consequences, products, and by-products. This productive desire and the

⁶ Bilbo losing his way in the Misty Mountains’ tunnels that “seemed to have no end” (*Hobbit* 70) is a piece of the Sauron-assemblage insofar as it acts as a catalyst for his finding the One Ring and the subsequent War of the Ring.

⁷ Most namely are the nomad, smooth and striated space, and the *ritournelle*. However, while these all play a large part in *Lord of the Rings*, the assemblage and desiring-production still lie at the center of these ideas; they are the connecting lines, the plateaus “always in the middle” of the connections formed by the other ideas (*Plateaus* 22).

⁸ “Desire,” Deleuze and Guattari say in *Anti-Oedipus*, “does not lack anything; it does not lack its object. It is, rather, the *subject* that is missing in desire, or desire that lacks a fixed subject... Desire and its object are one and the same thing” (26).

machines which drive it are evident in J.R.R. Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings*. This body of works produced by Tolkien encapsulates Deleuze's concepts in a profound way; it is shocking then that the mesmerizing consonance between the two has never been noted. Tolkien's conceptualization of desire is pointedly Deleuzian: the One Ring is a machine that embodies desire production. Desire in the *Lord of the Rings* is not a lack, not stagnant, but an ever-webbing flow, piercing through the surface of the themes and characters of the story like an omnipresent rhizome curling its roots around all it can touch. If *Lord of the Rings* is the surface to be studied, Deleuze is the undercurrent—a new substrate on which a reinvigorated understanding of Tolkien can be founded.

If Deleuze is the substrate to Tolkien, and the assemblage a substrate to *Lord of the Rings*, the rhizome is the key to literature. “[T]he rhizome is made only of lines” (*Plateaus* 22) and books are composed of “lines of articulation or segmentarity, strata and territories... lines of flight, movements of deterritorialization” (2)—the book is a rhizome unto itself as well as “forms a rhizome with the world” (10). If a book is only lines, then a book is a rhizome and literature, as a whole, “is an assemblage” (3) made of lines and defined “in connection with other assemblages”— “[a]ll this... constitutes an assemblage” (2). Thus here I do not only illustrate the assemblage at play in *Lord of the Rings* but posit a point for which the assemblages of all literature can be uncovered; how all literature is founded on assemblage and lines. Literature is a mushroom growing on a substrate of pasteurized straw: the straw is lines and only lines, connecting to itself in every way whether it is meaningful or not; it is also an assemblage as the lines connect with each other and produce the growth of a mushroom— an assemblage could be

considered a rhizome with a purpose. Consider *Pride and Prejudice*: it is a novel, a plateau, a mushroom founded on the assemblage of Edwardian social class, the assemblage of women's place in history, the assemblage of the English countryside, etc. Within the fiction of the novel, there is the Longbourn-assemblage made up of lines between Mr. Bennet, Elizabeth, Lydia, etc., and the lines drawn from them to the outside; there is the Mr. Bingley-assemblage in which social connections are lines, the paths of his travels are lines, the words he says are lines, all connecting to other lines and other assemblages. There is no end to the activity of assemblage in literature, both the assemblages in the fiction of the novel and the assemblages the novel "functions with... through the outside and on the outside" (2). However, it is not my goal here to exhaustively examine the assemblage in literature, or even to explore the role of all the assemblages in and around *Lord of the Rings*. Instead, I will focus on the one assemblage to rule them all, the one that drives the central narrative force of Tolkien's fantasy epic: the Sauron-assemblage.

To understand the Sauron-assemblage and its adjacent functions, a few key aspects of Deleuze and Guattari's philosophy bear thorough explanation, first outside of the parameters of this Middle-earth and then subsequently re-explained within the context of Tolkien's work. To begin with: the assemblage. An assemblage is an "organization of desire" (*Assemblage* 71); not a fixed connection of separate parts, but an ever-shifting arrangement of intersecting lines—not physical lines, but rather connections. To think of the Sauron-assemblage specifically, the assemblage is an organization of Sauron's desire for power; its lines are not physical but the connections between Sauron and the Nazgûl, Frodo and the One Ring, the One Ring to Sauron.

These lines overflow from the middle of the middle, known as the milieu, of the assemblage and connect in no particular order with each other. The assemblage is a rhizome with a purpose, but the purpose is achieved by the ever-shifting adaptability of the assemblage's lines. An assemblage requires a territory to exist, and is in fact "the first form of the assemblage" (*Assemblage* 60). Territory is not necessarily physical:⁹ "What defines territory is the emergence of matters of expression" (*Plateaus* 366). A territory can be a physical landscape or a mental mindscape. If I am sitting in a coffee shop, watching a farmer's market out the front window I am occupying one mental territory; but once I am bored of watching the farmer's market, I escape my ennui by picturing myself fishing in the Rocky Mountains, experiencing the sensations of my mental scene as if I were not just sitting in a coffee shop: this shift away from the coffee shop scene is a deterritorialization, and this deterritorialization results in a reterritorialization of experiencing fishing in the Rocky Mountains. As soon as another coffee shop patron walks by and bumps my chair, I am deterritorialized from my mental territory of fishing in the Rockies and reterritorialized back to watching the farmer's market through the coffee shop window. De/reterritorialization functions to move the mind from one territorial state to another, or to remove it from one territory and reterritorialize it in any other. A deterritorialization is a move out of one territory; likewise, a reterritorialization is an entry into a territory by way of a line of flight which is the line that allows one to deterritorialize—the action of the very deterritorialization.¹⁰

⁹ "territory is neither a spatial concept nor a material concept. This does not mean that it does not entail either spatial or material components" (*Assemblage* 96).

¹⁰ *A Thousand Plateaus* 591

This territorializing effect is achieved in part by the *ritournelle*, or refrain, a repeated phrase that “is essentially territorial, territorializing, or reterritorializing” (*Plateaus* 350). The refrain serves to reterritorialize within the immense black hole of chaos “in which one endeavors to fix a fragile point as a center... organizes around that point a calm and stable ‘pace’...: the black hole [] become[s] a home... [or] grafts onto that pace a breakaway from the black hole” (363). This black hole of chaos is always a risk: “Everything we do (insofar as it is an action of desire) carries this risk of plunging us into a black hole... we sometimes find ourselves in [the black hole] either because we chose to go down a dark path or somehow our actions inadvertently lead us there” (*Assemblage* 87). Territory, and thus by extension the refrain, is a defense mechanism— a defensive concept that “describes our means of getting out of black holes” (87). To utilize the *ritournelle* is to find one’s ‘safe’ territory¹¹ in the same way “A child in the dark, gripped with fear, comforts himself by singing under his breath... A child hums to summon the strength for the schoolwork... A housewife sings to herself, listens to the radio, as she marshals the antichaos forces of her work” (*Plateaus* 362)— “in other words, the refrain... assures the consistency of the territory” (381). A refrain is the “*Hey dol! merry dol!*” Tom Bombadil sings to himself as he traipses through his territory (*Fellowship* 134) or the “*gollum*” that Sméagol/Gollum coughs as he deterritorializes from Sméagol into the more malevolent territory of Gollum (*Towers* 267). As with the refrain, Sméagol/Gollum also provides an excellent subject for framing Deleuzian desiring-machines in the context of *Lord of the Rings*.

¹¹ “The role of the refrain has often been emphasized: it is territorial” (*Plateaus* 363).

Desire is the driving narrative force of *Lord of the Rings*, whether a desire for the One Ring or a desire to destroy it. While desiring-machines are normally internal to a person's mental desiring-machinations, the Ring is an external desiring-machine that "produces an interruption of the flow" of desire (*Anti-Oedipus* 36). Desiring, as conceived here, is like a rhizome constantly swirling in the mind; it is the job of the desiring-machines to cut off these incessant flows and target a subject as one apt for desiring: these machines are "a system of interruptions or breaks... like a ham-slicing machine" (36).¹² Furthermore, schizophrenic desire is pervasive in the desiring of Tolkien's characters for the Ring. Deleuze describes the schizophrenic as one who "goes in the other direction... they no longer obey the statistical laws: waves and corpuscles, flows and partial objects that are no longer dependent upon the larger numbers; infinitesimal lines of escape, instead of the perspectives of the larger aggregates" (*Anti-Oedipus* 280). Schizophrenia, for Deleuze and Guattari, is not used as a clinical or medical term to diagnose actual mental illness; it is a term they "airlift... from psychiatry to mean the generalized breakdown of meaning" (Saldanha 81). In relation to Tolkien, the best example of this is Sméagol/Gollum,¹³ a character for whom meanings are broken down to their relationship with the One Ring and everything exists for the express purpose of gaining/regaining his access to the Ring: "Gollum himself had remained unchanged... he had trodden, driven by a devouring desire and terrible

¹² The translator's note for this reads: "The authors' word for this process is *prélèvement*. The French word has a number of meanings, including: a skimming or a draining off; a removal of a certain quantity as a sample...; a setting apart of a portion or share of the whole" (*Anti-Oedipus* 36).

¹³ Nagy recognizes that Gollum is "often termed a 'schizophrenic' character" (59) outside of the Deleuzo-Guattarian conception of the term. I would argue that in clinical terms Sméagol/Gollum more resembles someone with disassociative personality disorder but this clinical discourse lies outside the scope of this essay.

fear” (*King* 236). Desire has been carried past understanding for the Deleuzian schizophrenic¹⁴ and “reach[ed] those regions of the orphan unconscious... where the problem of Oedipus can no longer even be raised” (*Anti-Oedipus* 82). The goal of what Deleuze and Guattari call ‘schizoanalysis’ is to reveal this; schizoanalysis aims to destroy social structures that influence desire and representations of desire in order to fully reveal what the subject desires and how the desire functions mechanically. It is a system to replace psychoanalysis that aims to reveal “desire is a machine, a synthesis of machines, a mechanic arrangement... [and] reproach psychoanalysis for having stifled this order of production, for having shunted it into representation” (296). To draw this back to *Lord of the Rings*, the One Ring does not represent anything for Gollum— it is simply his object of desire, and the workings of his brain to produce the desire for the Ring are the machines of which Deleuze and Guattari speak. This schizophrenic desire that Gollum possesses causes the standard formations, desires, and expectations of the larger body of society¹⁵ to be incidentally eschewed by “a dotted line of escape or schizoid breakthrough... the pure schizophrenic process of deterritorialization” (*Anti-Oedipus* 283). During this process of desiring, the Body without Organs is created, as “you can’t desire without making one” (*Plateaus* 174). The Body without Organs is the result of desiring untethered to the socius; a formless form “opposed not to the organs but to that organization of the organs” (184) of an individual’s desire “reaching the furthest limits of the decomposition of the socius” (*Anti-*

¹⁴ Deleuze and Guattari claim that the schizophrenic “has carried his flows right into the desert” (*Anti-Oedipus* 67) meaning the desert as a Body without Organs where the schizophrenic “installs his desiring-machines” (131) on “the limit of the socius” (281).

¹⁵ I do not want to confuse society and the socius here, the latter of which Deleuze insists “is not society, but rather a particular social instance which plays the role of a full body. Every society presents itself as a socius or full body upon which all kinds of flows flow and are interrupted” (“Lecture 02”); that is, society is a broader, less useful term while the socius is the machine that ensures society’s people’s desires are invested in the “proper” thing.

Oedipus 35). In its widest conception, the Body without Organs, abbreviated as BwO, is that which underlies the surface of desire, allowing flows of production and desire to run over its surface, regulating these flows but not cutting them off as a desiring-machine does: “The body without organs determines when a particular mode of desire, or particular way of desiring, is undesirable” (*Schizoanalysis* 48). However, “BwOs are by definition ambiguous” (Saldanha 136), which makes it difficult to come up with a decisive definition for the concept. Deleuze and Guattari, while somewhat vague, lay out different forms of the BwO. The latter BwO introduced in *Thousand Plateaus*, we could say, was revised from the negative BwO from *Anti-Oedipus* into “an active and affirmative form of it” (66) in conjunction with the cancerous or empty BwO from *Anti-Oedipus* with its “eyes closed tight, nostrils pinched shut, ears stopped up” (*Anti-Oedipus* 37-38). While the positive BwO is of slight interest, it is the empty BwO that is of the most interest here; specifically, the “empty BwO of a drug addict” (*Plateaus* 190) the type of which “emptied themselves of their organs instead of looking for the point at which they could patiently and momentarily dismantle the organization of the organs” (187). Sméagol abandons his other desires and his organization all at once for the sake of the Ring (*Fellowship* 58). Like a drug addict, he abandons his body for his desire of the Ring, emptying himself for the sake of this self, and in turn becoming-Gollum.¹⁶ I term this state of being ‘becoming-Gollum’ based on Deleuze and Guattari’s ‘becoming,’ a state of being in which one is in the process of resembling another; however, is not “not an evolution” (*Plateaus* 278) and “is certainly not imitating, or identifying with something” (279). If becoming were an evolution, it would suggest that there is a point at

¹⁶ While I will elaborate on why later in this essay, the terms BwO, schizo-identity, and becoming-Gollum will be used somewhat interchangeably throughout.

which one could exactly be another: Bilbo cannot *be* Gollum but can become-Gollum through a similar pursuit of the Ring, resembling what Gollum is without *being* Gollum. Similarly, Frodo does not seek to imitate or identify with Gollum when his desire for the Ring causes him to claim it for himself and “set it on his finger” (*King* 239) but is nonetheless becoming-Gollum “always in the middle” (*Plateaus* 342). Frodo is a unique figure in *Lord of the Rings* given that he does not only pursue becoming-Gollum but pursues becoming-Sauron and becoming-Nazgûl as well: a becoming of trying to bend the Ring to one’s will for power and a becoming of being enslaved to the will of Sauron, respectively.

Frodo himself is always becoming-nomad once he accepts responsibility for the One Ring at the Council of Elrond, which brings us to the last and perhaps more important, Deleuzian concepts to this analysis: the nomad and the smooth and the striated. The spatial nomad is “an apposite figure for a kind of resistance that is not exterior to relations of power, but exerts a force within their elaborate, mobile, and ever shifting web of spatial relations” (*Spatiality* 139). Nomads move through space without concern for notions of how they are expected or ‘supposed’ to move through space, though “he is not ignorant of points” but rather “goes from points to point only as a consequence and as a factual necessity; in principle, points for him are relays along a trajectory” (*Plateaus* 443).¹⁷ Points are only of concern within striated space— space that is segmented “to determinate intervals, assigned breaks” (559); that is, striated space is space in which people can only move in certain ways dictated by pre-established considerations. Conversely, smooth space is space in which these considerations do not exist, “a space which is

¹⁷ Deleuze and Guattari note, however, that “a pure nomad does not exist” (*Anti-Oedipus* 148). This is why Frodo is becoming-nomad: a true nomad does not exist but one can constantly portray the characteristics of the hypothetical nomad to become-nomad.

indivisible, heterogenous, and uncontrollable” (Grosz 83). Smooth space is the space of the nomad; the nomad does not have considerations for the conventions or expectations of striated space and thus translates the striated into the smooth as they move through it. The character of Frodo Baggins is able to smooth space as he pursues becoming-nomad along with his other trajectories of becoming.

The goal here, then, is to first illuminate the previously undiscovered symmetry between Tolkien and Deleuze and Guattari. As established, *Lord of the Rings* and its surrounding works¹⁸ showcase perfectly the different aspects of Deleuze and Guattari’s philosophy, engaging with the concepts of the assemblage, desiring-machines, and the nomad— to name a few— in such a way that the symmetry cannot be ignored. Once this consonance is fully illuminated and drawn out, I argue that Frodo Baggins is able to engage with all of these Deleuzoguattarian concepts at once in a unique way; as a Ring-bearer on a divine mission to destroy the One Ring, Frodo is able to become-nomad both in the sense of how he traverses the space of Middle-earth, as well as how he selectively and partially pursues the One Ring’s offerings of becoming-Sauron, becoming-Nazgûl, and becoming-Gollum.

In *Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari propose that their book is “a rhizome. It is composed of plateaus... Each plateau can be read starting anywhere and can be related to any other plateau” (23)— I propose the same here.¹⁹ So long as the introduction is read at the outset, and the conclusion read as what its name suggests, the following sections can be read as plateaus

¹⁸ By surrounding works, I mean *The Hobbit*, *The Silmarillion*, and *Unfinished Tales*, all of which will also be examined in the subsequent work.

¹⁹ The following paper also mimics the naming conventions of Deleuze and Guattari’s plateaus; each section’s name begins with a date from *Lord of the Rings* of significance to the concept that it discusses.

connecting to each other in no particular order, and in fact, in every which order the reader may please.

The first section expands upon the concept of the Sauron-assemblage and the One Ring as a desiring-machine. Insofar as the name of this thesis suggests, the concept of the assemblage is indispensable to fully understanding the scope of this argument. While maintaining Deleuze and Guattari's original thought as a focal point, the conceptualization of the Sauron-assemblage draws from Ian Buchanan's understanding of Deleuze and Guattari. Buchanan admits that he treats "assemblage theory as an *incomplete project* that invites us to develop it further on the basis of a set of 'first principles'" (*Assemblage* 6; emphasis original); furthermore, he adds that "we cannot start from single assemblages and work our way up— we have to start 'all at once' as one does with language" (15). Unfortunately, it is difficult to structure writing to start 'all at once,' as Buchanan rather insists more than suggests, but the rhizomatic nature of this project allows the separate parts of the assemblage to exist 'all at once' and enables the reader to navigate the plateaus as they please. While this first section deals mainly with establishing the Sauron-assemblage, what it is, and how it functions both in the central Sauron-Mordor-Ring triad and the expansive rhizome which connects the Minor Rings of Power to this triad, it also explores the One Ring as an external desiring-machine to be plugged into the Ring-bearer's desiring-machinations.

The second section of this project expands to a concept which permeates all of Deleuze and Guattari's philosophy: space. Here, I create and explain a theory of space I term *spatiomagus* in order to escape the trappings of examining literary space as mimesis or as a way we might

understand our real world, and instead “involve some theory of imagination” in modern spatial theory (*Topophrenia* 67). The goal of *spatiomagus* is to read space in fantasy as just that and only that; as space that cannot be understood in terms of reality but only in terms of the fantasy world in which it exists. This introduction to *spatiomagus* explains how the space of *Lord of the Rings* can only be understood and analyzed when taking into consideration the role of magic in space, arguing that this theory cannot just be applied to Tolkien’s world but also the genre of fantasy as a whole. Section two then refocuses on the Sauron-assemblage and the role of space in and around the assemblage.

The subsequent section is neither the third section nor the second and a half; instead, it is a section that means to reflect the transitory nature of its subject matter: the spatial nomad. This section examines the unique role and nomadism of Frodo Baggins in *The Lord of the Rings*. It is not that this section does not ‘fit’ in between sections two and three but rather that it refuses to fit anywhere and fits everywhere all at once; it draws on the Sauron-assemblage and *spatiomagus* but refuses to be read as a conclusion— it also refuses to be read as an introduction. The becoming-nomad of Frodo is brought to light through an examination of his ‘divine mission’ and various other becomings.

The third section is the most clinical. It looks at the various becomings present through *Lord of the Rings* due to the One Ring and methodically schizoanalyzes the various characters affected by the Ring. This is first done to Sméagol/Gollum and his becoming-Gollum that is reflected through the production of his cancerous Body without Organs I term the schizo-identity or becoming-Gollum. I then move to the antithesis of Gollum in terms of desire and production:

Tom Bombadil— a character free from desire and a healthy BwO. Lastly, my practical schizoanalysis turns to the more tertiary analysis of Saruman, Boromir, and Denethor, examining their Becoming-Gollum and how they are plugged into Sauron-assemblage.

In all this, I first and foremost want to beg the question not “‘What does it mean?’ but rather ‘How does it work?’” (*Anti-Oedipus* 109). There is not necessarily a meaning or representation behind the Sauron-assemblage that needs to be interrogated— just the functions of the assemblage itself: how it utilizes desiring-production, how *spatiomagus* affects the workings of the assemblage, how the assemblage produces becoming-Gollum, and, most importantly, how the character of Frodo Baggins is able to become-nomad within the Sauron-assemblage itself. In doing so, this thesis posits an entirely new reading of Tolkien’s fantasy epic via the theory of *spatiomagus* and the philosophy of Deleuze and Guattari from which new understandings of the genre of fantasy as a whole can be gleaned.

SECTION ONE— SECOND AGE 1600:²⁰ THE SAURON-ASSEMBLAGE

“Three Rings for the Elven-kings under the sky, Seven for the Dwarf-lords in their halls of stone, Nine for Mortal Men doomed to die” (Fellowship vii)

“For convenience we speak of assemblages as already composed things, but what it really names is a state of interactivity” (Assemblage 34)

The Sauron-assemblage is one of the main constituents of the narrative of *Lord of the Rings*, containing inside of it the antagonist, plot mechanism, and the journey’s destination, at the very least. In its entirety, the Sauron-assemblage refers to the relationship of lines drawn between Sauron, the Ring, Mordor and the things to which they connect; more specifically, the Sauron-assemblage is what acts as an extension of Sauron’s will and desire. This is not limited to just physical entities such as Sauron, the One Ring, or his Nazgûl servants— the assemblage “was never intended to refer to ensembles of material things. It was always about the organization of desire” (*Assemblage 71*). Sauron’s desire for domination is the assemblage; it dictates the interactions of its components, shifts the components, and creates in itself a territory and a social field where the desires of those within the assemblage are invested. Once invested in the socius of the Sauron-assemblage, these desires are bent to those of Sauron’s: “The assemblage is an actual composition of desire” (*Assemblage 62*). The desire within the Sauron-assemblage is either: a) the desire for Sauron’s fascism by those who are not him: or b) the desire for power, emanating from the milieu of the assemblage.²¹ The Sauron-Ring-Mordor trinity is the milieu of

²⁰ This is the year that Sauron forges the One Ring in the fires of Orodruin (Mount Doom) and thus creates the Sauron-assemblage as it is recognized in *Lord of the Rings* (“Appendix B” 401).

²¹ These two desires are intrinsically linked to each other but remain distinct due to the difference in the one who is desiring.

the Sauron-assemblage, an assemblage's middle "from which it [the assemblage and its rhizomatic connections] grows and which it overflows" (*Plateaus* 22). Before the extensions of the Sauron-assemblage came into being, namely the Minor Rings of Power, the milieu first existed; and it is from this Sauron-Ring-Mordor milieu that Sauron could draw lines to the Noldor, to Celebrimbor, to the Rings he gifted the free races of Middle-earth, and attach them to his assemblage. From this point, the Sauron-Ring-Mordor milieu no longer actualizes the events of the assemblage: "When the territory comes into being the milieu components cease to be directional (i.e. functional) and instead become dimensional (i.e. expressive). The key difference between functional and expressive is this: the latter cannot be reduced to or thought of as the 'effects of an impulse triggering an action in a milieu'" (*Assemblage* 105). While the milieu still remains the center of the assemblage, the center from which all lines overflow, the milieu does not actualize every line and connection; for example, the Ringwraiths' power comes from the milieu of the Sauron-assemblage, but the milieu, once forming the territory of the Sauron-assemblage, does not direct their every action or how they use the power given to them. True, Sauron still directs their actions (finding the One Ring, rallying the troops of Orcs for war) but he does this more so as a military commander, not as an assemblage component. Before this territory of the Sauron-assemblage could be constructed, the milieu of the assemblage had to come into being to actualize Sauron's desires, and from there expand into a territory.

Sauron, the One Ring, and Mordor all act as the milieu because they are more or less the same. Both the One Ring and Mordor contain pieces of Sauron; in shaping these elements of the milieu, Sauron spread himself out across them almost like a body without organs, allowing

‘pieces’ of himself to be de-structured from himself and placed inside the Ring and Mordor. The latter is like a ‘battery’ for Sauron— a geographical place where he can recharge, regaining his physical form as if he was regaining parts of himself: he “came back to Middle-earth and to Mordor that was his home. There he took up again his great Ring in Barad-dûr... until he wrought himself a new guise” (*Silmarillion* 280). It is always back to Mordor that Sauron returns to regain his form and power, whether it be after the destruction of Númenor and his physical form (280) or after having been driven from Dol Guldur by the White Council (302). Mordor is like a machine that re-assembles Sauron, but the Ring is more of a direct extension of Sauron himself: “much of the strength and will of Sauron passed into that One Ring” (*Silmarillion* 287). It is an extension of his power, of his desires, and ultimately actualizes the flows of the Sauron-assemblage to the other plateaus: “Sauron made the One Ring to rule all the others, and their power was bound up with it, to be subject wholly to it and to last only as long as it too should last” (*Silmarillion* 287). Sauron may be the initiator of the assemblage, his desires being the ones that drive the assemblage, but the Ring is the actualizer of the flows, tying the other Ring of Power to the central milieu of the assemblage, making a rhizome through which Sauron’s power flows, and building the territory of the assemblage: a “livable order” in which the assemblage can survive (*Assemblage* 85). By de-organizing himself across both the One Ring and Mordor, Sauron is able, in effect, to become an assemblage: he himself becomes an “organization of desire” (*Assemblage* 71), the Sauron-Ring-Mordor milieu acting as a sort of assemblage within the Sauron-assemblage. Between the three of them, there is a working arrangement that ensures

the Sauron-assemblage's perpetual existence by effectively spreading out its organs; and, at the same time, creating mutually assured destruction between the three of them.

Only the dark power of Mordor can unmake the power of Sauron, as it is utterly the same; the Dark striation of Mordor is the same power as the malice of Sauron and the threads holding the magic of the One Ring together. It lacks an equal in Middle-earth, and thus must be undone by another aspect of the Sauron-assemblage milieu triad. Being as the power of Sauron, the One Ring, and Mordor are all the same, they cannot exist without each other, and as one piece of the Sauron-assemblage's central milieu is destroyed, the other two must perish as well: "he cast the Great Ring of Power, and so at last it was unmade and its evil consumed. Then Sauron failed, and he was utterly vanquished and passed away like a shadow of malice; and the towers of Barad-dûr crumbled in ruin" (*Silmarillion* 304). Upon the destruction of the One Ring, both Sauron the entity and Sauron's symbols of power within the realm of Mordor are destroyed. However, the assemblage is not so simple as a middle extending outwards; an assemblage is a rhizome with a purpose, and "the rhizome connects any point to any other point" (*Plateaus* 21); thus within assemblages, any point is connected to another point, and every line can— and will — intersect. The Nazgûl are not just connected to the central milieu of the Sauron-assemblage, and Frodo is not just attached to the assemblage by way of the Ring, but Frodo and the Nazgûl are also connected to each other; it is because of this that Frodo is able "feel" the Black Rider²² over him and Sam (*King* 207) and the wearer of the Ring is able to see the Nazgûl while in the Wraith-world (*Fellowship* 221). As the milieu perishes, there is no center from which the

²² Black Rider, Ringwraith, and Nazgûl may all be used interchangeably.

assemblage-flows can extend; true, lines are still attaching to other lines in the assemblage, but without the central power of the assemblage, the assemblage connections become weaker and falter— while the connections of the assemblage are rhizomatic, Sauron attempts to maintain an arborescent²³ power structure, which ultimately proves the assemblage’s fatal weakness. This weakening of flows can also be seen upon Sauron’s separation from Mordor, as without geographical proximity for the place of Mordor to act as a sort of battery for Sauron’s power, the assemblage milieu becomes stretched and weakens all the other connections of the assemblage.

While the existence of the Ring and Mordor is vital for the survival of the Sauron-assemblage, they can be separated from Sauron and still exist by their own right, possessing some semblance of power,²⁴ granted, only a fraction of what it is when in geographical proximity: the Ring “looks after itself” (*Fellowship* 60) and Mordor still remained a place vested with the Dark striation of Sauron. After being forced to flee from Mordor, Sauron’s power alone was enough for him to ‘recharge’ himself, slowly regaining his form and power: “out of the wastes of the East [Sauron] took up his abode in the south of the forest [Mirkwood], and slowly he grew and took shape there again; in a dark hill he made his dwelling and wrought there his sorcery” (*Silmarillion* 302). However, this space, called Dol Guldur, was not a place imbued with Sauron’s power as Mordor is, rather only a place from which Sauron could escape those countering his power; it was not so much a ‘battery’ from which Sauron could charge but rather a hole in which he could slowly heal his wounds by his own volition and whatever power he

²³ An arborescent power structure denotes a defined, top-down approach to power: it is strictly hierarchical, while the rhizome is not (*Plateaus* 17).

²⁴ Even after Isildur cuts the Ring from Sauron’s finger during the Last Alliance of Elves and Men, two years later it “was still laden with Sauron’s evil will and called to his servants for their aid” (*Unfinished* 273).

maintained once separated from the Ring and Mordor. This lack of power is laid bare in the relative ease of his defeat at the hand of the White Council²⁵: “the Council... out further their strength; and they assailed Dol Guldur, and drove Sauron from his hold, and Mirkwood for a brief while was made wholesome again” (*Silmarillion* 302). There are two things here to note: first, the ease of Sauron’s defeat and the quick recuperation of Mirkwood. When fortified inside Mordor with the Ring, Sauron’s power was so great as to resist the Last Alliance of Elves and Men for seven years, inflict grievous losses upon them, and slay both their leaders, Gil-galad²⁶ and Elendil²⁷ (294). However, when separated from the other central aspects of the Sauron-assemblage milieu, he is easily thrown down by Gandalf and Saruman. Furthermore, the land of Dol Guldur was not striated by Sauron’s darkness. While this concept of Darkness=striation will be interrogated more fully later in this section, for now it suffices to note that Mordor remained a place of darkness even in Sauron’s absence due to his previous striation via Darkness of the space, and even in its desolation, the kingdom of Gondor felt an apprehension to settling the space and a necessity for it to be “watched over by great fortresses that guarded the passes” (“Appendix A” 356). However, no residual Darkness remained in Dol Guldur or Mirkwood following Sauron’s expulsion, as it was not a place striated by the Darkness of the Sauron-assemblage’s flows. Dol Guldur, while an abode of Sauron, was not part of the territory of the Sauron-assemblage, being as “territory is the first form of the assemblage” (*Assemblage* 60); if

²⁵ The White Council was a group comprised of Gandalf, Saruman, Elrond, Galadriel, and Círdan, along with “other lords of the Eldar” in response to the growing darkness in Dol Guldur (*Silmarillion* 300).

²⁶ Gil-galad was king of the Noldor Elves who allied with the Dúnedain of Arnor and Gondor against Sauron at the end of the Second Age (“Appendix B” 400).

²⁷ Elendil was one of the Faithful of Númenor who did not fall for Sauron’s deceptions and thus was spared during Akallabeth, the destruction of Númenor (*Silmarillion* 276). Upon arriving in Middle-earth, he became High King of the remaining Númenorians— the Dúnedain— and lord of their kingdoms in Middle-earth (280).

Dol Guldur were part of the Sauron-assemblage, Sauron's power would have been more akin to that of his power at the end of the Second Age when he was not apart from Mordor and the Ring. Within this territory of the Sauron-assemblage, there is a social field assembled; given that an assemblage forms a territory, there must be a territorial machine; and this territorial machine is "the first form of socius" (*Anti-Oedipus* 141): a socius onto which the desires of the Sauron-assemblage can be inscribed.

The Sauron-assemblage at its core is its own social machine which forms its own socius for those attached to it, wherein it polices itself to "codify the flows of desire, to inscribe them, to record them, to see to it that no flow exists that is not properly dammed up, channeled, regulated" (*Anti-Oedipus* 33). The Ring acts as adjacent to this assemblage-insular socius, drawing off of it but nonetheless keeping itself and its subject deterritorialized from divesting in social desire through the becoming-Gollum it produces in its subjects. This becoming-Gollum is the production of schizophrenic desire in the Ring-bearer or the Ring's subject otherwise so that they desire the Ring and the Ring only, and only because it is the Ring. However, becoming-Gollum operates separately from the Sauron-assemblage; the two becomings that are attached to the Sauron-assemblage are becoming-Sauron (the desire to gain power such as Sauron has and have mastery over Middle-earth, such as he desires) and becoming-Nazgûl (desiring the rule of Sauron and serving his will as a blind servant). Those drawn into the social machinations of the

Sauron-assemblage²⁸ are made to desire the fascism of Sauron through “the repression that the social machines exercise on desiring-machines” (*Anti-Oedipus* 54), namely the desiring-machines of the Nazgûl— their own desiring becomes that of Sauron’s: “the Ringwraiths... had no will but his own, being each utterly subservient to the ring that had enslaved him” (*Unfinished* 338). Assemblages generate fascism, and in the case of the Sauron-assemblage, the assemblage *wants* to generate fascism in the subjects attached to it: “what we call fascism is immanent to the assemblage, that is, it is generated by the assemblage” (*Assemblage* 91). This will for the fascism of Sauron manifests more powerfully in the Ringwraiths than even the desiring-producing of the One Ring: “if one of them, even the Witch-king their captain, had seized the One Ring he would have brought it back to his Master” (*Unfinished* 343). There is a clear difference in the way that the Minor Rings and the One Ring function: the former inscribes the bearers’ desires onto the socius and forces them to desire the fascism of Sauron, and the latter high-jacks its bearer’s desiring-machines in order to create schizophrenic desire for only itself that is divorced from the socius.

As a desiring-machine, the One Ring begins generating desire by adulterating existing desires in favor of itself; once this desire has been captured, the Ring then produces schizophrenic desire in the subject for only itself. The One Ring “presupposes the continuity of a flow; every flow, the fragmentation of the object... a connection with another machine is...

²⁸ Subjects can only be drawn into the Sauron-assemblage and its socius with direct links to the assemblage, such as the Orcs being created by and bent to the power of Mordor and the Nazgûl through their Rings of Power. The assemblage’s tertiary aspects such as the Palantiri, which Sauron attempts to bend completely to his will, do not subject people to this, and neither does the Ring when it creates becoming-Gollum in a subject instead of becoming-Nazgûl or becoming-Sauron. These parts of the Sauron-assemblage are still subject to the assemblage’s flows but do not necessarily bring the subject onto the socius formed by the assemblage: key examples of this are Saruman and Denethor, who will be explored more fully in a later section.

established, along a transverse path, so that one machine interrupts the current of the other” (*Anti-Oedipus* 6). The Ring functions as this aforementioned object that presupposes the flow and interrupts the current of other desires by surrounding itself with the desires of its subjects, redirecting these other desires toward itself; in turn, it feeds off the subject’s manufactured desire for it and produces an alternate identity for the subject: becoming-Gollum. Once the production of becoming-Gollum begins and the Ring-bearer is engulfed in it, the Ring-bearer’s desiring-machines are high-jacked completely by the Ring as it delineates desire towards itself, creating schizophrenic desire freed from social codes within the schizophrenic becoming-Gollum, who does “not operate on the socius, but... in a pure state” (*Anti-Oedipus* 281). Thus while the One Ring functions as a central part of the Sauron-assemblage, it also deterritorializes its bearer from the socius, all at once drawing the subject into the Sauron-assemblage via the Ring’s connection to Sauron and creating in them a deterritorialization from all but pure desire for the Ring. The Ring as a desiring-machine is only fully effective in certain species of Middle-earth. While Hobbits, like Bilbo and Frodo Baggins, and proto-Hobbits, like Sméagol and his cousin Déagol, are certainly susceptible to its seductive power, the race of men, both the ‘lesser’ men of Middle-earth and the Númenorians,²⁹ are those who are most susceptible to the One Ring’s desiring-production. This vulnerability to the One Ring is akin to their vulnerability to the Sauron-assemblage as a whole as well, more specifically, their vulnerability to the Minor Rings of Power.

²⁹ The Númenorians were of the Men who assisted the Valar and Eldar during the War of Wrath and were thus gifted with the isle of Númenor “raised... out of the depths of the Great Water” and “wisdom and power and life more enduring than any others of mortal race have possessed... in all things more like to the Firstborn [Elves] than any other of the kindreds of Men” (*Silmarillion* 261).

The Nazgûl

The Minor Rings of Power are central aspects of the Sauron-assemblage, not because they constitute a milieu like the Sauron-Ring-Mordor milieu, but because they are primary parts of the assemblage's constitution. Forged by the Noldor Elves and their head smith, Celebrimbor, under the guidance of Sauron, disguised in elf form as Annatar, the Rings of Power were created with the intent to bring the free races of Middle-earth "under [Sauron's] vigilance" by way of the "One Ring to rule all others" to which the power of the Minor Rings was tied (*Silmarillion* 287). Thus, the milieu of the Sauron-assemblage expanded, changing the entire make-up of the assemblage, as "one can neither add nor subtract from the multiplicity that is the assemblage without changing it" (*Assemblage* 118). The constitution of the Sauron-assemblage was altered insofar as the flows were not just between the Sauron-Ring-Mordor milieu, nor assemblage flows just in the space which Sauron had striated. The flows of the assemblage now surpassed even just that geographical space which Sauron ruled, connecting to his milieu those bearers of the One Ring, in turn drawing them into the assemblage, inscribing their wills on the socius, and forcing those on the socius to desire the fascism of Sauron. Nineteen of these Minor Rings were forged: Nine for the kings of Men, Seven for the lords of the Dwarves, and three for the rulers of the Elves. While all these Rings are in some way attached to the Sauron-assemblage, their purposes are fulfilled in varying degrees. Their purpose in the assemblage is ultimately tied to Sauron's desire for domination; and as is the case with all assemblages, Sauron's "Desire creates by creating assemblages" (*Assemblage* 38). In order to exercise his desired power, Sauron must create a functioning assemblage; by extension, Sauron also desires the pieces of his assemblage,

or at least desires to ensure that they serve the purposes of his desire: "Sauron took the Nine Rings... but the Seven and the Three he could not find. Then Celebrimbor was put to torment, and Sauron learned from him where the Seven were bestowed. This Celebrimbor revealed, because neither the Seven nor the Nine did he value as he valued the Three; the Seven and the Nine were made with Sauron's aid, whereas the Three were made by Celebrimbor alone, with a different power and purpose" (*Unfinished* 238). Sauron desires the enactors of his desire, seeking that his assemblage should only expand and not shrink by the removal of concealment of Rings from him and the cutting off of their flows from the assemblage.

The Sauron-assemblage argument shatters if the Minor Rings and their bearers are considered fixed or end points and not connections of lines. Assemblages are constructed in a rhizomatic fashion and "A rhizome has no beginning or end; it is always in the middle, between things" (*Plateaus* 26) and there are "no points or positions in a rhizome... There are only lines" (7). Here, we should look to the Nazgûl. Each Nazgûl and their respective Ring within the Sauron-assemblage is a multiplicity and an event, the former of which Deleuze and Guattari describe as something that "has neither subject nor object, only determinations, magnitudes, and dimensions" (7). Plateaus are just multiplicities "connected to other multiplicities by superficial underground stems in such a way as to form or extend a rhizome" (23) which in turn are BwOs (183); all of these construct the assemblage, which "is precisely this increase in the dimensions of a multiplicity that necessarily changes in nature as it expands its connections" (7). Upon receiving their Rings and becoming part of the Sauron-assemblage, each of the Nazgûl becomes a body without organs "made up of plateaus... itself a plateau in communication with other

plateaus” (183), and as we know, rhizomes— and by extension assemblages— are made of plateaus (22). In becoming BwOs, the Nazgûl constitute plateaus within the Sauron-assemblage; furthermore, since they are multiplicities, they are also rhizomes in and of themselves, smaller assemblages attached to other assemblages. As smaller assemblages within themselves, the Nazgûl constantly change, expand, contract, attach, and detach from other lines and plateaus; they are always in motion and always becoming. The perpetual becoming-Nazgûl of each of the nine kings of Men pulled into the Sauron-assemblage by their Ring of Power makes them events: “Events... are part of the process of becoming and differentiation... In other words, Deleuzian events are rhizomatic and part of an ever-changing, ongoing process” (Beck and Gleyzon 329). By way of Deleuzian events being marked becomings and processes, the Nazgûl are events— intersections of lines and not points constantly becoming-Nazgûl. Yes, they are Nazgûl but they must continually maintain a certain Nazgûl-ness to be considered as such. There is constant production, a constant event, constant lines that draw them into the Sauron-assemblage; being ensnared to the One Ring, the Nazgûl relied on Sauron power to provide them with “glory and great wealth” until finally “they fell under the thralldom of the ring that they bore and under the domination of the One, which was Sauron’s” (*Silmarillion* 289). Knowing this, it becomes clear that the Nazgûl’s constant changing from men of power and wealth to shadows contingent on Sauron’s power to survive and have “as it seemed, unending life” (289) denotes a becoming-Nazgûl; they cannot unbecome Nazgûl, as their becoming is too far gone, but if they fail to become-Nazgûl who are attached to the power of Sauron and the One Ring, they would cease to exist. If the Nazgûl were points and unto themselves Nazgûl without their becoming, then they

would retain this Nazgûl-ness even when cut off from the flows of the Sauron-assemblage; however, there are two events that showcase the necessity of the flows from the Sauron-assemblage into the Nazgûl for them to be Nazgûl: Merry and Eowyn's encounter with the Witch-king during the Battle of Pelennor Fields and the fate of the Nazgûl after the destruction of the One Ring.

The magic of the Dúnedain knife from the Barrow-downs wielded by Merry during the Battle of Pelennor Fields disrupts the flows of the Sauron-assemblage to the Witch-king of Angmar.³⁰ The enchantment of Merry's knife "break[s] the spell that knit [the Witch-king's] unseen sinews" (*King* 118). This enchantment was created in direct opposition to Sauron's power, "wound about with spells for the bane of Mordor" (*Towers* 6), the dagger having been "wrought... long ago in the North-kingdom when the Dúnedain were young, and chief among their foes was the dread realm of Angmar and its sorcerer king" (118). Being that the Witch-king's power is a result of the Sauron-assemblage, the enchantment's opposition to the Witch-king's realm of Angmar would also be an opposition to the Dark powers of Sauron. Merry's dagger is thus able to cleave through the Dark flows of the Sauron-assemblage, not unlike how the Light in the Phial of Galadriel is able to break through the Dark striation of Mordor (*King* 188)³¹ or how the Elven Rings' power disrupts the lines of Darkness that emanate from Sauron and Mordor throughout Middle-earth.³² Once the Witch-king's connection to the Sauron-

³⁰ The Witch-king of Angmar was "the chief of the Ring-wraiths" ("Appendix A" 350) who was "King of Angmar long ago" (*King* 87), a kingdom of northern Middle-earth that "arose North beyond the Ettenmoors... with the purpose of destroying the Dúnedain in Arnor" ("Appendix A" 350).

³¹ The significance of this event will be discussed more extensively later in relation to Frodo's becoming-nomad.

³² This, once again, links back to the assemblage. The Elven Rings disrupt the flows of the Sauron-assemblage through the Light with which they are imbued, as the flows of the Sauron-assemblage are 'rays' of Darkness. The functionality of this in spatial theory and the assemblage will be explored later in the section on *spatiomagus*.

assemblage is disrupted, he fails to become-Nazgûl and is shocked out of his metaphysical body without organs: he is forced back into a physical organism that is vulnerable to Eowyn's unenchanted sword to kill his physical body. Once the physical body of the Witch-king has been killed by Eowyn, there are no organs that the flows of the Sauron-assemblage can de-organize into a BwO, and the Witch-king ceases to be, his power having been cut off from the Sauron-assemblage flows and his physical form having been slain.

The death of the rest of the Nazgûl follows a similar, but not exact, pattern. These deaths occur in *Return of the King* upon the destruction of the One Ring, and by extension, the obliteration of the Sauron-assemblage. As Mordor crumbles, the Nazgûl, flying atop their fell beasts,³³ are described as “shooting like raining bolts, as caught in the fiery ruin of hill and sky they crackled, withered, and went out” (*King* 241). While their ultimate destruction comes from the debris of the erupting Mount Doom as “Fire belched from its riven summit” (241), the vulnerability to death comes from the lack of connection to the Sauron-assemblage. Just as Merry's barrow-blade first had to slice off the flows of the Sauron-assemblage which gave the Witch-king his power, first the milieu of the Sauron-assemblage had to crumble, cutting off flows of power to the other Nazgûl and making them susceptible to the disastrous potency of natural elements. Previously, the Nazgûl displayed a resiliency to death by nature. Following Frodo's flight from the Black Riders to Rivendell, three of these Riders are assailed by a torrent of water instigated by the magic of Elrond and Gandalf (*Fellowship* 242); while, quite obviously, a violent torrent of water and fiery debris from a volcano are very different, the flood instigated

³³ The fell beasts are winged mounts of the Nazgûl described as “naked, and neither quill nor feather did it bear, and its vast pinions were as webs of hide between horned fingers... grew beyond the measure of all other things that fly” (*King* 113).

to protect Frodo in *Fellowship* was deadly to the horses of the Nazgûl, forcing them to find new steeds (299). By this notion, we can assume that the flood would be deadly enough to any entirely mortal rider; and by way of the Nazgûl's surviving this flood, the conclusion can be drawn that the Nazgûl should not have perished if they were not first sliced off from the assemblage-flows of the Sauron-assemblage.

The Seven and the Three

While Rings of Power gifted to the kings of Men were fully effective in their purpose within the Sauron-assemblage, the seven given to the Dwarf-lords were unable to overcome the powerful desiring-machines of the Dwarves. The Dwarves' resiliency to being drawn into the Sauron-assemblage is comparable to the resiliency of the stone they were carved from;³⁴ they were, however, still prone to obsessive desiring: "The only power over [Dwarves] that the Rings wielded as to inflame their hearts with a greed of gold and precious things... they could not be reduced to shadows enslaved to another will" ("Appendix A" 394). The Minor Rings given to them could not enslave them to *another's* will, but as Thorin Oakenshield portrays in *The Hobbit*, Dwarves can easily become slaves to their *own* desires.³⁵ Thus it is not because they lack desires that they are not drawn into the Sauron-assemblage as Ring-wraiths; instead, their own desiring-machines are more powerful than those found in the Minor Rings of Power. Their desire remains invested in the Dwarven socius. Being so invested in their desire for wealth and precious minerals—the socially accepted desires of the Dwarves—they use "their rings only for the

³⁴ (*Silmarillion* 44)

³⁵ Thorin's desire for the treasures of the Dwarven Kingdom of Erebor, newly liberated from the tyranny of the dragon, Smaug, leads to his isolation and the instigation of the Battle of the Five Armies.

getting of wealth” (*Silmarillion* 288). The competing socius of the Sauron-assemblage remains untethered from the codes of Dwarven desire, as they could not be made to desire the fascism of Sauron as the Kings of Men— later the Nazgûl— do.

While it is clear that the Minor Rings were ineffectual at creating flows between the Dwarf-lords and the Sauron-assemblage as an entirety, it cannot be spoken to how a dwarf would react to the desiring-producing machinations of the One Ring— a much more powerful desiring-machine. We must imagine that because of their powerful desiring-machines and the One Ring’s delineation of those desires towards itself, Dwarves would indeed be susceptible to the Sauron-assemblage once plugged into the desiring-machine of the One Ring. However, it is difficult to ascertain exactly how a dwarf might react to the desiring-machine of the One Ring, given that they were “made from their beginning of a kind to resist most steadfastly any domination” (“Appendix A” 394) and the difficulty of asserting an infallible answer about a fantasy race by way of real-world philosophy. Nonetheless, given that the Minor Rings attempt to draw their bearers into the socius of the Sauron-assemblage and make them desire his fascism, and that the One Ring functions only to create desire for itself by high-jacking the desiring-machines of the Ring-bearer, it would be safe to assume that despite the Minor Dwarven Rings failing in their domination of the Dwarves’ wills, the One Ring would be at least somewhat successful in the creation of a becoming-Gollum in a dwarf by feeding off of and high-jacking the strong powerful desiring-machines of the dwarves.

This stipulation about the One Ring extends to the Elves as well. While we do not see an elf take possession of the Ring, they are shown to have greater resilience to its seductions than

Men, as Elrond, an elf, implores Isildur³⁶ to forsake and destroy the Ring instead of desiring it in any capacity (*Silmarillion* 295). This desire for the Ring, however, does vary between Elves, as even though Elrond does not desire the Ring, Galadriel admits that she has secretly desired it (*Fellowship* 410); despite this, she is able to resist the temptation better than the Men of *Lord of the Rings* are shown capable of. Additionally, the Elves are fully aware of the destructive capabilities the Ring holds for them, refusing to take it for fear that it will utterly corrupt them and make them something other than themselves³⁷: “In place of the Dark Lord you will set up a Queen. And I shall not be dark, but beautiful and terrible as the Morning and the Night!... All shall love me and despair!” (410). While the effects of the One Ring on Elves are more clear than its effects on Dwarves, the assemblage connection of the Elven Minor Rings is slightly more dubious.

The Elven Rings exist inside the Sauron-assemblage, but act in opposition to the Dark will of Sauron. Being as the assemblage is just “a state of interactivity” (*Assemblage* 34), there is room for aspects that interact in a counterproductive way to the assemblage’s desire, namely, the Elven Rings and their wielders. These Elven Rings, despite remaining unsullied by Sauron’s hand, “were also subject to the One” (*Silmarillion* 288); they are connected to the One but disruptions to Sauron’s desire within his very assemblage. While the Dwarven Rings simply did not work in the way Sauron intended, the Elven Rings subvert the assemblage, imbuing their holders with “power according to the measure of each possessor” (*Fellowship* 411). Furthermore,

³⁶ Isildur is a Númenorian, the son of Elendil.

³⁷ Upon her rejection of the Ring, Galadriel states that she will “remain Galadriel,” showing an awareness that if she were to accept the Ring, in her would be produced a schizo-identity that is separate from the consciousness she possesses sans One Ring (*Fellowship* 411).

while the Dwarves desired adjacent to the Rings (they did not desire the Rings, but they also did not desire *against* them— they are simply too invested in their desire for wealth to pay any real attention to the desires for and against Sauron’s fascism), the Elves actively desired against the fascism of Sauron; the Dwarves’ desire were simply too socially invested in wealth for the Rings to hi-jack their desiring-production— the Elves have a metaphysical, almost religious, aversion to the fascism of Sauron. Being the eldest and favorite children of Eru Ilúvatar— the equivalent of the God in *Lord of the Rings*— the Elves have a proximity to goodness represented by Light that equally opposes the discord of Darkness, which is diffused by Sauron and Morgoth.³⁸ The Elves cannot— or will not— invest their desires into the Dark territory of the Sauron-assemblage; their desiring-production for the desire of Ilúvatar and all that is good in Middle-earth, though capable of being over-ridden by the One Ring, ultimately over-powers the desires presented by the three Elven Rings, and in fact allows them to invest their own desires for the Light into the Rings. Thus, the Elven Rings are still pieces of the Sauron-assemblage, tied to the powers of the One Ring, but are also coded into what could be called the Ilúvatar-assemblage, which introduces flows of Light into the Dark flows of the Sauron-assemblage. The dual investment of the Elven Rings makes their role in their two respective assemblages abstruse: while ultimately acting as inter-assemblage resistances to Sauron’s desires, the Rings’ powers are tied to that of the One, and their wielders are still vulnerable to the flows of the Sauron-assemblage.

³⁸ Morgoth is the master of Sauron, imprisoned by the Valar for the Darkness he introduced to Middle-earth and his evil deeds during the First Age of the world.

By the time of the War of the Ring, the wielders of the three Elven Rings were the elves Elrond, Galadriel, and the wizard Gandalf who concealed their ownership of the Ring in order to not draw attention to themselves from Sauron; while they “wield[ed] the Three Rings while Sauron slept” (“Appendix B” 403), the wielders of the Elven Rings “concealed them and never again used them openly while Sauron kept the Ruling Ring” (*Silmarillion* 288). However, those in possession of the Elven Rings could use them without fear of discovering during the time that Sauron was not in possession of the One Ring, allowing them to fortify strongholds such as Rivendell and Lothlórien against the lesser evils of Middle-earth. Though they used their Rings’ power to fortify their strength and strongholds, it was not evident to Sauron that this was the case; being separated from the Ruling Ring, Sauron’s flows to and from the assemblage were weaker, and the usage of the Elven Rings escaped his detection. During their usage by their wielders in the Third Age, the Rings were able to repel the likes of Orcs and Nazgûl from their strongholds; the Light imbued in the Elven Rings created a space of Light, resilient against both decay and Sauron’s Darkness: “the power of the White Ring, [the Lord of Morgul] would not defy, nor enter into Lórien” (*Unfinished* 339). But these spaces were not immune to the Sauron-assemblage. Spaces like Rivendell and Lothlórien that were fortified by Light against Sauron’s Darkness are like rooms with their windows open, allowing light to flood in; those such as the Nazgûl and Sauron’s Orcs are like blinds, attempting to cover up a window or two in the room. While this might make the space slightly darker for a time, the room is still lit and the blinds can be taken down. However, the Elves feared that their strongholds would not hold against Sauron at his full might, even without being reunited by the Ring:

“What power still remains lies with us, here in Imladris, or with Círdan at the Havens, or in Lórien. But have they the strength, have we here the strength to withstand the Enemy, the coming of Sauron at the last, when all else is overthrown?”

“I have not the strength,” said Elrond; “neither have they.”

“Then... the Ring cannot be kept from him for ever by strength,” said Glorfindel.

(Fellowship 298)

While the Nazgûl and Orcs may only be able to put blinds over one of these hypothetical windows, the full power of Sauron would be able to cover up every opening letting light into the room.

The Sauron-assemblage is a construction of Sauron’s desires and the interaction between different elements, both actual and virtual, to achieve these desires. While the creation of the assemblage began with the Sauron-Ring-Mordor milieu, upon the creating of the Rings of Power and the assemblage’s over-spilling of rhizomatic connections, “the milieu components cease[d] to be directional” (*Assemblage* 105). The lines had been formed and the flows begun, but the milieu could not direct or dictate how the assemblage connections would function. The desiring of Sauron created by these connections was most evident in the Nine Rings of Men: their desire for Sauron’s fascism upon receiving their Rings causes them to perpetually become-Nazgûl and actualize Sauron’s desire across Middle-earth. The Dwarven desiring-machines, however, rendered the desiring of Sauron via the Seven ineffective; and in the case of the Elves, their connection to the Light of the Ilúvatar-assemblage allows them to reappraise the Three to subvert

the desires of Sauron within his own assemblage. Despite the Rings of the Elves acting as inter-assemblage resistance to the Sauron-assemblage, their power was ultimately subject to that of the One Ring so that upon the destruction of the Sauron-assemblage, “the powers of the Three must then fail and all things maintained by them must fade, and so the Elves should pass into twilight” (*Silmarillion* 298). These flows and connections created and maintained by the Sauron-assemblage create the space in which Frodo Baggins becomes-nomad, driving the narrative of *Lord of the Rings*.

SECTION TWO— YEARS OF THE TREES 1495:³⁹ A BRIEF EXPOSITION ON THE THEORY OF *SPATIOMAGUS*

Everything is space— even the lack thereof constitutes a space that is occupied. Within each space is a different space, occasionally constituting an area in space as a place: “a given portion of space becomes a ‘place’ once it occasions a pause, a resting of eyes” (*Spatiality* 51). Just because you are in a space does not mean that you are occupying the same place as someone else. Picture the expansive land of the Midwest United States. If Farmer A and Farmer B settle on the same swathe of land here, they are in the same space: a lush, grass field on which their cattle can graze and their grains can grow. But they are not in the same place; an invisible division is drawn between Farmer A’s field and Farmer B’s field, and Farmer A may shoot Farmer B if he crosses this boundary, walking across the space but leaving his place and entering another’s. Someone looking down on this plain may think it is the same space, but there are places within this space: Farmer A and Farmer B’s separate cattle grazing area, the playhouse under the willow that Farmer B’s children play in, the favorite fishing spot along the river of Farmer A, the grave of Farmer B’s family dog; and all this space, all these places, built atop of the land of the indigenous peoples displaced by the settling of Farmer A and B. Farmer A, Farmer B, and the indigenous peoples may all be in the same physical, geographical coordinates, but they are not in the same space; the space they occupy is coded differently. I use this example

³⁹ The year known as the Darkening of Valinor. Morgoth and Ungoliant destroy the trees of Valinor, the original sources of Light, and sow Darkness throughout Arda (*Silmarillion* 76).

because the reality of it grounds the complexities of how space is coded before expanding the spatial discussion to that of the fantasy novel and its space.

The issue that currently exists in the study of space in fantasy novels is that in order to study this space, one must study the representations of real space; doing away with this bias would allow for space in fantasy literature to be studied in a way that liberates it from the belligerent insertions of real space by scholars into these fantastical settings who have “envisioned a demystification of the world” (*Topophrenia* 143). Spatial theory, while “needed as a means for giving form to and making sense of texts and events... is also limited by its own situatedness” (*Topophrenia* 66). In order to escape from this current trapping of spatial theory, this section proposes to do to spatial studies what New Criticism⁴⁰ has done to literary studies. When it comes to fantastical space, we are simply looking in the mirror the wrong way. The question is not “how can I understand reality reflected in fantasy” but “how can I understand fantasy through my understanding of the real world?” We cannot stop at perceiving that Marxism may exist in a fantasy world and say “ah yes, the class struggle”— we have to go further and say “I begin to understand this fantasy in terms of reality’s class struggle. But how might magic and fantasy perpetuate or activate this? And how does magic cause or allow this to exist? Based on the struggles of reality, how might I understand the fictional struggles and how they are heightened or alleviated by magic within this fantasy novel?” The disparity between the orc slavers and slaves of Mordor should not be necessarily read as reflective of serfdom or the class struggle in our real space but instead, we can apply our knowledge of serfdom and Marxism in

⁴⁰ I mean that I wish to read space in fantasy as a self-contained vessel and how it functions in relationship to the fantastical elements without consideration for the context of the text’s production.

our real space in order to examine this relationship within *Lord of the Ring's* Middle-earth. This example, however, is missing a key aspect of what I propose: space. Thinking in terms of *Lord of the Rings*, Mordor bears examination as well as how Sauron's heightened power within the confines of this space might crush the wills of men⁴¹ or muster his armies of orcs⁴² to be more cruel slave masters. Thus, given these elements of magic, we cannot read Mordor as a mimesis of real space or as a representation. Instead, we must rely on what I term *spatiomagus*⁴³ in order to examine space in fantasy through solely the lens of magic and fantastical elements.⁴⁴

We should read fantasy as deterritorialized from the world and as the escapism that it is often criticized to be; and when we read fantasy as a representation of the world, we are attempting to reterritorialize the fantasy world back into our world, trying to plant the book in the world when Deleuze and Guattari urge us to "Make rhizomes, not roots, never plant!" (*Plateaus* 26). Furthermore, Robert Tally observes that "*fantasy* is freighted with a rather pejorative sense in modern criticism and theory. Fantasy is opposed not only to mimetic realism in literature or art but also to reality itself at times. Fantasy's apparent rejection of the real, the possible, and even the probable is perhaps reason enough for some to reject it outright" (*Topophrenia* 147). I take these criticisms of fantasy in stride, and unlike China Miéville who "asserts that fantasy offers a better approach to realism for getting at the truth of the 'real world' under capitalism" (150),

⁴¹ *Towers* 355

⁴² "armies he had. As far as their eyes could reach, along the skirts of the Morgan and away southward, there were camps, some of tents, some ordered like small towns" (*King* 212).

⁴³ *spatio-* coming from the Latin root *spati-*, meaning space, and the Latin adjective *magus*, which means magic or magical.

⁴⁴ I am tempted to term this *geomagus* but that would be to limit the concept. This theory aims not to look at the *geography* of fantasy but rather the *space* of fantasy in its entirety; how magic permeates the people, places, spaces, and structures in their entirety. Thus, *geomagus* could be conceptualized as a subject of *spatiomagus* but not as a synonymous term.

embrace the fact that fantasy is regarded as nothing more than escapism.⁴⁵ By wholeheartedly embracing this critique of the genre, *spatiomagus* is able to free itself from forced mimesis—when the genre so ardently seeks to escape it— and illustrate the fantasy novel as “not an image of the world. It forms a rhizome with the world, there is an aparallel evolution of the book and the world; the book assures the deterritorialization of the world, but the world effects a reterritorialization of the book” (*Plateaus* 10). *Spatiomagus* allows the fantasy novel to deterritorialize from the world and only be reterritorialized when we attempt to understand the fantasy through our world, not when we try to understand our world through the fantasy.

Fantasy is a moralistic genre. Light and Darkness in the genre are often recreations of the author’s ideology, such as Tolkien’s Catholicism, and equate the ‘good’ or Light in their fantasy world to what is considered ‘good’ or ‘right’ in their ideology. The symbolism of Dark and Light has been manipulated with all the way back to Tolkien;⁴⁶ however, the stark good-evil binary is maintained in ideology, regardless of the utilization of deceptive light-dark imagery. Jameson is critical of this “binary opposition... between good and evil” present in fantasy, illustrating the Nietzschean problematics with this binary as evil historically characterizes “whatever is radically different from me, whatever by virtue of precisely that difference seems to constitute a real and

⁴⁵ Fantasy as escapism is not entirely removed from politics and ethical considerations. Robert Fisher observes that capitalism has “colonized the dreaming life of the population... the pre-emptive formatting and shaping of desires, aspirations and hopes” (8-9). As escapism, fantasy allows the reader to escape this. They are not getting at the ‘real world’ under capitalism, as Miéville proposes, but finding a way to escape the seemingly inescapable net of capitalism and desire something outside of the realm of the real.

⁴⁶ In their introductions, the colors associated with these characters are contrary to their moral alignments: Aragorn — or Strider, as he is first known by the Hobbits— is introduced as “a strange-looking weather-beaten man sitting in the shadows... A travel-stained cloak of heavy dark-green cloth was drawn close about him... he wore a hood that overshadowed his face” (*Fellowship* 177) and Saruman is closely associated with the color white. However, by the end of *Lord of the Rings*, both characters are finally coded with either Light or Darkness as it correlates to their morality: from Saruman comes a “grey mist... like smoke from a fire” upon his death (*King* 326) while in Aragorn’s eventual crown “was set a single jewel the light of which went up like a flame” (*King* 265). Furthermore, his regnant name is Elessar, meaning Elfstone in the Elvish language, a stone Light (*Unfinished* 251).

urgent threat to my own existence” (101). Malone responds to Jameson’s demonization of the ethics of fantasy by offering a turn towards studying “hybrid texts, works that are part fantasy and part other genre,” asking if eliminating the good-evil binary in fantasy “break[s] the boundaries or ‘rehabilitate[s]’ the genre?” (205). She continues by suggesting the “militarist and racialist ideology found in medievalist fantasy” (211) and addressing the alleged “racialism, totalitarianism, and chauvinism” of *Lord of the Rings* (219), finally coming to the conclusion that “medievalist fantasy is perhaps best understood as a dream-space” (221). It is from this viewpoint of fantasy as a dream-space that *spatiomagus* can expand as a theory, not likening the good-evil binaries of the genre to the good-evil binaries of the real world, as Jameson would, but instead understanding the good-evil binaries of fantasy as strife internal to the genre; again, we turn to Deleuze and Guattari’s question “How does it work?” (*Anti-Oedipus* 109). We do not want to insist on inquiring about the Light and Dark of fantasy as “What does it mean?” (*Anti-Oedipus* 109) but rather ask how Light and Dark, good and evil, moral and immoral function within fantasy novels; and more importantly, how does the good and evil of magic impact the spatial elements of these novels?

Deleuze and Guattari differentiate between smooth and striated space as such: in smooth space “one occupies without counting” but in striated space one “counts in order to occupy” (*Plateaus* 555). Striated space is demarcated by both virtual and actual lines whereas smooth space is space un-demarcated: the former is like knitting wherein “the needles produce a striated space,” and in turn, a systematic, lumpy texture, while the latter is like patchwork, which “may display equivalents to themes, symmetries, and resonance... But the fact remains that its space is

not constituted in the same way”— it is not beholden to patterns of segregation, classification, or allocation (*Plateaus* 553-554). This is the genesis of *spatiomagus*. Through the lens of *spatiomagus*, magic is striation; of course, there is still normal striation in fantasy: the space of Gondor in which Faramir is commanded to execute trespassers (*Towers* 307), the private property of Bag End— “NO ADMITTANCE EXCEPT ON PARTY BUSINESS”— (*Fellowship* 27), and the segregation of the four villages of Bree-land (*Fellowship* 170), to name a few. The striation of space is not so simple as the roads that cut up the space of Bree-land or the tiered segregation of the city of Minas Tirith:⁴⁷ “Striation is not simply the construction of places in the geographical sense but the physical and ideological framework by which construction becomes possible” (Saldanha 113). By viewing fantasy through *spatiomagus*, magic— and in most fantastical cases, Dark magic, as Light is generally ‘smooth’— replaces the ideological framework which makes construction possible. There are, of course, the ideologies of good and evil that guide the author’s writing of the novel’s protagonist and antagonist, but these are again linking the fantasy novel to the larger world; Sauron is not concerned with whether his want for power is Machiavellian, and we shouldn’t care either. There is no guiding ethical philosophy behind Melkor’s want for discord⁴⁸ or Sauron’s desire to dominate Middle-earth, and it would be reductive to the novel’s internal narrative to reduce these evil desires to being a product of

⁴⁷ Following the fall of Osgiliath to Sauron’s forces, Minas Tirith became the primary capital of Gondor. Built into the side of a mountain, the city “was such that it was built on seven levels, each delved into the hill, and about each was set a wall, and in each wall was a gate... the paved way that climbed towards the Citadel turned first this way and then that across the face of the hill... Thus men reached at last the High Court, and the Place of the Fountain before the feet of the White Tower... fifty fathoms from its base to the pinnacle” (*King* 8-9).

⁴⁸ There are very clear parallels between the fall of the angel Lucifer and Melkor/Morgoth’s introduction of “matters of his own imagining” at odds with Ilúvatar’s creation song (*Silmarillion* 16) and his desire to “have subjects and servants, and to be called Lord, and to be master over other wills” (18). However, we have to divorce the authorial intent of representing Christian Evil behind this parallel from the magical Darkness that it is in the text.

Tolkien's Catholicism. Without inserting real-world ideology into fantasy, there is only the inherent, religious-adjacent good-evil dichotomy by which to judge Light and Dark; and in leaving this dichotomy uninterrogated, it closes the door to ideologically-coded space and opens one to magically-coded space.

Commonly in fantasy, Darkness is tangible; it is itself a substance, not an absence, "enacted, rather than defined" ("Defying" 16). There is the actual, visible dark that it produces: the absence of physical light, the impairment of vision. And there is the unseen, yet felt presence of the Dark: a feeling of doom, hopelessness, or dread that affects characters, controls their actions, or influences their relationship to the space. It is this latter effect that is of concern here and makes Darkness most akin to the Deleuzoguattarian idea of striation—the idea that "one closes off a surface and 'allocates' it according to determinate intervals, assigned breaks" (*Plateaus* 559). *Spatiomagus* appropriates Deleuze and Guattari's smooth and striated to synchronously examine magic and space in a way that hasn't been done before. *Magical Realism: Theory, History, Community* touches on the interaction of magic and space, but only in magical realist texts, once again limiting the study of space in fantasy to the scope of the real. Additionally, Bunting and Currie's article "Tolkien's Fantasy Landscape" engages too much with Tolkien's biographical material to be pertinent to the insular scope of *spatiomagus*. As a theory, *spatiomagus* interrogates how magic invests in space and how this in turn affects the experience of this space. In particular, how the spaces invested in by Light are magically smooth and how those invested in by Darkness are magically striated. There is not an exact correlation between Deleuze and Guattari's original conception of smooth and striated space and its adaptation here

of Light=smooth and Dark=striated space.⁴⁹ Perhaps some will think that this adaption of Deleuze and Guattari makes *spatiomagus* a bad reading of their philosophy, but like Deleuze and Guattari, I don't know which is superior: "a bad reading, or no reading at all" (*Anti-Oedipus* 379). Striation is grooved or textured; there is a 'bumpiness' to it: Darkness as striation adds this texture to space. Light is the smooth space that comes not necessarily always with the nomad but with the moral and divine good of the fantasy novel. In *spatiomagus*, Darkness is like synthetic dunes, created in order to shape a space, and Light is like the forces of nature washing a wave over them, cutting through them, and smoothing the space of its 'bumpiness' though not uncoding the space entirely.

Darkness=Striation

In Middle-earth, and all of Arda,⁵⁰ Darkness is striation. Of course, there is the normal striation of space that we can see in kingdoms such as Gondor and Rohan; but Darkness as striation is a more tangible and yet metaphysical form of striated space. There is 'normal' darkness in Middle-earth as well (night, an unlit room, etc.) but the Darkness that is striation is concretized in more tangible effects: "The Light failed; but the Darkness that followed was more than loss of light. In that hour was made a Darkness that seemed not a lack but a thing with being of its own: for it was indeed made by malice out of Light, and it had power to pierce the eye, and to enter heart and mind, and strangle the very will" (Silmarillion 76). In the corpus of Tolkien's work on Middle-earth, "Both light and dark are reified" ("Defying" 117): Darkness is made

⁴⁹ Lysen and Pisters open a space for this, claiming there is room "to shed new and interdisciplinary light upon the concepts of smoothness and striation, and, conversely, upon the way the smooth and striated can give important insights into artistic practices" (2).

⁵⁰ Arda is the name for Earth in *Lord of the Rings*.

tangible as something heavy, akin to “a gaseous residue” (117) while Light feels liberating and aqueous, like the “sea... a smooth space par excellence” (*Plateaus* 557). If Darkness=striation, then Light=smooth space; however, as Deleuze and Guattari remind us, “smooth spaces are not in themselves liberatory” (*Plateaus* 581). This can be seen in places such as Rivendell and Lothlórien: they are free from the striation of Darkness but are not wholly liberated in all senses.

The idea of Light still comes with expectations and demands— places imbued with it are not uncoded— and in the case of Rivendell and Lothlórien, they represent a decaying yet firmly set stronghold against the flows of Darkness attempting to striate Middle-earth. Flieger notes that in *Lord of the Rings*, directional movement is associated with Light (*Splintered* 124),⁵¹ putting movement and Light at odds with the sedentary space of the striated, like Mordor (*Plateaus* 552). Rivendell and Lothlórien are sedentary places as well; however, they also constitute Light-coded movement insofar as there is movement *through* them. Mordor is never more than an end goal: a place where Frodo can destroy the Ring, the endpoint of the journey. Rivendell and Lothlórien, however, are places through which the Fellowship on their divine journey travels, places of rest which foster further movement of Light: “Now is the time... when those who wish to continue the Quest must... leave this land” (*Fellowship* 412). In order to be a part of the moving Light in the narrative, the characters must depart Lothlórien; thus while a place constituting a pause, Lothlórien is still associated with directional movement. And in the case of Rivendell, it is a

⁵¹ “smooth space is directional” (*Plateaus* 556).

place that not only fosters movement in and out of it but the very place where the directional movement of the Light in *Lord of the Rings* truly begets.⁵²

Darkness is directional, albeit in a different way: it is directional in the way that it spreads. However, the directional lines of Darkness are “subordinated to points,” whereas with the directional movement of Light, like the Fellowship of the Ring, “the points are subordinated to the trajectory” (*Plateaus* 556). True, there is a point for the trajectory of the Fellowship to end — Mordor— but their direction is not constituted by set paths; the entire journey of the Fellowship, of Light, is rhizomatic in the way that it first breaks at the end of *Fellowship of the Ring*: how Merry and Pippin are taken hostage by Uruk-hai, journeying to Isengard. Aragorn, Gimli, and Legolas intersect with them, but only after their lines of trajectory take them through Rohan, to Helm’s Deep. Frodo and Sam are redirected from their original path, fleeing from the Fellowship and engaging in spatial nomadism as they make their way to Mordor: the Fellowship is a rhizome. On the other hand, the directional movement of Sauron and his forces— this movement actualized by the Dark flows of the Sauron-assemblage— is subject to points. Within the points that construct the exterior limit of the Sauron-assemblage, there is the rhizome of the assemblage: the Ring connecting to the Minor Rings, the Nazgûl connected to Sauron, each other, and Frodo, etc. However, the physical territory of the Sauron-assemblage is limited; its

⁵² “[T]he cartography— both the imaginary cartography of Tolkien’s narratives and his own literal map made for inclusion in *The Hobbit* and *Lord of the Rings*— of this imaginary space is essential to the plot” (*Spatiality* 151). Not only are these spaces and places essential to the plot, but the magic of these spaces and places is essential to understanding the movements and feelings of characters through Tolkien’s cartography.

non-physical territory can be stretched via the wraith-world⁵³ but the actual territory of Mordor has its limits— limits that can only be expanded in a point-to-point directional movement. The line-flows of the Sauron-assemblage are rhizomatic, but in the way that these flows affect space, they are subject to points: the virtual is rhizomatic, the actual is arborescent. There cannot just be an expansion of the assemblage in order to striate the space with Darkness: the coming of Sauron’s army to the gate of Minas Tirith during the Siege of Gondor does not automatically striate the space with Darkness. The Darkness is tangible as its virtual lines flow to, from, and around the points in the Sauron-assemblage, but it has not yet invested in the space. The spatial investment of these Dark, striating lines of the Sauron-assemblage can be seen, however, in the conversion of Minas Ithil to Minas Morgul.

Minas Morgul is a city striated by the Sauron-assemblage by way of the Nazgûl and their conquest of it. Initially called Minas Ithil, Minas Morgul is the sister city of Minas Tirith⁵⁴, wrenched from Gondor’s power by the Nazgûl, who “filled it, and all the valley about it, with decay: it seemed empty and was not so, for a shapeless fear lived within the ruined walls” (*Towers* 339). This shapeless fear and decay is the striation caused by the Sauron-assemblage. The space itself has been impacted and shaped by the Dark Sauron-assemblage flows; these flows have carved up the space, instilling both invisible “shapeless fear”— just as real striation

⁵³ This term is only used once in *Lord of the Rings* (though is not the only time it’s seen) when Gandalf describes Frodo’s peril upon being stabbed by the Witch-king’s Morgul-blade: “But it was a terribly narrow shave, so to speak. You were in gravest peril while you wore the Ring, for then you were half in the wraith-world yourself, and they might have seized you. You could see them, and they could see you” (*Fellowship* 249). The Wraith-world is a world of spirits where the Nazgûl are visible; the only time we see characters entering this world in *Lord of the Rings* is once they put the One Ring on their finger and become invisible to all except Sauron and the Nazgûl. Thus, we can assume that it is a physical-adjacent world that is a virtual extension of Mordor’s territory.

⁵⁴ Upon the Nazgûl’s conquest of Minas Ithil, both this city and Minas Tirith had their names changed: Minas Ithil became Minas Morgul, and Minas Tirith gained its name around this time, having been originally called Minas Anor (*Silmarillion* 297).

dictates invisible impacts on us (this is private property, leave or get arrested!)— and physical manifestations of this Darkness=striation: “the light of [Minas Morgul] now, wavering and blowing like a noisome exhalation of decay, a corpse-light, a light that illuminated nothing” (*Towers* 353) like the actual effects of striation (I have drawn up a fence and a threatening sign around my property so you no longer trespass). The Sauron-assemblage and its Darkness have invested in this space; Minas Ithil was already a place in terms of pause and striation by the kingdom of Gondor, but there was no magical striation present in the place. The expansion of the Nazgûl into this place and their subsequent magical investment in Minas Ithil created a place dictated in terms of magic: Minas Morgul. Even after dispelling the Nazgûl and orcs from Minas Morgul, there is remaining Darkness in the space; the magical striation of Minas Morgul is not contingent on there still being the presence of the Sauron-assemblage, as the assemblage has already invested in the space and introduced Darkness to it: “although it might in time come to be made clean, no man might dwell there for many long years” (*King* 267). Without the Light magic of the Elves, the Valar, or Ilúvatar, the men of Gondor are unable to rid Minas Morgul of its Dark striation by utilizing Light as a smoothing of the space. As outlined at the outset of this section, this analysis of Minas Morgul via *spatiomagus* does not use fantasy to help us understand the real world, but rather the real world to help us understand fantasy.

Spatiomagus is a concept that begs to be expanded through fantasy past the confines of *Lord of the Rings*. Just as Tolkien’s fantasy acted as a keystone for the fantasy genre as a whole, this section’s proposal of the theory of *spatiomagus* seeks to act as groundwork for *spatiomagus*’s expansion into other novels, adapting and evolving as it dissects space and magic

in both other popular linchpin fantasies, such as George R.R. Martin's *Game of Thrones*, and more esoteric fantasy works, such as Piers Antony's *Magic of Xanth*, *The Adventure Zone*, or C.S. Friedman's *Coldfire* trilogy.⁵⁵ Given *spatiomagus*'s strong underpinnings of post-structuralist philosophy, it may find itself at odds with the escapist nature of fantasy; however, it is this post-structuralism that allows fantasy to be just that: escapist. *Spatiomagus* seeks to deterritorialize the fantasy novel from the work and remove it from the biases that may have created the fantastical world. While theories which dissect these biases— classism, racism, sexism, colonialism, etc.— in fantasy are vital, *spatiomagus* offers a nuanced view of space in these fantasies without the tint of influence. In viewing magical space as divorced from the real world, we can glean an escapist understanding of the fantasy novel. To return to Tolkien, *spatiomagus* allows *Lord of the Rings* to escape relation to Tolkien's experience as a soldier in World War I and be read as pure fantasy.⁵⁶ The aforementioned suggested applications of *spatiomagus* to different fantasy novels and series ultimately lie outside the scope of this thesis; however, by carrying *spatiomagus* through the remainder of the thesis, the space of *Lord of the Rings* can be understood in a radically new way.

⁵⁵ The latter of these two works are non-traditional pieces of fantasy literature. In its graphic novel form, *The Adventure Zone* opens a new door for *spatiomagus* to examine visual elements of space within fantasy. The science-fantasy genre of Friedman's *Coldfire* trilogy also allows for a different application of *spatiomagus* with its scientific elements, allowing space for different nuances to the theory to be introduced.

⁵⁶ For instance, Loconte explores how World War I and Tolkien's Catholicism heavily shape the world of Middle-earth. I am not refuting Loconte's argument or saying he is wrong but rather offering a fundamentally different reading and understanding of *Lord of the Rings*.

OCTOBER 25, THIRD AGE 3018:⁵⁷ FRODO THE WAR MACHINE

“Proposition IX. War does not necessarily have the battle as its object, and more important, the war machine does not necessarily have war as its object, although war and the battle may be its necessary result (under certain conditions)” (Plateaus 484)

This section is a milieu: the center of this thesis and an unnumbered section, refusing to find a place to be except in the middle. As such, it is also a place where all other concepts from this thesis converge: the assemblage, *spatiomagus*, and becoming—the focal points of the other sections—unify here in such a way that to re-describe the concepts in full would be a redundancy. Given this, this section avoids a traditional literature review, opting to engage with the presented concepts immediately instead. Here, Frodo Baggins is examined at length as becoming-nomad, the war machine, and the anti-Sauron-assemblage. The Deleuzoguattarian ideas of the nomad and the war machine are very similar: both exist in smooth space and rival the State’s striated space. It is through his divine mission to destroy the One Ring that Frodo is able to become-nomad and create the Fellowship of the Ring-war machine.

The Fellowship of the Ring is a perfect example of Deleuze and Guattari’s war machine. The term war machine may at first be misleading—it does not “necessarily have the battle... [or] war as its object” (*Plateaus* 484). It is a machine that “has many varied meanings, and this is precisely because the war machine has an extremely variable relation to war itself” (491), and in the case of the Fellowship, a machine that “invents speed and secrecy” (*Plateaus* 413)— the

⁵⁷ This is the exact date of the Council of Elrond during which Frodo formally accepted the burden of the One Ring, forming the Fellowship of the Ring (*King* 412).

verbiage used by Elrond when constructing the Fellowship: “The number must be few, since your hope is in speed and secrecy” (*Fellowship* 309). The Fellowship is not only a war machine through its actions— evading battle as its objective, smoothing space— but in the very language used by Tolkien as well. While Elrond believes the “hope” of the Fellowship is in speed in secrecy, they invent it as the war machine does; they consciously conceal themselves in an invention of these two attributes of the war machine: “‘Lie flat and still!’... ‘As for moving as soon as it is dark, I am afraid that you are right’” (*Fellowship* 320). The semantic difference between Elrond’s “hope” and Deleuze and Guattari’s “invents” is rendered moot by the actions of the Fellowship. Their invention is of speed and secrecy, and when speed and secrecy fail all those except Frodo and Sam— who still, I might add, invent speed and secrecy up until the very end of their mission— take “war and the battle [as] its necessary result” (*Plateaus* 484). In its original conception, though, the Fellowship-war machine was conceived with the intention of secrecy, the number of its members chosen to match the number of Sauron’s Nazgûl⁵⁸ and directly rival the powers of Sauron— the stand-in here for what Deleuze and Guattari call the State. However, the Darkness of the Sauron-assemblage is insatiable and as it expands seeks to continually gather up more lines within its rhizome. Though the number of the Fellowship and the Nazgûl is each nine, this does not eliminate the possibility of the Fellowship as an entirety being co-opted into service to Sauron, numbering his servants eighteen. There is the fear of the war machine being appropriated by the state:⁵⁹ a danger made even more real as Frodo connects himself to the Sauron-assemblage via the Ring. Not only is there the danger of Frodo

⁵⁸ (*Fellowship* 309)

⁵⁹ “The State... has a power of appropriation” (*Plateaus* 508)

“becom[ing] a wraith under the dominion of the Dark Lord” (*Fellowship* 248) but the danger of State-appropriation that exists for every war machine.

Frodo’s becoming-nomad allows the Fellowship as a whole to be a war machine; they did not all accept Middle-earth’s burden of the Ring but rather accepted the burden of guiding and supporting Frodo (*Fellowship* 304; 309-310). Through his acceptance of the divine mission to destroy the One Ring, Frodo becomes an agent of Light, insofar as Light is explored in the section of *spatiomagus*. As such, Frodo is also an agent of the smooth: the nomad. It is within this smooth space of the nomad that “the war machine develops” (*Plateaus* 552), and the existence of Frodo as a nomad “effectuates the conditions of the war machine in space” (*Plateaus* 443). The Fellowship was formed in Rivendell but developed along the smooth space of their journey’s “nomadic trajectory” that “distributes people... in an open space” (443). The paths taken by the nomad Frodo and his Fellowship-war machine follow known points—Moria, Lothlórien, Caradhras’ Redhorn Pass— but only so far as the points “are strictly subordinated to the paths they determine... the in-between has taken on all the consistency and enjoys both an autonomy and direction of its own” (*Plateaus* 443). The path of the Fellowship to either cross the mountain Caradhras or go through Moria is not subject to the points of these places, but rather these places are subject to the nomad-war machine’s trajectory; more specifically, the trajectory of the war machine as dictated by Frodo: “how can I return without shame— unless there is indeed no other way, and we are already defeated?... we must go on, if there is a way” (*Fellowship* 331). The Fellowship may be a war machine but only so far as it is attached to

Frodo; it is Frodo's becoming-nomad that is the war machine, and the Fellowship is a part of this Frodo-assemblage.

As the war machine is a nomad, the war machine creates smooth space and moves through it. This smooth space is contrasted to the desires of the State and the striated space it utilizes: "One of the fundamental tasks of the State is to striate the space over which it reigns, or to utilize smooth space as a means of communications in the service of striated space. It is a vital concern of every State not only to vanquish nomadism but to control migrations" (*Plateaus* 449). Sauron, as the State, seeks to vanquish the nomadism of Frodo and his Fellowship as well as control the movements of the potentially appropriated Fellowship-war machine. As a war machine, Frodo "ha[s] a power of metamorphosis, which of course allows [him] to be captured by States, but also to resist that capture" (*Plateaus* 508): Frodo is faced with becomings through which he could be appropriated into the Sauron-assemblage as well as the ability to evade being drawn into the Sauron-assemblage. Frodo is able to enact the latter through his divine mission to destroy the Ring; additionally, through this divine mission, Frodo can uniquely become-nomad.

Frodo is not only a spatial nomad but a magical nomad as well. He traverses space using places "conceived in terms of the trajectory that is forever mobilizing [him]" (*Plateaus* 443), becoming-nomad in a spatial sense. His magical nomadism comes with the appointment of his divine mission to destroy the One Ring: "I think this task is appointed for you, Frodo; and that if you do not find a way, no one will" (*Fellowship* 303).⁶⁰ His magical nomadism can be pictured as such: Frodo's becoming-nomad is a circle of Light in the expansive Darkness of the Sauron-

⁶⁰ While the appointment of this task is not voiced to Frodo by Ilúvatar or the Valar, it is the implication that the task is bestowed upon him by a power higher than Elrond, who voices it to Frodo.

assemblage he connects to via the Ring— this Light is the Light of Ilúvatar emanating from him from the appointment of his mission. As he is attached to the Sauron-assemblage via the Ring, Frodo is able to pursue certain radiuses of becoming-Gollum, becoming-Sauron, and becoming-Nazgûl; however, he can only pursue these radiuses so far as the Light covers them. That is, if becoming-nomad is a circle, becoming-Gollum, -Sauron, and -Nazgûl are lines that meet at and shoot out from the center of the circle. Frodo can pursue these three becomings offered by the Ring to his own ends only so long as they remain in the radius offered by the Light of Ilúvatar; when traveling outside of this radius, he pursues one of the becomings to an extreme and is unable to reterritorialize back into becoming-nomad, as it seen on the slopes of Mount Doom, explored later in this section. The divinity of the mission to destroy the One Ring comes from Ilúvatar and the fact of the Ring as a burden to Middle-earth: “for good or ill it belongs to Middle-earth; it is for us who still dwell here to deal with it” (*Fellowship* 298). In accepting the task, Frodo represents the Light of the Valar, accepting the task through a curious mixture of his own volition and destiny: “At last with an effort he spoke, and wondered to hear his own words, as if some other will was using his small voice. ‘I will take the Ring,’ he said, ‘though I do not know the way’” (303). There could not be another to destroy the Ring besides Frodo, but in order for Frodo to fulfill his destiny and destroy the Ring, he first had to accept the task in his own words. The acceptance of this task forces Frodo to abandon his home and seek his own path, becoming-nomad in a spatial sense, and internalize the “pinioned battle between light and dark both outside and inside... perfectly balanced and tormented by the equal stress exerted by positive and negative forces... neither the one nor the other, nor yet both” (*Splintered* 153). In

this sense, he is also becoming-nomad magically, at the same time both the Dark and Light and neither of them, “always in the middle... neither one nor two, nor the relation of the two... the in-between” (*Plateaus* 342). Frodo is not the only Ring-bearer in the history of Middle-earth, but it is his divine acceptance of the burden to destroy the Ring that allows him to become-nomad.

Unlike Frodo, Sam as a Ring-bearer is not in this constant state of becoming. While he becomes-Frodo⁶¹ for a time, upon returning the Ring to Frodo and allowing Frodo to complete his divine mission, Sam ceases to become-Frodo (*King* 198). As such, Sam is able to continue living in Middle-earth: while he was a Ring-bearer for a time, he was not affected by the Ring so much as Frodo and Bilbo were. The latter of these nearly gave entirely into his becoming-Gollum, going so far as to attempt to reterritorialize into his schizo-identity with the refrain of “my precious” (*Fellowship* 35). Frodo is something else entirely; despite abandoning his becoming-nomad for the sake of the Ring on Mount Doom, he has still undergone becoming-nomad and is unable to feel at home in the Shire (*King* 338). The Ring has created multiple becomings in him, his divine mission to destroy the Ring has forced him to become-nomad as a war machine, and his wound at the hand of the Witch-king at Weathertop⁶² has caused him to be even more intimately intertwined with the Sauron-assemblage. He is utterly reshaped from the hobbit he was when leaving Bag End for Bree. Sam, on the other hand, has not become-nomad as Frodo has and is still able to feel at home in the Shire: “I wish I could go all the way with you

⁶¹ It is not Sam’s divine mission to destroy the One Ring, as it is Frodo’s, so he cannot become-nomad in the same way that Frodo does. Furthermore, the centrality of Frodo to the Fellowship is recognized, and his companions are all given the ability to become-Frodo should Frodo fail: “the council gave [Frodo] companions, so that the errand should not fail” (*Towers* 386). It is only Frodo who can become-nomad given that the “task is appointed for [Frodo]” (*Fellowship* 303) but it is the ability of all members of the Fellowship-war machine to become-Frodo should the need arise.

⁶² (*Fellowship* 221)

to Rivendell... And yet the only place I really want to be in is here [the Shire]" (*King* 335).

Regardless of Sam feeling "torn in two" (335) by his desire for certain spaces, all of the (surviving) Ring-bearers are able to go to the Undying Lands,⁶³ with Sam not being forbidden but delayed from this journey, as there seems that there is somewhat of a necessity to this journey: "you were a Ring-bearer too, if only for a little while. Your time may come" (*King* 337).

The Ring-bearers are split from their initial being into some kind of becoming during their time plugged into the Ring, changed somehow, though at different levels, by the Ring's influence.

There is never a completion of the becoming process. Frodo becomes-nomad perpetually without fully *being* a nomad; becomings are "always in the middle... neither one nor two" (*Plateaus* 342). After experiencing their respective becomings, the Ring-bearers are neither who they were pre-becoming, nor the subject that their becoming was towards: Frodo is not a nomad, Bilbo is not Gollum, and Sam is not Frodo. They are something new entirely; something that was unintended, unexpected, and very different from both their initial selves and what their becoming was toward: a becoming is not "imitating [an] entity or even transforming oneself into it" (*Plateaus* 321). Becoming does not go from point A to point B, from Frodo to nomad, as it "is not defined by the points that it connects" but "passes between points... comes up through the middle... [and] runs perpendicular to the points first perceived" (*Plateaus* 341-342). While the points initially perceived are Frodo and nomad, Frodo's line of becoming runs perpendicular to these; Frodo still shows characteristics of Frodo and a nomad, but once his becoming begins, he

⁶³ The only apparent complication to this is Gimli's journey to the Undying Lands with Legolas ("Appendix A" 399). Gimli's journey to the Undying Lands is outside of the journey of healing that the Ring-bearers take to the Undying Lands: Gimli's is a production of his "love that grew between him and Legolas" and his "desire to see again the beauty of Galadriel" (398-399). While Frodo, Bilbo, and eventually Sam journey to the Undying Lands to 'heal' themselves from carrying the Ring, Gimli's journey is more of just an exception to permit the passage of a Dwarf to the Undying Lands based on his relationship with the Elves.

can never fully be either Frodo or a nomad. This is the case with all becomings. In the case of the becomings experienced by all the Ring-bearers, they are all linked in some way to the Sauron-assemblage; and when plugging their organ-machines into the Ring, the Ring-bearer is transported into the spectral territory of the Sauron-assemblage.

While Mordor is the physical territory of the Sauron-assemblage, having been striated by the assemblage's Darkness and made an extension of Sauron as a piece of the milieu, the wraith-world is the spectral territory of Mordor. Mordor itself is a geographical place in real space; the wraith-world is a spectral world acting as an extension of Sauron's power. The wraith-world is space laid over the geographical space the Ring-bearer is inhabiting when they plug into the Ring. Within the wraith-world, Sauron functions as a panopticon.⁶⁴ By being plugged into the Sauron-assemblage via the One Ring, the Ring-bearer risks being gazed at by Sauron. Frodo becomes afraid to put the Ring on and enter the wraith-world, afraid and unsure if Sauron is actually gazing upon him or not. Of course, there is no guarantee that Sauron *is* in fact looking, but this is the very function of the panopticon, and why it is so effective as a means of seeing and discipline. Furthermore, the way that the panopticon functions is quite territorial, and in the case of Sauron, even more so than usual. When using the Ring, not only is the Ring-bearer plugging into the Sauron-assemblage but plugging themselves into a part of Sauron, both by way of the One Ring and by way of the Mordor territory, both making up parts of Sauron and the Sauron-assemblage milieu. By plugging themselves into the Ring, the Ring-bearer is plugging

⁶⁴ Originally invented by Jeremy Bentham, Michel Foucault popularized this cylindrical prison-observation tower as a form of social control. The panopticon is set up as such: an "enclosed, segmented space, observed at every point, in which the individuals are inserted in a fixed place, in which the slightest movements are supervised, in which all events are recorded" (Foucault 197). In being panopticonical, Sauron induces in the Ring-bearer "a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power... to arrange things that the surveillance is permanent in its effects" (201).

themselves into a non-geographical extension of Mordor as well: the wraith-world. To return to the concept of the panopticon, the Ring-bearer is pugging themselves into the prison (wraith-world) where Sauron (panopticon, disciplinarian) can gaze upon them from his tower of Barad-Dûr.

The departure from the panopticon is this: the Ring-bearer is not confined to a cell— they can roam the whole prison. The strength of the Ring’s link to Mordor is also its weakness, not only in the sense that it can only be destroyed by Mount Doom in Mordor, but that it allows the Ring-bearer— should they be able to overcome the increasing ‘charge’ of the Ring as it nears other parts of the milieu— to cut through the striation of space by shifting between the wraith-world (the space inhabited when the Ring is on the Ring-bearer’s finger) and real space (space inhabited when the Ring is removed). The Ring-bearer can remove the Ring and is suddenly no longer subject to Sauron’s panopticism once leaving the wraith-world. When carrying the Ring, the Ring-bearer effectively exists in two spaces: the spectral wraith-world when wearing the Ring and their actual space when they are not.⁶⁵ Thus, by weaving in and out of these striated spaces, the Ring-bearer becomes a spatial nomad; they are still subject to the striation of the space they are in— be it geographical space or the spectral space of the wraith-world— but are able to navigate between these two planes of space, not necessarily smoothing the space but carving a smooth path between the spaces’ respective striations. If this were to be visualized, we could image the wraith-world floating in a plane above the actual space of Middle-earth. When walking in the latter, the Ring-bearer avoids the striation— and panopticism— of the former;

⁶⁵ The Ring-bearer, and the Nazgûl as well, still exist in actual space when in the wraith-world. Their bodies still can influence and effect their actual space, but they are also transported to co-exist in the spectral space of the wraith-world.

when plugged into the Ring, the striation of the real world can be avoided due to the Ring's invisibility effect but the Ring-bearer is subjected to the panopticism and striation of the wraith-world. Either way, the Ring-bearer can freely shift between these different planes of space, avoiding certain lines they do not wish to be subjected to or encounter. For instance, Frodo territorializes into the wraith-world to escape Boromir (*Fellowship* 449) but quickly deterritorializes from the wraith-world and back into real space once feeling the gaze of Sauron: "And suddenly he felt the eye. There was an eye in the Dark Tower that did not sleep. He knew that it had become aware of his gaze. A fierce eager will was there. It leaped towards him; almost like a finger he felt it, searching for him... He took the Ring off his finger" (*Fellowship* 451). The space is not necessarily smoothed but navigated through. Here, we return to Frodo's becoming-nomad.

Frodo may be connected to the Sauron-assemblage but he is not a part of it; as the divine becoming-nomad, he is able to periodically and temporarily attach and detach himself from the lines of the Sauron assemblage, intersecting with its lines only to smooth the Darkness of the assemblage and move through it to his own ends. Within the assemblage is space; not physical space, but nonetheless a space of Darkness and the lines emanating from the milieu of the Sauron-assemblage. Once accepting the Ring as his divine burden, Frodo's becoming-nomad is a Light that is able to smooth this Darkness; furthermore, he is a nomad of becomings, able to dip into becoming-Gollum, becoming-Sauron, and becoming-Nazgûl as to fit his own ends: "Not with hope of escape, or of doing anything, either good or bad: he simply felt that he must take the Ring and put it on his finger... Immediately, though everything else remained as before, dim

and dark, the shapes became terribly clear. He was able to see beneath their black wrappings” (*Fellowship* 221). By delving into the wraith-world without fully being absorbed into the Sauron-assemblage, Frodo is exercising his becoming-nomad, venturing into the Dark space of the wraith-world and becoming-Nazgûl, only to reterritorialize to his center of becoming-nomad. Furthermore, Frodo is creating a smooth space for himself in between the striated spaces of the real world and the wraith-world; this smooth space “lies between two striated spaces... But being ‘between’ also means that smooth space is controlled by these two flanks, which limit it, oppose its development” (*Plateaus* 448). However, as Deleuze and Guattari note, “smooth spaces are not in themselves liberatory” (*Plateaus* 581), and if smooth space is not inherently liberatory, then the figure that constitutes them, the nomad, cannot be in itself liberatory — this is especially true of Frodo.

While Frodo’s becoming-nomad ultimately culminates in the destruction of the One Ring, and thus by extension the Sauron-assemblage, Frodo is trapped in this figure of the nomad, unable to return home to the Shire to feel whole: “I tried to save the Shire, and it has been saved, but not for me” (*King* 338). Though Bilbo’s becoming was becoming-Gollum, the sensation instigated by this becoming of feeling “like butter that has been scraped over too much bread” (*Fellowship* 34) can be applied to Frodo’s becoming as well. As becoming-nomad, Frodo is spread out too much: his micro becoming-Gollum, -Sauron, and -Nazgûl has deterritorialized him out of his Frodo-ness to the point where he requires spiritual healing in order to feel whole again. Upon Sam’s lamentation that he thought Frodo was to return home and enjoy the Shire, Frodo replies, “So I thought too, once. But I have been too deeply hurt” (*King* 338). Frodo’s

becoming has left him stranded, unable to be Frodo and return to the Shire but also unable to be a nomad: he is stuck in the middle, as all becomings are. Additionally, part of Frodo's hurt is due to his wound from the Morgul-blade during the attack on Weathertop.⁶⁶ Others stricken with injuries from Nazgûl, such as Eowyn and Merry, do not face becoming-Nazgûl.⁶⁷ The danger of becoming-Nazgûl, instead of a micro becoming-Nazgûl from which he can reterritorialize back into becoming-nomad, arises from Frodo being in the wraith-world at the time of his injury. While being in the wraith-world, Frodo has already plugged into the Sauron-assemblage and opened himself up to its flows; the wound inflicted by the Witch-king's Morgul-blade imbues Frodo with an even greater amount of Darkness from the Sauron-assemblage: "They tried to pierce your heart with a Morgul-knife which remains in the wound. If they had succeeded, you would have become like they are, only weaker and under their command. You would have become a wraith under the dominion of the Dark Lord" (*Fellowship* 248). The Dark flows from the assemblage to and around Frodo increase— granted, not so much as they would have been should the Nazgûl had pierced his heart— accelerating his becoming away from that of becoming-nomad— a danger of which Gandalf is aware: "You were in the gravest peril while you wore the Ring, for then you were half in the wraith-world yourself, and they might have seized you" (*Fellowship* 249). As there are clear lasting effects of this event on Frodo, even after

⁶⁶ (*Fellowship* 220-221)

⁶⁷ Eowyn and Merry are stricken with "a malady that would not be healed; and they call it the Black Shadow, for it came from the Nazgûl. And those who were stricken with it fell slowly into an ever deeper dream, and then passed to silence and a deadly cold, and so died" (*King* 137). Their illness is eventually healed by Aragorn (*King* 147) and is not a becoming.

the destruction of the Ring,⁶⁸ Frodo's wound abets his ultimate failure to continue becoming-nomad.

Frodo's claim to the Ring on the slopes of Orodruin is a failure to continue becoming-nomad and a pursuit of becoming-Gollum, becoming-Sauron, or becoming-Nazgûl; however, it is not explicitly clear which of these he does pursue. The becoming least akin to Frodo's on Mount Doom is becoming-Gollum:⁶⁹ he does not show a schizophrenic desire for the Ring nor utter a *ritournelle* associated with becoming-Gollum:⁷⁰ "I have come... But I do not choose now to do what I came to do. I will not do this deed. The Ring is mine!" (*King* 239). Following this, Frodo becoming-Nazgûl can also be debunked as becoming-Nazgûl entails a desiring of Sauron's fascism and a compulsion to return the Ring to Sauron (*Unfinished* 343)—Frodo expresses neither of these sentiments. Thus, we can conclude that the becoming pursued by Frodo on the slopes of Mount Doom is a becoming-Sauron: a desire to rule and dominate by way of the Ring, similar to Sauron's desire for the Ring. However, as seen with Saruman,⁷¹ becoming-Sauron can be used as a deception of interest while causing the subject to become-Gollum. Unfortunately, Frodo's desire for the Ring is not investigated past this conjuncture enough to come to a decisive answer as to his becoming: it is only clear that he is no longer becoming-nomad. Despite this failure to become-nomad due to the overwhelming desiring-production of the Ring, Frodo is

⁶⁸ "I am wounded... wounded; it will never really heal" (*King* 333).

⁶⁹ Frodo does, however, showcase traits of becoming-Gollum when Sam returns the Ring to him after being taken captive by Orcs: "'Give it to me!... You can't have it!... No, no!' cried Frodo, snatching the Ring and chain from Sam's hands. 'No you won't, you thief!'" (*King* 198). This episode quickly passes as Frodo reterritorializes into becoming-nomad: "'O Sam!' cried Frodo. 'What have I said? What have I done? Forgive me! After all you have done. It is the horrible power of the Ring. I wish it had never, never, been found'" (*King* 199).

⁷⁰ These *ritournelles* being 'gollum' (unique to only Sméagol/Gollum) and 'my precious' (which is used by both Sméagol/Gollum and Bilbo).

⁷¹ See Section Three: "Third Age 2463: The Desiring-Machine of the One Ring and becoming-Gollum."

unable to revert to the hobbit he was before his divine mission and still feels the effects of his becomings: “[Frodo] was clutching a white gem that hung on a chain about his neck and he seemed half in a dream. ‘It is gone for ever... and now all is dark and empty’... Mr. Frodo wore always a white jewel on a chain that he would often finger” (*King* 331-333). Frodo is unable to deterritorialize himself out of his becoming-Gollum/Sauron, even after the destruction of the Ring, and cannot feel at home or healed in the Shire due to his becoming-nomad. The smooth space the Light of Frodo’s divine mission creates does not liberate him: he is still always becoming, even when detrimental.

SECTION THREE— THIRD AGE 2463:⁷² THE DESIRING-MACHINE OF THE ONE RING AND BECOMING-GOLLUM

The character of Gollum is one of, if not the, most recognizable *Lord of the Rings* characters, and not undeservedly. He is the fulcrum of Frodo and Sam’s foray into Mordor and ultimately, it is his hysterical desire for the Ring that leads to both its and his destruction. This maddened desire Gollum possesses for the One Ring resembles the kind of desire theorized by Deleuze and Guattari: the desire of the schizophrenic who “plunges further and further into the realm of deterritorialization, reaching the furthest limits of the decomposition of the socius” (*Anti-Oedipus* 35). This deterritorialization from the socius is the schizophrenic escaping any coding of desire, or dictation of desire outside of what they want: the schizophrenic does not desire anything ‘coded’ into the object they want, and they cannot be told why they should or should not desire an object. This illumination of schizophrenic desire is done through what Deleuze and Guattari call schizoanalysis, a concept that will be methodically applied throughout this section when exploring the One Ring’s desire-producing machinations and their effects on the characters of *Lord of the Rings*.

Schizoanalysis, while diametrically opposed to it, cannot be discussed without its relation to psychoanalysis; it is “not merely a critique of psychoanalysis, it is... a re-engineering” (*Schizoanalysis* 271). While schizoanalysis does not really engage with psychoanalysis outside of condemning it, it loses some of its foregrounding without honing itself against

⁷² This is the year that Sméagol first found the One Ring and set the production of his schizo-identity into motion (“Appendix B” 406).

psychoanalysis's practice of stamping Oedipal meaning onto desire. Buchanan observes that "Freud wants to reduce every creature in his patients' dreams to symbols, to objects that stand in the place of something else, and as a consequence loses sight of the specificity of the symbols themselves" (*Schizoanalysis* 279). Thus psychoanalysis "settles on the imaginary" (*Anti-Oedipus* 316)—this horse is your mother, this carrot is your father because I, the psychoanalyst, say so—whereas schizoanalysis asks "Nothing more than a bit of relation to the outside, a little real reality" (384)—I want this ring because it is beautiful, not because it's my mother; I want to be powerful but not because I want to be my father, like the psychoanalyst tells me. Thus the primary difference between the two arises: "schizoanalysis attains a nonfigurative and nonsymbolic unconscious; a pure abstract figural dimension" (351); that is, while psychoanalysis focuses on the inserted figurative (surely you do not really mean what you say, your unconscious wants something other than what your conscious tells me) and the symbolic of desire (this sheep is a symbol for your mother, you do not like it just because it is a sheep), schizoanalysis only wants to examine the actual object desired, and how this desire is linked to the social (I want this bag because its high cost and name brand are symbols of wealth and success; the social dictates why I want it and my attainment of it improves my standing in the social field); or, in the case of the schizophrenic, examining the object desired and how the desire for it *escapes* the social field (I want the bag because it is pretty). In "Deleuze and the Question of Desire," Daniel Smith provides an excellent example of how normal desire functions:

My inclination to go to the tavern, for instance, includes not only the minute perception of the effect of the alcohol, or the taste and temperature of the drink,

but also the clinking of the glasses in the bar, the smoke in the air, the conversation with friends, the temporary lifting of one's solitude, and so on. The same is true of the inclination to stay home and work, which includes the minute perceptions of the rustling of paper, the noise of my fingers tapping at the computer, the quality of the silence of the room when I stop tapping, the comfort (or frustration) that I find in my work. Both inclinations are formed within an unconscious complex of auditive, gustative, olfactory, and visual perceptions, an entire perceptio-inclinary ensemble. ("Question of Desire" 136)

This conception of desire arises from an application of schizoanalysis. Schizoanalysis is not, as many "commonly assume" theory is, a "pure abstraction, which, when 'applied,' will yield concrete results" (Grosz 77); rather it is a practical method for uncovering the realities of desire and escaping the entrapments of psychoanalysis. Buchanan asserts that Deleuze and Guattari are "Unwilling to provide any kind of 'formula' or 'model' that would enable us to simply 'do' schizoanalysis as a kick-box exercise"; it is rather a meta-modeling that "tries to grapple with the realm of 'what might happen' that constantly dogs the realm of 'what is happening'" (*Schizoanalysis* 11). However, in *Anti-Oedipus*, Deleuze and Guattari lay out guidelines for how to go about schizoanalysis. As a concept, it is "focused on two aspects: the destruction of the expressive pseudo form of the unconscious, and the discovery of desire's unconscious investment in the social field" (*Anti-Oedipus* 167). Similar to Buchanan's argument, schizoanalysis is not a list to check things off of but rather a thought experiment that "follows the lines of escape and the machinic indices all the way to the desiring-machines" (*Anti-Oedipus*

339)— all it asks is “what place [the socius] reserves for desiring-production” (380). As these lines of escape and machinic indices are followed in *Lord of the Rings*, the One Ring is found to continually hijack characters’ desire.

Desire in *Lord of the Rings* has been explored before⁷³ but these approaches fall short of analyzing desire in a revolutionary way, usually classifying it as a Freudian lack, particularly in regard to the One Ring. Other existing scholarship has emphasized the Ring as a part of Sauron⁷⁴ but not as a machine merely created by Sauron, initially produced by a siphoning of his power into it; in fact, in a moment of exposition, Gandalf explains that the Ring has a will of its own: “A Ring of Power looks after itself... It was... the Ring itself that decided things” (*Fellowship* 60-61). This innate connection between the Ring and Sauron’s will that others find so intrinsic to understanding the One Ring needs to be severed. True, the Ring opens its wearer to the will and subjugation of Sauron; however, the Ring also acts as an independent entity as a desire-producing machine. Croft asserts that since the ring can be “lost, taken, or stolen... [i]ts power does not depend on its creator” (86). This is only partially true, as the Ring is still a part of the Sauron-assemblage, drawing its power ultimately from the assemblage, but is also able to attach itself to other machines outside the assemblage and create its own productions: something that other pieces of the Sauron-assemblage are not able to do. In its machinations, the Ring siphons off of characters’ existing desires and in turn produce a schizo-identity that is defined by these siphoned desires. This production of the schizo-identity in the subject is not an inexplicable phenomenon. Deleuze explains that “Desire constantly couples continuous flows and partial

⁷³ See: Albaugh and Bernard

⁷⁴ See: Rawls

objects that are by nature fragmentary and fragmented” (*Anti-Oedipus* 5). The Ring is able to gather and refine the fragmentary desires of its subjects, refine them, and return them to the subject in a continuous flow of an act of identity and desire production. The identity that is produced in this desire-production is a Body without Organs.

Gollum, as he exists within Sméagol, is a Body without Organs, which— in the case of the Body without Organs that the Ring produces— I also call a schizo-identity. A Body without Organs— abbreviated as BwO— can be many things and is constantly formed alongside any desiring subject; by using the term schizo-identity, I am specifying how the BwO produced by the One Ring is a whole body (non-corporeal) that desires the Ring in a purely schizophrenic way; that is, desire that does not lack anything, desire that is untethered from the ideas of what should or ought to be desired. The Ring does not *desire* the schizo-identity’s existence, but nonetheless requires it; the Ring is only desired properly through the schizo-identity. However, the schizo-identity is not the endpoint or goal of the Ring— it is only a side-effect of the Ring’s desiring-producing effects. While the Ring ultimately requires the existence of the schizo-identity, its end goal is desiring-production: the schizo-identity is only a means to achieve this. Lastly, there is becoming-Gollum, which is used interchangeably with BwO and schizo-identity in the context of this section. The synonymous usage of these terms arises from Gollum’s schizo-identity: the most fully formed schizo-identity found in *Lord of the Rings* and thus the paradigm example of the BwO the One Ring produces.

The Body without Organs that the One Ring produces is produced alongside the consciousness of the person being affected. The physical entity of this person is, to use Deleuzian

terminology, the organ-machine, and the organ-machine and Ring-bearer are synonymous. This is because the body is a machine: its organs are little machines inside that constitute it; it works like a machine and can be plugged into other machines. It is only when the organ-machine is plugged into the machine of the One Ring that the organ-machine is the Ring-bearer.⁷⁵ Both the organ-machine and the Ring-bearer are physical, but the ‘subject’ referred to in this chapter is the consciousness of the organ-machine/Ring-bearer. Because the Ring affects the mental desiring-producing and desiring-machine of the Ring-bearer, it does not suffice to refer to the Ring-bearer’s consciousness in the same way that I refer to the Ring-bearer’s physical body, as the One Ring affects each differently. Thus, the Ring-bearer constitutes the entirety of one’s being, both mental and physical, while the organ-machine is the Ring-bearer’s physical body and the subject is the pre-BwO consciousness of the Ring-bearer. This is not to say that the subject and the organ-machine are not linked: they are; and in fact, they are intrinsically linked in the way that the Ring affects the Ring-bearer. The mind of the Ring-bearer is affected *through* the physicality of the Ring-bearer, and vice versa. The Ring-bearer must physically plug their organ-machine into the One Ring for their mind to be fully influenced by it;⁷⁶ likewise, the physical appearance of the Ring-bearer alters when de/reterritorializes to and from the schizo-identity:

Gollum looked at them. A strange expression passed over his lean hungry face.

The gleam faded from his eyes, and they went dim and grey, old and tired. A

⁷⁵ As I will explore in the case of Denethor, Boromir, and Saruman, the plugging of the organ-machine into the One Ring is not a prerequisite for the production of the schizo-identity.

⁷⁶ The becomings of Gollum and Frodo, who were physically plugged into the Ring, are much more complete than the becomings of Boromir and Denethor, who never were plugged into the Ring. There can be desiring-producing for the Ring without being plugged into it, but in order to fully become the subject must plug their organ-machine into the Ring.

spasm of pain seemed to twist him, and he turned away, peering back towards the pass, shaking his head, as if engaged in some interior debate. Then he came back, and slowly putting out a trembling hand, very cautiously he touched Frodo's knee—but almost the touch was a caress. For a fleeting moment, could one of the sleepers have seen him, they would have thought that they beheld an old weary hobbit, shrunken by the years that had carried him far beyond his time, beyond friends and kin, and the fields and stress of youth, an old pitiable thing. (Towers 366)

Here, as Sméagol/Gollum deterritorializes from the schizo-identity Gollum and reterritorializes into the subject Sméagol, there is a physical alteration to his body: he no longer appears lean, hungry, “small slimy creature... [with] two big round pale eyes in his thin face” (*Hobbit* 71) but as a pitiable old hobbit. While he has one organ-machine and two consciousnesses contained within him, both consciousnesses are unified to the organ-machine and reciprocally affected.

The organ-machine and Ring-bearer can contain multiple subjects, and they do once exposed to the One Ring—the organ-machine of the Ring-bearer contains both the subject and the schizo-identity. The schizo-identity is produced in the Ring-bearer as a Body without Organs, and just as a BwO is produced: “as a whole, but in its own particular place within the process of production, alongside the parts that it neither unifies nor totalizes” (43). The schizo-identity is a whole produced within the Ring-bearer; there is neither a unification between the schizo-identity and the subject nor a unification of the subject's parts by the schizo-identity: it is merely produced in the same organ-machine but alongside the Ring-bearer. That is, the schizo-identity

exists alongside the Ring-bearer's original consciousness without unifying to the original consciousness; both the subject consciousness and the schizo-identity, however, are linked to the organ-machine, both influencing and influenced by the Ring-bearer's physical body. The flows of the Ring-bearer's desire are returned in one flow, though not by the BwO; nor are these flows constituted of the parts of the subject. They are bits of the Ring-bearer's desiring-producing; the parts of the subject are machines— not flows— that cut off and channel the flows of desire. The becoming-Gollum of the Ring-bearer “exists as a product that is produced apart from [the machines and parts of the subject] and yet at the same time is related to them” (44). This initial production of becoming-Gollum “produces a subject alongside the machine, functioning as a part adjacent to the whole” (40). The machine, in this case, is the organ-machine of the Ring-bearer and, as briefly explored above, can be plugged into the machine of the One Ring in order to affect the Ring-bearer as a whole.

The Ring is a physical desiring-machine, constantly delineating other desires onto itself in order to make itself the sole object of desire. However, it becomes a closed circuit when detached from the assemblage; while it still produces desire in the subject/Ring-bearer, it traps them in a constant state of becoming. The subject never really achieves the Body without Organs but the Ring traps them in a desire for becoming the BwO. The Ring itself is then a walking paradox: it produces desire for itself and becomings but in producing this desire, it acts as an antithesis to itself: the states of desiring and becoming that the subject is trapped in inherently and perpetually negate the subject achieving the finality of the BwO. As the Ring forms a BwO in its subject, the BwO “determines when a particular mode of desire, or particular way of

desiring, is undesirable” (*Schizoanalysis* 48). This BwO that is produced is becoming-Gollum: an identity in the subject’s body perpetually produced by the Ring which deems that desiring for the Ring is the only acceptable form of desiring. The One Ring acts as a desire-producing machine for the Ring-bearer, eliciting desires of various forms from those around it that cater to each individual and in turn creating what I describe as a schizo-identity or becoming-Gollum: a new identity separate from the subject’s self that is manufactured by the Ring’s desire-producing mechanisms. Among those most notably affected are Sméagol, Sméagol’s schizo-identity Gollum — which begs for an examination separate from Sméagol—, Boromir, Denethor, and Saruman. Tom Bombadil also warrants examination as the exact antithesis to Gollum: while the latter represents schizophrenic desire in its purest sense, the former embodies a complete lack of desire.

Devouring and Insatiable Desire⁷⁷

Before examining the other characters from *Lord of the Rings*, an intensive analysis of the character Sméagol/Gollum must arise from the Ring’s failure to complete its production on any other character in either *The Hobbit* or *The Lord of the Rings* saga. While others certainly desire the Ring, they merely desire the things it promises to them as the subject: beauty, power, prestige. It does finish its production of desire delineation; the production of these schizo-identities begins certainly but does not culminate in a production so complete as Gollum’s. It seems that even Sauron himself, creator of the One Ring, does not desire the Ring so vehemently as Gollum. Sauron’s desire is not for the Ring but for domination: there is no schizophrenic

⁷⁷ (*Return of the King* 236-237)

desire here. Despite his celestial power, Sauron's desire is still inscribed onto the socius; he is still subject to the normal confines of socialized desire. The convoluted relationship between Sauron and the Ring is difficult to navigate; however, should we view both as a production-machine, Deleuze provides a conceptualization of the flow between them: "there is always a flow-producing machine, and another machine connected to it that interrupts or draws off part of the flow... And because the first machine is in turn connected to another whose flow it interrupts or partially drains off, the binary series is linear in every direction" (*Anti-Oedipus* 5). On one side, the Ring is connected to Sauron and his will; the Ring itself desires to return to Sauron and become one whole machine, no longer interrupted or partially drained by the subjects in which it produces the schizo-identity. Thus the Ring is caught between its two desires: to return to the machine from whence it came and again become a single machine, or to constantly produce desire in subjects and thus also produce their schizo-identity.

The One Ring acts independently from Sauron as a desire-producing machine. As a desire-producing machine, it elicits various desires from its subjects and redirects them toward itself, in turn creating what I describe as a schizo-identity: a new identity in the subject manufactured and produced by the Ring's desire-producing machinations. As a desire-producing machine, the Ring is separate from Sauron, seeking to create a sole desire in its subjects for only itself. This identity is separate from the mind of the Ring-bearer/subject but joined in the same body; in Sméagol, the Ring produces the perfect schizophrenic of Gollum: a schizo-identity that escapes the normal confines of desire, desiring only the Ring for the sake of the object itself. Once producing this schizo-identity, the Ring produces the *ritournelle* of 'my precious' in order

to maintain its subject's desire upon itself; furthermore, the schizo-identity Gollum connects as a machine to the Ring and produces its own distinctive *ritournelle* in order to continually reterritorialize Sméagol/Gollum's mind back into Gollum and his schizophrenic desire for the Ring. Since Gollum's desire for the Ring is schizophrenic, it does not operate as a normal, socialized desire as Gollum does not operate on the socius. This desire of Gollum's then is "explosive" and cannot be "assembled without demolishing entire social sectors," but it also "does not 'want' revolution" (*Anti-Oedipus* 116); Sméagol/Gollum does not seek revolution, power, or other fragmentary desires which the Ring attracts and delineates.⁷⁸ His desire is entirely produced in a purely schizophrenic form "that follows the *lines of escape* of desire" (277).

Gollum is the paradigm of schizophrenic desire: he wants the Ring only because it is the Ring. If there is a lack from which his desire stems, it is a lack of the actual object, not the lack of an imagined thing for which the Ring stands. For Sauron, his desire is not for the Ring but for power—the Ring does not stand for this power but is the means for this power; thus even Sauron's desire for the Ring is not from a lack but is productive. He desires power so he produces the Ring; when he loses the Ring, his desire does not stem from this lack but rather still his desire for power, so he produces an army; he has an army so he produces a war. There is not a lack of power or lack of the Ring, only a productive desire for both. While Gollum's desire does not produce tangible artifacts (Rings of Power, an army, a war), it produces actions and events, which are in fact actual and not virtual because of their effects.

⁷⁸ "[Gollum] doesn't really want to wield power; he only, in fact needs, to have his Ring" ("Role of Gollum" 3).

The productions of Gollum are not limited to his constant desiring-production: this production is productive of intended consequences; “everything is production: production of productions, of actions and of persons” (*Anti-Oedipus* 4). The Ring itself produces desire in Sméagol/Gollum which in turn produces actions for Sméagol/Gollum to possess it: Sméagol must eat so he produces movement, producing a trajectory of his boat across the lake in his abode under the Misty Mountains (*The Hobbit* 71), producing lactic acid in his muscles and carbon dioxide from his lungs; this produces hunger for “fish [or] stray goblins” (81); his feasting produces more energy, producing more energy, and so on and so forth. In terms of Tolkien’s narrative, desire for the Ring produces the events of *Lord of the Rings*; not only, but a million other little productions occur attached to this: Gollum’s torture in Mordor (*Fellowship* 64), Frodo’s fear of being discovered by the Black Riders (83), even economic production upon Frodo selling Bag End “to the Sackville-Bagginses” (73). These productions, however far-reaching, are unintentional on the part of Gollum who, upon obtaining the Ring, attempts to cut himself off from the socius and return to a production of desire localized within his own assemblage that disregards the self and the non-self.

Gollum, like Lenz described by Deleuze and Guattari in *Anti-Oedipus* “has projected himself back to a time before the man-nature dichotomy, before all the co-ordinates based on this fundamental dichotomy have been laid down. He does not live nature as nature, but as a process of production. There is no such thing as either man or nature now, only a process that produces the one within the other and couples the machines together. Producing machines, desiring-machines everywhere, schizophrenic machines, all of species life: the self and the non-self,

outside and inside, no longer have any meaning whatsoever” (2). Gollum lives by the Ring and for the Ring— it is his most active desiring-machine despite it being a non-self and foreign to his organ-machine and its desiring-machines; he has unplugged it from the Sauron-assemblage to the best of his ability and disconnected the Ring geographically from the other two connections in the Sauron-assemblage's center: Mordor and Sauron himself. He has attempted to form a new triad: the Sméagol organ-machine, the schizo-identity of the Gollum BwO, and the desiring-machine of the One Ring. The Sméagol organ-machine acts as a connection to the productions of nature (eating, spitting, etc.); the Gollum schizo-identity and the Ring form a perpetual and closed circuit of never-ending self-production *within* the Sméagol organ-machine. It is worth noting here how the Ring is still connected to the Sauron-assemblage while connecting itself to this Gollum-assemblage, so to speak; the distinction in its assemblage functions is this: the Ring is a *schize*, a break-off, not a slice-off point in the Sauron-assemblage; a slice-off (*coupures-prélèvements*) has “to do with continuous fluxes” (*Anti-Oedipus* 39) whereas the break-off (*coupures-détachement*) is composed more as a brick “having been launched from a distance” (40). Within the Sauron-assemblage, the Ring is the latter: breaking off from the flows of the assemblage and instead attaching to another machine (the Ring-bearer’s organ machine) where it functions as the former. Once acting as a *coupures-prélèvement*, the Ring ‘slices off’ the Ring-bearer's desiring-flow and reappropriates it as energy for itself, energy in this sense being the subject’s desires which the Ring redirects towards itself and returns in a flow: here the subject cuts off this flow, desires the Ring and flows back where this stream is cut off again and again;

during this production flow, the schizo-identity is produced— catapulting the subject into a becoming-Gollum— and grafted onto this flow as another machine which ‘slices.’

Following his attainment of the Ring and self-imposed exile under the Misty Mountains, Sméagol the social person is destroyed, or at the very least hidden in the depths of Gollum/ Sméagol’s mind so that Gollum in his pure, schizophrenic desire takes hold of the body. Here, there is a constant production of desire and schizo-identity which perpetually feed on one another and close the gap. During the production of the schizo-identity, the Ring-bearer (subject) and their fragmentary desires are unattached from the desire-producing machine of the Ring: this subject was only attached so that the Ring might produce the schizo-identity within the subject’s body. Now there are only two machines attached to each other: the Ring and the schizo-identity. The only difference is now there is a closed loop between the two: the Ring continually produces the schizo-identity in the subject, and in turn, the produced schizo-identity constantly desires the Ring and creates fuel for its own perpetuation production. Thus an incessant feedback loop is created outside the confines of the socius. This desire is not revolutionary for the socius or the social person (Sméagol) but revolutionary for the subject (Gollum) in the way in which it creates two inextricably linked desire-producing machines, operating in a constant loop as they grow closer and closer until they might be conflated with one another. By alienating Sméagol the initial subject, the social aspect of desire is eliminated, creating pure, unadulterated, and schizophrenic desire.

This production, no matter how effective, is not entirely successful in eliminating the original subject of the Ring-bearer. Becoming-Gollum can only exist within the Ring-bearer

organ-machine alongside the subject, not instead of it. While both Sméagol and Gollum inhabit the same organ-machine, their inner machinations and desires are quite different; in fact, they are constantly at war with each other:

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.

“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.” (*Towers* 267)

Here the difference between the pre-Ring subject and the post-Ring schizo-identity is made the most clear. Sméagol’s desires, as represented by the pale light in Sméagol/Gollum’s eyes, have reverted back to that of the social: he desires to help Frodo because of the promise made; Gollum, on the other hand, is represented by the green light and desires only to regain the Ring, regardless of socially invested desire. This difference is also made clear by the references Sméagol/Gollum makes to himself: Sméagol speaks in the third person in an attempt to assert his identity as the non-schizophrenic Sméagol over Gollum; Gollum does not refer to himself as

Gollum but instead refers to Sméagol as ‘precious’— the same way he refers to the Ring. In this moment, the concept of the *ritournelle* becomes most apparent and important. By referring to Sméagol as ‘my precious,’ Gollum is attempting to reterritorialize completely back into the territory of Gollum from that of Sméagol, as he is equating Sméagol with the Ring; by referring to them as the same thing, within the span of one sentence even, Gollum redirects Sméagol’s socially invested desire toward Gollum’s schizophrenic desire for the Ring. The reinvestment in the socius from Sméagol interrupts the desire-machinations of the Ring and Gollum and occurs when Sméagol/Gollum is forcibly placed into the social. The first instance of this within Gollum/Sméagol occurs upon the insertion of Bilbo Baggins into his self-isolation, reintroducing the social person Sméagol through the avenue of memory.⁷⁹ Upon this occurrence, the *ritournelle* surfaces to reterritorialize the subject into their schizophrenic form.

How He Got His Name⁸⁰

The *ritournelle* is an invaluable tool in analyzing the production of the schizo-identity and the reterritorialization of the ring-bearer into this aforementioned identity. However, the distinctive *ritournelles* of both Sméagol and Gollum must be analyzed insofar as to how they relate to each specific identity as well as how they intertwine. Gollum’s eponymous and onomatopoeic *ritournelle* provides a signifier for/creates his new schizo-identity and (re)territorializes him into the desire-produced schizo-identity of Gollum. Likewise, Sméagol/Gollum continuously reiterates the refrain of ‘my precious’ just as a “child hums to summon the

⁷⁹ This first occurs with Gollum’s recollection of riddles, which he played before “he lost all his friends and was driven away” (*Hobbit* 73); other notable references on pages 75 and 76.

⁸⁰ (*The Hobbit* 72)

strength for schoolwork she has to hand in. A housewife sings to herself, or listens to the radio, as she marshals the antichaos forces of her work” (*Thousand Plateaus* 362). However, this reterritorialization is not to territorialize Sméagol into Gollum, as ‘gollum’ does, but instead is to reterritorialize himself into desire for the Ring so the Ring might feel omnipresent, when “chaos threatens, to draw an inflatable, portable territory” (372). There is certainly an overlap between these two *ritournelles* and how they function; they are “variations that converge as the components of a consistent concept” (“Innovations” 46). We can be certain that ‘gollum’ does not *refer* to Gollum but is a nonsense word functioning as a *ritournelle*. However, this begs the question: “does ‘my precious’ refer to himself or the Ring?” (Croft 90).

This question is easily answerable: ‘my precious’ as a refrain is not specific to Gollum—others say it while the Ring delineates their desires into desire for it.⁸¹ ‘My Precious’ is a direct production of the Ring in order to achieve its ultimate goal of creating the schizo-identity of its subjects; however, the Ring has only been truly successful in its desire/identity production in Gollum—a subject who has developed his *own* refrain that is unique to his schizo-identity. It is not purposeful and merely a clearing of his throat (*Fellowship* 58) but it is this incidental creation of the nonsense refrain which makes the identity-production so significant. Sméagol is not consciously creating this identity in which he only desires the Ring: it is *being* produced in him as a combative identity to Sméagol’s. Thus the refrain of ‘gollum’ becomes involuntary identity production, creating a negative line of flight away from the identity of Sméagol and into the identity of Gollum. The very nonsense of the word ‘gollum’ is what makes it unique to his

⁸¹ Bilbo refers to the Ring as his ‘precious’ on page 35 of *Fellowship of the Ring*

identity: it makes it a proper name. The *ritournelle* ‘my precious’ is a concept referring to the Ring; the *ritournelle* ‘gollum’ is a proper name that does not denote any universal conceptualization of the schizo-identity: “It was always understood that the proper name was not a concept. Indeed, ‘dog’ is certainly a concept, but Fido is not a concept. There is certainly a dogness about all dogs, as certain logicians say in a splendid language, but there is no Fido-ness about all Fidos” (“Leibniz”). Thus there is the conceptualization of the Ring’s desirability behind the refrain of ‘my precious’ as there is a concept of ‘dogness’ in all dogs but there is no concept of desirability behind the refrain of ‘gollum’ just as there is no ‘Fido-ness’ in Fido.

The notion of ‘gollum’ as a nonsense word, as I have mentioned, is what makes it so unique in its signification. There is something conceptual in the idea of the schizo-identity but nothing conceptual in the specific schizo-identity of Gollum; nothing conceptual in the idea of Sméagol; in fact, nothing conceptual in the proper names of the idea of any one of the ring-bearers in which the schizo-identities are created. All these proper names are, in fact, nonsense words; they mean nothing in and of themselves. These nonsense words/proper names cannot contain concepts but “express themselves in language, carving differences in it, but language gives each its own individual life and gets things passing between them... individuality is rather that of events” (*Negotiations* 141).

The schizophrenic nonsense word, as Deleuze names it, “comprises the passion-word, which explodes into wording *phonetic* values, and at the action-word, which welds inarticulate *tonic* values” (*Logic* 90; emphasis original). When Gollum begins to clear his throat, the onomatopoeia of ‘gollum’ becomes a nonsense word that is symptomatic of his increasingly

schizophrenic identity—the identity of Gollum that is taking over. In this sense, the nonsense word refrain of ‘gollum’ serves to deterritorialize Sméagol and reterritorialize the mind into his schizo-identity of Gollum while it is in the perpetual process of becoming. Conversely, the refrain of ‘my precious’ serves to appeal to the sensibilities of real language and forces Sméagol to turn his desire back to the Ring. ‘My precious’ is a recognizable refrain to those other than Sméagol/Gollum as it is a signifier for the concept of the One Ring: ‘gollum’ is only a recognizable refrain insofar as Gollum has made it— only significant in the way that it conveys “a sense of imminence, of something about to happen or something that just happened... Proper names belong primarily to forces, events, motions and sources of movement” (*Negotiations* 34). It is a nonsense *ritournelle* that allows Gollum to be produced as an identity but the sensible and phonetic signifier of ‘my precious’ that allows Gollum to produce desire for the Ring in Sméagol; by communicating outside of the nonsense language of the schizophrenic, Gollum is able to conceptualize the Ring in Sméagol’s mind, both Gollum—the identity, not the refrain—and ‘my precious’ functioning as desire-producing machines in themselves.

The issue arises when considering both Croft’s earlier question and the passage in *The Hobbit* which asserts that “he always called himself ‘my precious’” (*Hobbit* 72). However, this is only in reference to Gollum— there is no reference to Sméagol at all within the entreaty of *The Hobbit*. As Gollum was still in possession of the Ring there was no territory for Sméagol inside their shared mind, so to speak. This tension is alleviated once considering the conflation of the ‘precious’ Ring with the ‘precious’ self. As I have mentioned before, others refer to the Ring as ‘my precious’ and it is not a refrain specific to Sméagol/Gollum; what the other ring-bearers do

not do is refer to themselves as ‘precious’ as Sméagol/Gollum does. Sméagol does not begin as the precious: this refrain is initially only in reference to the Ring. Once the production of his schizo-identity Gollum was begun by the Ring, we must assume that this conflation began. Because this identity was produced by and for the desire for the Ring, they are intertwined to the extent that Sméagol/Gollum is unconscious of the conflation, unable, or unwilling to differentiate between ‘my precious’ as the object of desire and ‘my precious’ the self-produced by said object; thus this “differential relation becomes *constitutive* of identity: difference becomes productive” (“Innovations” 43). By this logic, while the ‘my precious’ is not a refrain unique to Sméagol/Gollum, Sméagol/Gollum’s usage of the refrain is unique. Thus, to answer Croft, ‘my precious’ does not refer to the Ring or Gollum himself individually: it refers to both simultaneously.

Next, we must interrogate the reterritorialization occurring during Bilbo Baggins’ use of ‘my precious’ in reference to the One Ring (*Fellowship* 35). While I have already established that ‘my precious’ is not a refrain specific to Gollum, but rather one specific to the Ring, the desiring-production of Bilbo during his utterance of this *ritournelle* bears investigation. Gollum’s ‘my precious’ is a repetition of a signifier that differentiates it from the signified; Bilbo’s reference to the Ring as ‘my precious’ is a repetition of this refrain, and the difference inherent in Bilbo’s saying of it elevates it above a mere reference to his experience with Gollum. While repeating this phrase verbatim is somewhat of a homage to Bilbo’s encounter with Gollum in *The Hobbit*, the possessor of the ‘precious’ within the refrain has altered; no longer is the ‘my’ Gollum but rather Bilbo—the word is the same but there is a difference in what it now signifies.

To entirely unpack the significance of this difference, we must turn to Deleuze's earlier work, *Difference and Repetition*.

It has been called that before, but not by you⁸²

'Gollum' as a *ritournelle* is repetition; 'my precious' is a repetition when only uttered by Gollum but difference when said by Bilbo Baggins. "Repetition thus appears as difference without a concept, repetition which escapes indefinitely continued conceptual difference" (*Difference and Repetition* 13). There is not a concept behind the differences when Gollum repeats 'my precious' and 'Gollum'— there is no finite concept behind these refrains per se, but rather a real object and "thus appears as a difference, but a difference absolutely without concept; in this sense, an indifferent difference" (15). Conceptually to Gollum, there is no differentiation between him and the Ring; furthermore, they are both real objects-- real objects to signify, not concepts that can be directly gestured towards without a conceptual resemblance or conscious difference. While the interchangeability of the two could degrade them to merely generalities "express[ing] a point of view according to which one term may be exchanged or substituted for another (1), the nonsense of 'gollum' as a refrain assuages this possibility of generality: "As for the repetition of a single word, we must understand this as a 'generalized rhyme'" (21). Similarly, the repetition of 'my precious' by Bilbo Baggins challenges the concept that the Ring is *not* a concept: this again is tension easily relieved. In regards to the schizophrenic nonsense of 'gollum,' it is a result of the destruction of the boundary between the internal and external; similarly to how Sméagol/Gollum "projected himself back to a time before the man-nature

⁸² *Fellowship* 36

dichotomy" causing "the self and the non-self, outside and inside [to] no longer have any meaning" (*Anti-Oedipus* 2), the Ring--Subject, desiring machine--schizo-identity dichotomies have also been erased, eliminating any significant difference-- or conscious difference-- between Gollum and the Ring (though the organ-machine Sméagol attempts to redraw this boundary periodically: something remedied by Gollum's *ritournelles*). Furthermore, 'gollum' is an unconscious refrain: a schizophrenic word/signifier originating as a sound to clear Sméagol/Gollum's throat; "that which repeats does so only by dint of not 'comprehending'; not remembering, not knowing or not being conscious" (*Difference and Repetition* 16). As such, the repetition of 'gollum' is involuntary and unconscious, and "cannot be represented... it must always be signified, masked by what signifies it, itself masking what it signifies" (18).

Following these assertions set out by Deleuze, we can find that the repetition of 'my precious' by both Gollum and Bilbo is unconscious. Whether or not Bilbo is merely just reiterating what he heard Gollum say, he is presented as unconsciously remembering this occurrence, repeating 'my precious' in all areas of not comprehending, not remembering, not knowing, and not being conscious. It is only upon being reminded of Gollum and his refrain by Gandalf that this not comprehending, not remembering, etc. is negated in Bilbo, from which point he remembers and *is* conscious of remembering, and no longer reterritorializes towards a becoming-Gollum with 'my precious': "It has been called that [my precious] before,' he [Gandalf] said, 'but not by you'" (*Fellowship* 36). From this point, Bilbo can no longer reterritorialize with the unconscious refrain of 'my precious' as, due to his remembering, 'my precious' becomes a generality, something "which [is] always designate[d] [by] a logical power

of concepts” (*Difference and Repetition* 13). It is through this event that Bilbo escapes the illness resulting from territorializing via the *ritournelle* into the emptied and cancerous BwO of becoming-Gollum.

Gollum is not made ill by his refrains so much as he is by the continuous desiring-producing of the Ring and its production of the schizo-identity: the becoming-Gollum. It is, however, his *ritournelles* that reterritorialize him into this production. But, “If repetition makes us ill, it also heals us; if it enchains and destroys us, it also frees us, testifying in both cases to its ‘demonic’ power” (19). Sméagol/Gollum is reterritorialized onto his BwO by way of these dichotomous refrains. He is bound and shackled and utterly destroyed by his desire for the Ring but is liberated by it as well; he is liberated from the socius, from the Sméagol organ-machine and its desires; liberated from desiring for anything else but the Ring. While it is his schizo-identity that performs these illness/healing-shackling/freeing dichotomies, it is the refrain and repetition that actualizes this.

Sméagol/Gollum is the paradigm example of how the One Ring acts as a desiring-machine for the Ring-bearer. Furthermore, the Ring produces not only desire for itself but also “produces a subject alongside the machine, functioning as a part adjacent to the machine” (*Anti-Oedipus* 40) — this adjacent subject being the cancerous BwO of becoming-Gollum. Once obtaining his object of desire— the Ring— Gollum becomes “the schizo, continually wandering about, migrating here, there, and everywhere as best he can... plung[ing] further and further into the realm of deterritorialization, reaching the furthest limits of the decomposition of the socius” (*Anti-Oedipus* 35). That is, Gollum “decodes in the sense that he sits in his little corner and

makes little machines which make the flows pass and which make social codes break down... in opposition to paranoid investments which are fundamentally of a fascist type” (“Lecture 02”). As the social codes break down in Sméagol/Gollum’s self-isolation under the Misty Mountains, he territorializes further into Gollum, having been unplugged from the socius and constantly repeating his refrains of “gollum” and “my precious” to ensure the Sméagol cannot reappear.

A similar production occurs in other characters across *Lord of the Rings*; as it does, the Ring utilizes different desires in its subjects to attract them. Sméagol first desired the Ring for its aesthetic value—the same effect it had on Déagol, Sméagol’s cousin: ““there in his hand lay a beautiful golden ring; and it shone and glittered in the sun, so that his heart was glad”” (*Fellowship* 58). Déagol’s reluctance to give Sméagol the Ring (*ibid*) is a result of the becoming-Gollum in Déagol, however, Déagol’s schizo-identity never had the time to develop as Sméagol/Gollum’s did: Sméagol’s desire for the ring proved overwhelming, ultimately resulting in Déagol’s precipitous murder at the hand of his cousin ““because the gold looked so bright and beautiful”” (*ibid*). Rawls asserts that “hobbits originally lack the desire to dominate others” (32); because of this, Sméagol’s desire for the Ring is not caused by the Ring’s allure of power but the aesthetic appeal for the Ring’s material beauty, which Tolkien described as “exceedingly fair to look on” (*Silmarillion* 295). While this may not apply directly to Sméagol, as he was not quite a hobbit but “of a hobbit-kind” (*Fellowship* 57), it is still explicitly clear that Sméagol’s attraction to the Ring was not for power and thus this distinction does not have any particular bearing on Sméagol’s desire for the Ring. In fact, it does not even attempt its whisperings of power as it does to Boromir: ““why not Boromir? The Ring would give me power of Command. How I

would drive the hosts of Mordor, and all men would flock to my banner!” (*Fellowship* 448).

Here, we turn to the becoming-Gollum in Boromir, his father, Denethor, and the wizard Saruman.

Becoming-Gollum

Becoming-Gollum is a vital aspect in understanding desire in *Lord of the Rings*, specifically in relation to the One Ring. Whereas the desiring-production of the Ring fully produces a schizo-identity in Sméagol and begins to do so in Bilbo, there are three others who become-Gollum in an even less complete way than Bilbo: Boromir, Denethor, and Saruman. The key to differentiating the incomplete schizo-identity in Bilbo and these other three incomplete schizo-identities lies in the *ritournelle*. Bilbo’s long exposure to the Ring over the course of sixty years— from when he first discovered the Ring in the Third Age 2941 (“Appendix B” 408) to his giving it “to Frodo with all the rest” (*Fellowship* 37) in the Third Age 3001— allowed for the slow yet assured construction of his schizo-identity, however dormant, that he attempts to reterritorialize into through “my precious” when threatened separation from the Ring⁸³ and a striking resemblance to Gollum when presented with the Ring after long separation from it: “Frodo quickly drew back the Ring. To his distress and amazement he found that he was no longer looking at Bilbo; a shadow seemed to have fallen between them, and through it he found himself eyeing a little wrinkled creature with a hungry face and bony groping hands” (*Fellowship* 260). During this brief moment, Frodo was not looking at Bilbo, but rather at the physical manifestation of Bilbo’s becoming-Gollum. While not as all-consuming as Sméagol’s

⁸³ “I won’t give my precious away” (*Fellowship* 36).

schizo-identity, this schizo-identity in Bilbo is still more complete than those found in others across *Lord of the Rings*. The schizo-identity most akin to Gollum and Bilbo's is found in Boromir.

The character of Boromir is one of much contention in the discourse of *Lord of the Rings*;⁸⁴ much, if not all of this debate, arises from Boromir's desire for the Ring, first displayed at the Council of Elrond and ultimately resigning him to his fate at the beginning of *Two Towers*. Boromir's desire for the Ring during the Council of Elrond foreshadows the ultimate becoming-Gollum of Boromir at the end of *Fellowship of the Ring*, but his actions during the council do not give any indication that this schizo-identity production has truly started yet; it is only after extended travel with the Fellowship that Boromir becomes increasingly exposed to the Ring and his becoming-Gollum begins to be produced. Boromir's becoming-Gollum is most clearly showcased in "The Breaking of the Fellowship" when he assaults Frodo and attempts to steal the Ring from him; despite his defense of Boromir's role in driving the plot of *Lord of the Rings*, Branchaw does not forgo Boromir's guilt during this episodes but absolves Boromir for the splitting of the Fellowship of the Ring for which he is often blamed: "The Fellowship would have broken even if Boromir had not tried to take the Ring from Frodo, and Boromir is not the mover of the plot in the ways that he has been read" (Branchaw 125). Boromir's desire for the Ring— regardless of if it was ultimately responsible for the breaking of the Fellowship or not—

⁸⁴ Boromir is commonly read as the catalyst for the breaking of the Fellowship of the Ring at the end of the eponymous book and is often vilified, especially in the discourse surrounding Peter Jackson's interpretation of the character (he also betrays the character of Faramir, smearing the line of stewards in popular culture through his film adaptation of Tolkien). However, more recent scholars, such as Beebout and Branchaw, have attempted to defend Boromir from his traditional opprobrium.

is ultimately atoned for in his death defending Merry and Pippin:⁸⁵ his “final repentance and regeneration after his terrible lapse presents a model of atonement, humbling and forgiveness” (Birns 95). Boromir realizes he has erred and is able to separate himself from his schizo-identity, though he is “concerned only with the effects of his actions on the physical plane, in which he is shown to be mistaken, whereas Aragorn has a deeper understanding of what is at stake morally” (Branchaw 130). Boromir’s “acts of defense towards other characters throughout the story, and therefore seems to state clearly his intentions for use of the Ring. The Ring itself, as an agent of evil, is quick to detect and twist good desires into desires for power” (Beebout 4) confirms Levitin’s assertion that “The Ring plainly is a symbol of Power. It can provide unlimited Power to its possessor, but he is forced to lose his freedom and become a slave to that Power. Even the best intentions in the world will eventually be smothered by the Ring’s insidious influence upon its user” (“Power” 13). Boromir ultimately realizes that his assault on Frodo and attempt to steal the Ring was wrong but ultimately does not show repentance for his desire for the Ring and subsequent desire for its usage.

Boromir’s desire for the Ring does not stem from aesthetic appeal, as Sméagol’s does, nor the desire for Sauron-like power as Saruman’s does; instead, its basis is founded upon Boromir’s innate desire to bring glory to himself and the people of Gondor: ““Why do you speak ever of hiding and destroying? Why should we not think that the Great Ring has come into our hands to serve us in the very hour of need? Wielding it the Free Lords of the Free may surely defeat the Enemy... Let the Ring be your weapon, if it has such power as you say”” (*Fellowship*

⁸⁵ *Towers* 4

300). Boromir's own proclamation of why he desires the Ring paints a picture of a defense of Gondor— a justification for his desire akin to Gollum's insistence on having the Ring as a birthday present (*Fellowship* 58). Faramir, Boromir's brother, confirms this desire of Boromir's, however with a caveat: ““A fell weapon, per-chance, devised by the Dark Lord. If it were a thing that gave advantage in battle, I can well believe that Boromir, the proud and fearless, often rash, ever anxious for the victory of Minas Tirith (and his own glory therein), might desire such a thing and be allured by it”” (*Towers* 314). Faramir's testimony to Boromir's desire confirms that the latter desired the Ring for the defense and victory of Gondor against Sauron but also for a coveting of personal glory— it is this selfish desire that allows for the Ring to draw Boromir into its snare and produce a becoming-Gollum in him.

The becoming-Gollum of Boromir is a prominent part of his role in *Lord of the Rings* but is not intrinsic to his character as a whole. Upon realizing his wrong-doing after attempting to steal the Ring from Frodo, Boromir is able to divorce himself from his schizo-identity and repent his actions: “For a while he was as still as if his own curse had struck him down; then suddenly he wept... ‘What have I said?... What have I done? Frodo, Frodo!... Come back! A madness took me, but it has passed” (*Fellowship* 449). Just as Bilbo is able to deterritorialize from his becoming-Gollum and back into himself upon being presented with the Ring in Rivendell, Boromir too is able to escape his becoming-Gollum once being physically distanced from the Ring. However, this is due to the incomplete nature of his schizo-identity production; true, Boromir was exposed to the Ring for extended periods of time, but his organ-machine was never plugged into the Ring and thus the Ring could not truly and fully act as a desiring-machine, as it

does for Sméagol/Gollum. It delineates Boromir's desires towards it but it does not override his desiring-production and create a schizophrenic desire for only itself. We would be left to guess at how Boromir's fully produced BwO would look if not for Gandalf's insight during a conversation with Boromir's father, Denethor: "“In no case would Boromir have brought it to you... you deceive yourself. He would have stretched out his hand to this thing, and taking it he would have fallen. He would have kept it for his own, and when he returned you would not have known your son”" (*King* 80-81). Here, Gandalf confirms the all-encompassing desiring-production of the Ring; should Boromir's organ-machine have been plugged into the Ring, he would have been sent irrevocably down the path of becoming-Gollum, rendered schizophrenic in his desire for the Ring and deterritorialized from himself as the subject. Of the three analyses here of incomplete becoming-Gollum, Boromir's schizo-identity is the only one produced by close contact with the One Ring; both Denethor and Saruman's becoming-Gollum are results of attachment to the Sauron-assemblage through different means.

While Boromir's direct contact with the Ring produces a clear becoming-Gollum within him, Denethor's desire for the Ring is slightly different, as he does not come in contact with the Ring; instead, he comes in contact with the Sauron-assemblage via the Palantíri,⁸⁶ desiring the Ring through it but ultimately having his interests deceived. Boromir's desire for the Ring more closely aligns with that of Gollum's, grasping desperately for a hold of it instead of plotting for it and becoming a tool of Sauron in the process, as Denethor and Saruman do. Denethor and Saruman still sought their own power and such by way of the Ring, not the Ring itself for their

⁸⁶ Also known as the Seeing Stones

schizo-identities were the product of Sauron and their coming in contact with him by way of the Palantíri that were pulled into the Sauron-assemblage, not products of their own contact with the Ring and its desiring-production.⁸⁷ In this way, the schizo-identities of Denethor and Saruman are not only incomplete like Boromir's but also bear resemblance to the Nazgûl, insofar as they are brought into the Sauron-assemblage by means other than the One Ring and are manipulated by the Sauron-assemblage to become tools for it. While Sauron does not attempt to lure Saruman and Denethor into the Sauron-assemblage, as he does with the Nazgûl, he does manipulate them toward his own ends. Saruman's usefulness to Sauron is in his "desir[e] [for] [Sauron's] victory, or no longer oppos[ing] it" while Denethor "was made to believe that [Sauron's] victory was inevitable, and so fell into despair," rendering Sauron greatest militaristic foe, Gondor, enfeebled (*Unfinished* 408). Thus, while becoming-Gollum in the Ring-bearer is not useful to Sauron, becoming-Gollum in subjects who are not the Ring-bearer is useful.

The becoming-Gollum produced in Denethor resembles the delirium of the becoming-Gollum in Sméagol by virtue of his madness, that of Boromir by way of why he desires the Ring, and Saruman's becoming-Gollum— which will be explored more in-depth later— in its usefulness to Sauron. When considering Denethor's desire for the Ring compared to Boromir's, there is a distinction between them: Boromir wants to actively use the Ring to defeat Sauron while Denethor wants to hide the Ring, seeing that it is "kept, hidden, hidden dark and dark. Not used... unless at the uttermost end of need" (*King* 81). Nonetheless, Denethor's desire is still for

⁸⁷ Sauron's use of the Palantíri, or seeing-stones, in his assemblage was "a means of dominating and deluding two of his opponents" (*Unfinished* 407); however, being as the seeing-stones were initially of Númenor and not of Sauron's own design, they themselves were only peripherally connected to the assemblage and thus could not fully bring others— in this case, Saruman and Denethor— fully into the assemblage.

the Ring and, as Gandalf points out, only his physical distance from the Ring allows him to maintain this constrained desire, and if he had “received this thing, it would have overthrown [him]. Were it buried beneath the roots of Mindolluin, still it would burn [his] mind away” (82). This physical distance from the Ring allows Denethor to escape the desperation for the Ring to which his son succumbs: ““If any mortals have claim to the Ring, it is the men of Númenor, and not Halflings. It is not yours save by unhappy chance. It might have been mine. It should be mine. Give it to me!”” (*Fellowship* 449). Being that Denethor does not fully succumb to becoming-Gollum as Boromir does, his BwO is not disconnected from the socius, as it is even more incomplete than Boromir’s, and can be utilized by Sauron to achieve his own means.

Denethor’s madness and despair realized in his schizo-identity allows Sauron to manipulate his desires and attach him to the Sauron-assemblage. Since the Ring affects all of its subjects differently (attracting Sméagol through aesthetic appeal, seducing Boromir with whispers of power), Denethor’s desire for it, and resulting schizo-identity, is formed differently from the others; it takes shape in the form of his madness that causes him to quickly succumb to apparent defeat (*King* 95) and commit suicide in his grief (131). While his desire, as established in the above paragraph, is ultimately for the Ring, Denethor’s becoming-Gollum is created by contact with the Sauron-assemblage through the corrupted Palantíri. The Palantíri were gifts to the men of Númenor from Eldar (*Silmarillion* 276), initially crafted by Fëanor⁸⁸ so that “things far away could be seen small but clear, as with the eyes of the eagles of Manwë” (64). While these stones “were originally ‘innocent,’ serving no evil purpose,” they were corrupted by Sauron

⁸⁸ Fëanor was the greatest of the Noldor Elves in the First Age of Middle-earth, devising the Fëanorian script utilized by the Eldar (*Silmarillion* 64), crafting the Silmarils for which the *Silmarillion* was written (67), and ultimately only succumbing to death from the wounds he endured from the Lord of the Balrogs, Gothmog (107).

“who made them sinister, and instruments of domination and deceit” (*Unfinished* 405). Sauron’s corruption of the Palantíri served to bring them into the Sauron-assemblage (417) but because they were not initially crafted by him or with his assistance, this effort proved somewhat unfruitful. However, by bringing them into his assemblage, the Palantíri were still successful in the corruption of Denethor and Saruman, creating in them a weaker version of the schizo-identity seen in Sméagol/Gollum and Boromir; this brought the users of the Palantíri towards the Sauron-Ring-Mordor milieu at the center of the Sauron-assemblage, producing in them a schizo-identity, though not one so potent as those produced in the subject whose organ-machine is plugged into the Ring.

By drawing their users toward the milieu at the center of the Sauron-assemblage, the Palantíri corrupted by Sauron ultimately directed desire toward the One Ring, which sits at the middle of the Sauron-assemblage; the Ring, not the Palantíri themselves, creates the schizo-identity in the Palantíri’s users over a period of time. Plugging one’s organ-machine into the Ring immediately begins the production of becoming-Gollum⁸⁹ but the Palantíri, given their origins, require a more extended usage— such as Denethor and Saruman’s— to create the schizo-identity: “as the peril of his realm grew, [Denethor] looked in the Stone and was deceived: far too often, I guess, since Boromir departed. He was too great to be subdued to the will of the Dark Power, he saw nonetheless only the things which that Power permitted him to see... the vision of

⁸⁹ A beginning of this production does not entail an end. As seen when Samwise Gamgee uses the Ring, the Ring tempts him as “Wild fantasies arose in his mind; and he saw Samwise the Strong, Hero of the Age... and at his command the vale of Gorgoroth became a garden of flowers and trees and brought forth fruit,” beginning the becoming-Gollum production (*King* 186). This production can be resisted, however, even by those not becoming-nomad, as Frodo does; Sam’s own desiring-machines are able to divorce themselves from the desiring-production of the Ring, visualizing his own desire for “one small garden of a free gardener,” in turn escaping the Ring’s desiring-producing through “love of his master... his plain hobbit-sense... [and knowledge] that he was not large enough to bear such a burden” (*ibid*).

the great might of Mordor that was shown to him fed the despair of his heart until it overthrew his mind” (*King* 133-134). Becoming-Gollum is nonetheless actualized in Denethor but is weaker as a socially-divorced body without organs and more an incomplete schizo-identity bent to the will of the Sauron-assemblage. Denethor’s all-consuming madness makes it difficult to distinguish between the pre-becoming-Gollum Denethor and Denethor’s schizo-identity; however, Saruman’s identity as Saruman the White, the eldest of the Istari⁹⁰ wizards sent by the “Lord of the West to contest the power of Sauron” (*Silmarillion* 299), and his schizo-identity are more easily distinguishable.

The distinction between Saruman and Saruman’s becoming-Gollum is made the most evident of these incomplete schizo-identities by virtue of its naming; upon falling into desire for the Ring, Saruman the White becomes Saruman of Many Colors (*Fellowship* 290). Boromir and Denethor remain the same in name, just falling into a maddened state; Saruman wholly embraces his schizo-identity, complete or not, pursuing his desires past the point of the incomplete becoming-Gollum in others. “For Saruman, it is only mastery that matters” (Birns 89); even following the Ring’s destruction, the production of Saruman’s schizo-identity is not undone; his desire for power—heightened by the desire-producing machinations of the Ring—still remains. Though his desire for power may be diminished to merely lashing out against the Shire in order to “teach [the hobbits] a lesson” (*King* 324)⁹¹ rather than “have his own will by force, and... oust

⁹⁰ The Istari are an order of wizards that includes Gandalf and Saruman; they are Maiar in human form, come from Valinor. Maiar are “of the same order as the Valar but of a less degree” (*Silmarillion* 30); Valar are “the Powers of Arda, and Men have often called them gods” (25).

⁹¹ He comes to have a “misplaced desire for revenge” (Albaugh 56) rather than desire for power akin to Sauron’s.

Sauron” (*Unfinished* 390), Saruman still ardently desires power, and for the majority of *Lord of the Rings*, desires this power through the One Ring.

Saruman does not just desire political or militaristic power such as Boromir and Denethor do; the former desires personal glory in battle for defending the realm of Gondor, and the latter desires to make Gondor a stronghold against Sauron by virtue of the Ring, ultimately falling into maddening despair at the prospect of Sauron’s victory; but Saruman desires to become as Sauron himself is, proclaiming himself “Saruman Ring-maker” (*Fellowship* 290). His desire for the Ring extends beyond what Boromir and Denethor desire; there is nothing behind the power he desires — no personal glory or defense of a kingdom or despair for Sauron’s seemingly inevitable victory— but rather he just desires to rule and control: ““The Ruling Ring? If we could command that, then the Power would pass to us”” (291). Even Treebeard observes that there is nothing behind Saruman’s desire beyond that ““He is plotting to become a Power”” (*Towers* 76). There is, in Saruman’s desire to imitate and usurp Sauron, a dual deception.

Saruman is first deceived in his becoming: he thinks that he is becoming-Sauron, desiring the Ring “so that he might wield it himself and order all the world to his will. Too long had he studied the works of Sauron in hope to defeat him, and now he envied him as a rival” (*Silmarillion* 301) when he is really becoming-Gollum. Deleuze and Guattari state that “Desire can never be deceived” (*Anti-Oedipus* 257), which at first glance seems to complicate this reading; however, it is not Saruman’s desire that is being deceived. He desires the Ring, whether as becoming-Sauron or becoming-Gollum, and thus it is not his desire that is being deceived but rather the result of his desires that are being deceived. Deleuze and Guattari continue by stating,

"Interests can be deceived, unrecognized, or betrayed" (257). It is Saruman's interests that are ultimately betrayed, not unlike the manipulation of the Nazgûl and their desire: while his interest is in becoming-Sauron, he is instead bent to the will of Sauron and the Ring, becoming-Gollum as he loses grasp on his reality and desires only for the Ring, becoming "a fool... and yet pitiable" (*Towers* 208) as one might also describe Gollum. It is here that we turn to the second way that Saruman is deceived.

Saruman's second deception comes in the form of the productions instigated by his desire: the first deception is of his interests— thinking he is becoming-Sauron when he is becoming-Gollum— and his second deception is of the productions of his actions— he thinks he is creating his own army and tools of gaining power while he is, in fact, creating Sauron's means of victory. Saruman is deceived into helping Sauron though under the impression that he was only helping himself: "Saruman had slowly shaped [Isengard] to his shifting purposes, and made it better, as he thought, being deceived— for all those arts and subtle devices, for which he forsook his former wisdom, and which fondly he imagined were his own, came but from Mordor; so that what he made was naught, only a little copy, a child's model or slave's flattery, of... Barad-dûr, the Dark Tower, which suffered no rival, and laughed at flattery" (*Towers* 175). This second deception is also a deception of interests, however, a more tangible one; the interests of Saruman's productions were deceived, his becoming-Gollum manipulated by Sauron into "doing [Mordor's] work all the time, even when he thought he was working for himself" (*King* 323). Because Saruman is attached via the Palantíri to the Sauron-assemblage, which is in itself a kind of socius, his becoming-Gollum does not fully escape the social machine and is made by

Sauron to deceptively “desire its own repression” (*Anti-Oedipus* 105). Desire for the Ring is ultimately the driving force behind Saruman’s becoming-Gollum but the production is incomplete thus rendering his desire un-schizophrenic, still attached to the Sauron-assemblage, and useful in its interest-deception to Sauron. Outside of the entirely schizophrenic BwO Gollum, the partially produced schizo-identity within Boromir, and the schizo-identities within Denethor and Saruman that are conducive to Sauron’s goals, there is another BwO that interacts with the One Ring in an entirely different way: that of Tom Bombadil.

Ho! Tom Bombadil, Tom Bombadillo!⁹²

As much as— or perhaps more than— Boromir is a contested figure in the discourse surrounding *Lord of the Rings*, Tom Bombadil is an enigma. It is the general consensus that no one knows who he is or where he came from, leading some scholars to ask not “Who or What is Tom Bombadil” but rather why is Tom Bombadil significant, and what purpose does he serve? (Shergold 1). And in some cases, leaving him entirely neglected, “believing him to be a silly, unimportant addition to the story” (Chapman-Morales 59). Stipulation surrounding his origins and being has given rise to sundry theories about Tom’s “place in Tolkien’s cosmology... Tom has by turn been unmasked as one of the *Istari*, a *Maia*, a *Vala* or even as Eru Ilúvatar” (Campbell 43); others have posited him as “the nexus of joy... and teaches the hobbits how to use joy to overcome the shadow of Mordor, the shadow of despair” (Chapman-Morales 59) or “a positive environmental model— a positive environmental model which, in alignment with Tolkien’s own concerns for the primary natural world, is under threat from technocratic

⁹² *Fellowship of the Ring* 151

aggressors” (Campbell 42). Lewis aptly observes that “Bombadil demonstrates aspects of life beyond both humanity and the Elves” (151) though he goes on to contend that Bombadil is the Vala, Aulë, an assertion which I do not agree with and lies outside the scope of this analysis (152). However, by following the former statement further, we can examine Tom Bombadil as a BwO, as this ‘body’ “is opposed not to the organs but to that organization of the organs called the organism” (*Plateaus* 184) and presents a zero point of desire, both of which lie outside the capacity of humans and elves. Tom de-structures his organism across the Old Forest, at once becoming part of the Old Forest and the milieu from which the Old Forest-assemblage springs: “I am Old. Eldest, that’s what I am. Mark my words, my friends: Tom was here before the river and the trees; Tom remembers the first raindrop and the first acorn” (*Fellowship* 148). By virtue of his ancient nature, Tom is able to “patiently and momentarily dismantle the organization of the organs” (*Plateaus* 187) and distribute himself across the Old Forest as an ancient and un-desiring body without organs.

Earlier in this section, I noted that the terms BwO, schizo-identity, and becoming-Gollum were to be used interchangeably. However, when discussing Tom Bombadil there is a distinction within the concept of the BwO to draw; the BwO of becoming-Gollum is the drug-addicted, the cancerous body without organs— the BwO that is created “with too violent an action... without taking precautions” which plunges the subject “into a black hole, or even dragged towards catastrophe” (*Plateaus* 187). Conversely, the BwO of Tom Bombadil is the healthy Body without Organs which opens itself to “circuits, conjunctions, levels and thresholds, passages and distributions of intensity, and territories and deterritorializations” (*Plateaus* 186). He is “the

unproductive, the unconsuming” (*Anti-Oedipus* 11), opened up to the Old Forest around him, breathing in and understanding its flows and conjunctions without desire to rule them: “He is Master of the wood, water, and hill... The trees and grasses and all things growing or living in the land belong each to themselves. Tom Bombadil is the Master” (*Fellowship* 140-141). By opening his body up to the Old Forest-assemblage and de-structuring his organism, Tom possesses an understanding and power “to control the world about him, [but] he has no wish to rule, exploit or master” (Campbell 48), becoming, as Gandalf calls him, “a moss-gatherer” (*Return of the King* 298): a force “produced as antiproduction” (*Anti-Oedipus* 15). This lack of desire is made manifest in the events surrounding his interaction with the One Ring.

The One Ring has no effect on Tom Bombadil, either in the realm of magic or desire. Tom Bombadil is not affected by the Ring as he has no desires which the Ring can delineate toward itself; the Ring cannot create desire for itself in Tom to draw Tom into the Sauron-assemblage because Tom is entirely non-productive and non-desiring: “He has no desire for that ultimate symbol and expression of power, the Ring” (Inkpen 128). There are no becomings or deterritorializations within him as he has already deterritorialized as the healthy BwO; and the Ring cannot produce the becoming-Gollum in Tom Bombadil because he is already this BwO. Despite the Ring’s “seductive influence powerful enough to corrupt the mighty Maiar (Saruman is utterly corrupted by the Ring and Gandalf fears to use it)” (Campbell 49), Tom reacts to the Ring as if it were just another piece of jewelry: “he put it up to his eye and laughed... Then Tom put the Ring round the end of his little finger and held it up to the candlelight... There was no sign of Tom disappearing! Tom laughed again, and then he spun the Ring in the air” (*Fellowship*

150). The Ring's lack of effect on him results from Tom's complete and utter lack of desire; without any desires which can be delineated towards itself, there is no production of becoming-Gollum that the Ring can induce, and thus it is rendered utterly helpless to Tom's non-desiring BwO, both in terms of production and magic. Tom's complete lack of desire and productivity divorces him from the events of the narrative of *Lord of the Rings*; without any desire, there can be no production, and he serves no role, nor has no interest, in the productions of the narrative: "Quite untroubled; and I should guess, [Tom is] not much interested in anything that we have done or seen, unless perhaps in our visits to the Ents" (*King* 299).⁹³ By this notion, Tom asserts himself as the complete opposite of Sméagol/Gollum when considering desire in *Lord of the Rings*: the former desires nothing and has formed a full BwO of anti-production, and the other has fallen into a black hole of schizophrenic desiring, defining himself around his desire for the Ring.

The One Ring as a desiring-machine is a central aspect of its role in *Lord of the Rings*. While its role as one of the three parts of the milieu that make up the Sauron-assemblage, along with Sauron and Mordor, is intrinsic to understanding how the Ring came to be and how it functions within its assemblage, understanding the Ring as a desiring-machine external to the Ring-bearer allows us to interrogate its role in both the plot of *Lord of the Rings* and its effects on the characters who desire it. The most notable of these is Sméagol/Gollum, who is rendered a schizophrenic shadow of himself as a result of his desire for the Ring. This desire for the Ring in turn produces a schizo-identity, or becoming-Gollum, within the subject: a production seen in

⁹³ Tom's interest in the Ents and their home of Fangorn Forest does not indicate desire or production on his part but rather an interest in the forests of Middle-earth that would attach to his larger assemblage.

Bilbo Baggins, Boromir, Denethor, and Saruman, with the full BwO of Tom Bombadil acting as the antithesis to becoming-Gollum. A notable omission in this section is the character of Frodo Baggins— this omission was purposeful. Frodo does exhibit aspects of becoming-Gollum, particularly when he attempts to claim the Ring for his own on Mount Doom: “I will not do this deed. The Ring is mine!” (*King* 239); however, Frodo’s becoming-Gollum is only part of his becoming-nomad, and thus escapes analysis of only becoming-Gollum.

CONCLUSION

The objective of this project was to illustrate the hitherto uncovered relationship between Tolkien's fantasy epic, *Lord of the Rings*, and the philosophy of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari. This work fills a glaring lacuna in Tolkien scholarship by offering a new reading of *Lord of the Rings*. Additionally, it provides grounds for new readings of fantasy as a whole. As it applies to Tolkien, the philosophy of Deleuze and Guattari reframes the functions of Sauron, the relationship between magic and space, desire for the One Ring, and the character of Frodo as an entirety. As I proposed in the introduction, and as Deleuze and Guattari posit in their Authors' Note of *Thousand Plateaus*, this work was not necessarily comprised of chapters but of plateaus which, "To a certain extent... may be read independently of one another, except the conclusion, which should be read at the end" (*Plateaus* xix). Additionally, each of these sections (a more apt description than chapters) contains a date in its title; these dates are described in the footnotes and serve to ground the reader in the fictive timeline of *Lord of the Rings*, indicating significant dates for each of the concepts discussed in the respective section (the forging of the One Ring, the date of the formation of the Fellowship, etc.). With the exception of one, these sections fit together in a rhizome, connecting not necessarily at points but at intersections of themes and ideas; the aforementioned exception is the milieu section which explores Frodo as the war machine and becoming-nomad. As the milieu of this rhizome, all lines converge onto it and emit from it, allowing it to be placed in any order between the bookends of the introduction and conclusion. However, for the sake of organizational clarity, the sections are discussed here in order of appearance.

The first section analyzes what I term the Sauron-assemblage and the connections it makes across Middle-earth. As an assemblage, this construction of Sauron's desire for power requires a territory: this territory is found in the geographical location of Mordor as well as the spectral territory of the wraith-world. Mordor functions as two pieces within the Sauron-assemblage: the territory and a piece of the milieu. Alongside Mordor, the milieu is constructed of Sauron and the One Ring in a trinity, all of which contain pieces of Sauron. From this center milieu, the Sauron-assemblage expands outwards mainly through the Minor Rings of Power gifted to the kings of Men, Dwarves, and Elves. While Sauron is largely unsuccessful in drawing the Dwarves and Elves into his assemblage, the kings of Men are turned into Nazgûl, their existence linked intrinsically to the existence of the Sauron-assemblage. While the Dwarven Rings are simply ineffectual to Sauron's purposes, the Elven Rings exist as resistance to the Darkness of Sauron within the Sauron-assemblage itself. Though effective, and nearly entirely successful in its desire, the Sauron-assemblage's weakness is tied to the centrality of the Sauron-Mordor-Ring milieu and the Darkness of its flows.

Section two introduces the theory of *spatiomagus*. This theory analyzes the fantasy novel as a self-contained vessel, examining the way in which magic impacts and is impacted by space. This is done without considering real world influences to the author's construction of the fantasy and eschewing the ethical considerations that might have formed the fantasy's magic system. *Spatiomagus* finds its groundwork in Deleuze and Guattari's idea of smooth and striated space, adapting their concept and considering fantastical Darkness as striation and Light as smooth. By viewing fantasy through this lens, the fantasy novel is deterritorialized from our world and can

be confidently read as what it is so often criticized to be: escapism. *Spatiomagus* emphasizes and values the escapist nature of the fantasy novel, seeing it as a necessity of the genre. Just as Tolkien's fantasy has been reinterpreted and adapted to fit other works,⁹⁴ *spatiomagus* invites interpretation and application to other works of fantasy: this section merely serves as the initial conceptualization of the theory.

The next section is purposefully unnumbered and centers on the character of Frodo Baggins. As indicated in the introduction of this thesis, this section analyses the becoming-nomad of Frodo Baggins and refuses to be categorized as a numbered section, introduction, or conclusion. While joining the other three sections' central concepts of the assemblage, *spatiomagus*, and becoming, "Frodo the War Machine" acts as an intersection, rather than a conclusion, of these ideas. Introducing in fullness the divinity of Frodo's mission to destroy the One Ring, the nomadism— both spatial and magical— of Frodo is explored to be a result of his trajectory through space as well as an inherently magical venture. Furthermore, Frodo's divine nomadism allows for the construction of the Fellowship of the Ring: a war machine which, in the words of both Tolkien and Deleuze, contains speed and secrecy.⁹⁵ Just as a becoming has no true end, remaining always in the middle, this section ends in such a way that the discussion of Frodo's divinity and becoming-nomad might be expanded and our understanding might become different.

⁹⁴ For example, the co-option and adaptation of Tolkien's orcs in *Dungeons & Dragons*.

⁹⁵ This verbiage to describe the Fellowship and war machines as a whole is found in *Fellowship of the Ring* on page 309 and *Thousand Plateaus* on page 413, respectively.

The third, and final, section begins with an incisive schizoanalysis of the character Sméagol/Gollum and his relationship to the Ring. Sméagol/Gollum's usage of the *ritournelles* 'my precious' and 'Gollum' create a way for him to deterritorialize from Sméagol into Gollum. The latter of these two refrains is also utilized by Bilbo Baggins to reterritorialize into his forming schizo-identity; however, when used by Bilbo it is a repetition with a difference: the same utterance of 'my precious' with different signification. This section continues by analyzing the incomplete schizo-identities of Boromir, Denethor, and Saruman, asserting that ultimately these incomplete schizo-identities formed outside of contact with the Ring are useful to Sauron. Lastly, section three turns to an analysis of the healthy Body without Organs: Tom Bombadil. An enigma of a character to the entirety of Tolkien scholarship, here I assert that Tom is an undesiring being— a healthy BwO with no desire or production. The section closes by contending Tom's desire (or lack thereof) as the antithesis to Sméagol/Gollum's schizophrenic desire and purposefully eschewing an extended analysis of Frodo's becoming-Gollum.

I would be mistaken to say that this thesis has exhaustively covered the entirety of the symmetry between *Lord of the Rings* and Deleuzoguattarian philosophy. In fact, only hubris would lead me to say that this thesis has exhaustively covered the concepts contained within it; the concepts of assemblages, space, nomadism, and becoming can be expanded nearly indefinitely through *Lord of the Rings* and its surrounding works.⁹⁶ The philosophy of Deleuze and Guattari lends itself to multiplicitous readings— readings that may even conflict with each

⁹⁶ In particular, Tolkien's *Silmarillion*— and the stories expanded from it such as *Children of Húrin*— has notable Deleuzoguattarian underpinnings.

other.⁹⁷ As such, the very content of this work invites disagreements and further investigation in regard to both the Deleuzoguattarian reading of *Lord of the Rings* and the proposition of the theory of *spatiomagus*, the latter of which begs to be expanded into the genre of fantasy as a whole.

⁹⁷ Some of these conflicts of interpretation are laid bare in Buchanan's *Assemblage Theory*, a book which not only undertakes the task of interpreting Deleuze and Guattari's theory of the assemblage but also— to an extent— disproving other scholars' inadequate interpretations of the Deleuzoguattarian assemblage.

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