





Cambridge Tolkien Society

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Contents

On the Nature of Freedom in Tolkien's Middle earth
By Jamie Douglas

Eagle Debate
By Josie Kwon

Aragorn picture aka Page Three Elf
By Emily Turner

The Council of Elrond
By Kathryn Atwell

Masters of Doom, by Doom Mastered?
By Will Barter

Sauron featuring Lady Gaga
By Jamie Douglas

Editor's Note:

Welcome to the latest issue of Anor, our 'biannual' magazine which has not been published since 2006. With the permission of the Steward I have hijacked this publication and corrupted it with fangirl goodness and shameless parodies, only grudgingly allowing space for the very excellent articles which may actually be of some intellectual merit. We can't have Oxford beating us, after all.

The next issue of Anor will be out as soon as I can be bothered to create it, and any articles or pictures you care to submit will be received gladly. If anyone is offended by the content of this publication, please take it up with the Dark Lord Sauron, or better yet, Melkor. They will be happy to answer any queries you may have on behalf of myself, the illustrious editor. Thank you, happy reading.

On the Nature of Freedom in Tolkien's Middle-Earth

By Jamie Douglas

I first thought about the nature of freedom in Tolkien's Middle-Earth when I considered his use of the term "Free Peoples" to distinguish those inhabitants of Middle-Earth who were not under the dominion of the Dark Lord Sauron. Within just a few small leaps of logic I realised that Tolkien's use of the word 'free' was fundamentally different to our modern one and yet somehow Tolkien's notion does not seem so estranged – at least for the time being. My aim in this brief essay will be to address the following questions, namely: what is the nature of freedom in Middle-Earth? Is it shared by all the peoples of Middle-Earth? And finally how can such a fundamentally different view regarding 'freedom' received by readers today?

One interpretation of the nature of freedom would be that elves, men, dwarves, ents and hobbits are 'free' in the sense that they are not bound in servitude or held under the sway of the Dark Lord of Mordor. A modern reader may not actually label this as 'freedom' at all pointing to the fact that the vast majority of people are in fact 'subjects' to various kings, lords and elders both before and after the War of the Ring suggesting that 'freedom' in Middle-Earth is an illusion or at best a semantic necessity. However, this interpretation of a *relative freedom*, i.e. one conditioned by extenuating circumstances, is at odds with another form of freedom which runs throughout Tolkien's works and especially in the Lord of the Rings, that is *free will*. The principal danger of the One Ring (and the Nine Rings of Men especially) is that it enslaves the will of the bearer until it becomes a shadow, a mere extension of the will of Sauron. This strongly implies the existence of free will in Tolkien's cosmology and that the ultimate threat to the freedom of the "Free Peoples" lies in Sauron's potential to erode the free will of others through the exertion of his own will through the power of the One. Freedom is therefore an aspect of the will in Middle-Earth and the will remains

free so long as it is one's own, i.e. it is not *completely and utterly* governed by another, for of course it is the case that the will can be influenced both in our experiences and in those of the peoples of Middle-Earth.

Having established the nature of freedom, I will now consider how two of the major peoples of Middle-Earth exercise it, namely Men and Elves. At the beginning of the Second Age Elros became the first king of Númenor. The Númenorean people exercised a great deal of their free will over Middle-Earth establishing vast kingdoms and reaching new heights in power and craft. The Valar laid down one condition on their freedom which was never to sail to the West out of sight of Númenor and for thousands of years such was the case. However, the pride of these men left them vulnerable to the influences of Sauron until they openly flouted the condition of the Valar. Such an unchecked exercise of their will led directly to the Downfall of Númenor for the men desired to take immortality by force. The Elves too had previously rebelled against the Valar and left Valinor for Middle-Earth. Leaving the recovery of the Silmarils aside, many of the Elves rebelled in the hope of ruling lands according to their own will, of whom Galadriel is the prime example. However, as Galadriel finally realises, the Elves are "...fighting the long defeat...". She realises that the will she wished to exercise, although 'free', was not in accordance with the will of the Valar or of Eru and so it was vain and proud to pretend otherwise. Her ultimate rejection of the One Ring and the chance to fulfil her desire humbled her will, which incidentally exposed the power of her real freedom. At first glance this would seem to destroy any notion of there being real 'freedom' for the peoples of Middle-Earth if, in effect, one must always do what the Valar (or Eru) will you to do. However, I believe that Tolkien, by comparing and contrasting the different contexts of free will among Elves and Men, is demonstrating his view on the nature of freedom: we have free will but it must act according to the framework laid down by some higher power for it to be truly free. This appears counter-intuitive but it is a theme which runs throughout

the Lord of the Rings and one that I believe follows from Tolkien's Catholic convictions.

For Tolkien fairy stories harbour hidden Christian truths and Middle-Earth is no different. Our freedom is not so much a socio-political one as one of our will and our choice is most free when we choose to follow the right path. In a sense our choice would not be free if we chose the wrong path since our knowledge and conviction of what is good in the world would be limited or corrupted thereby reducing our freedom to choose. This 'right' path is the way of God for a Christian, and the way of 'good' for the people of Middle-Earth. Furthermore, just as a Christian has free will but aims to be a subject in the perfect kingdom of God, so too are the people of Middle-Earth free with the ultimate aim of being part of a restored, legitimate kingdom under the rightful heir. We are never permitted to suspect that Aragorn would ever be a 'bad' king or that the people of Gondor might like a republic after the War of the Ring. Aragorn's claim to kingship is prescribed by history and prophecy and so is a legitimate enactment of Eru's will (which is hidden). Gandalf hints at powers at work in the world that are greater than any of the Wise can imagine and I believe he is referring to a sort of providence within Middle-Earth, most fully realised in Tolkien's use of *eucatastrophe* as seen in the scene at the Crack of Doom where the Quest is fulfilled despite Frodo falling at the last hurdle, Gollum triumphing over Sméagol, the light of Eärendil being extinguished and Sam being powerless to help. This shows that the great will of Eru is at work in the world but it is only clearly apparent when our own freedom fails.

Thus I hope to have demonstrated how freedom is manifested in free will in Middle-Earth and how it functions as a part of Tolkien's cosmology. When exercised under the governance of Eru it is most free as it follows the will of the creator, but when exercised contrary to his will, it will ultimately be vulnerable to corruption, deception and failure. This reflects the free will of a Christian within God's hierarchy (assuming we do not subscribe to Pullman's view of a tyrannical God!). By striving for 'good', the "Free Peoples" are

enacting the will of Eru through their own free will, an act that in no way compromises the nature or significance of their freedom. How you receive this is up to you.

Pearce, Joseph. 2001. *Tolkien, A Celebration: Collected Writings on a Literary Legacy*. San Francisco: Ignatius Press.

Tolkien, J.R.R. 1991. *The Lord of the Rings*. UK: HarperCollins.

Tolkien, J.R.R. 1992. *The Silmarillion*. UK: HarperCollins.

Editor's Note: Many thanks to Jamie for his amazing essay. If anybody would like to offer up any official counter-argument please submit your own essay for the next issue of Anor. We would love to have your views.

Eagle Debate

The results of the Eagle Debate are in! The topic was 'In what order would the members of the Fellowship have been corrupted by the ring?' So, in order from the most to the least corruptible, we have:

BOROMIR – (deceased at the time of debate)

GIMLI – (tried to take the RING and therefore was SHOT)

PIPPIN – (tried to take the RING and got bludgeoned to DEATH by Gandalf's staff)

MERRY – (tried to take the RING and therefore was smitten by Glamdring)

LEGOLAS – (tried to take the RING and was mauled to DEATH by screaming Mary-Sues)

FRODO – (tried to take the RING, Sam abandoned him, and he therefore starved to DEATH)

ARAGORN – (tried to take the RING, Arwen was upset, therefore Elrond turned into AGENT SMITH and pummelled him to DEATH)

GANDALF – (tried to take the RING and therefore was instantly killed to DEATH for being NAUGHTY in Eru's sight)

SAM – (fails in the Quest, Gollum takes the RING, defeats Sauron and builds a SUSHI BAR! (*you, I want to take you to the sushi bar, sushi bar, sushi bar...*))

~~The End~~

NOTE: CAUSES OF DEATH ESTABLISHED BY JOSIE AS SHE PROGRESSIVELY GETS MORE AND MORE DRUNK AS THE DEBATE GOES ON. The debate itself was slightly more serious.

By Josie Kwon



Anor's answer to the pin-up: Because we love him and because I am editor and therefore have control (mwahahahaaa), a picture of our favourite ranger to brighten your day! Next issue: the unsung hero, Fatty Bolger.

A complete and unedited account of the council of Elrond, as recorded by Erebor, a clerk of Elrond's household:

The meeting commenced late in the afternoon on the appointed day. Elrond welcomed his guests and offered them drinks, but commented that he had only the clear, bubbling waters of Imladris available because he was "greatly incompetent". However, Frodo was found to be bearing a bottle of Wineyard's old peculiar as well as the ring of power, a fact which occasioned much rejoicing from all quarters. After a period of general discourse, Elrond exhorted his guests, saying, "tell me of your days; what's going on in Glóin-world". Glóin described his doings east of the mountains and a dire warning of a threat on Bilbo's life was revealed, at which point Gandalf lit up a toke.

Then all listened as Elrond spoke out loud and bold, recounting the full tale of the ring. Phrases like "authorial intention", "comparisons with Chekov" and "Gandalf was bigger than Jesus" floated across the circle. Boromir, on hearing that the ring was found, leapt to his feet.

"It is a gift!" he cried, "a gift to the foes of Mordor! Why not take this ring and use it against Sauron?"

"You cannot wield it! None of us can," replied Aragorn.

"What would a mere ranger know of these matters?" sneered Boromir.

Legolas attempted to take Aragorn's part. He spoke up saying,

"This is no mere ranger! This is Aragorn son of Arathorn. You owe him your allegiance!" Yet Boromir replied only with this simple linnod: "Llie n'vanima ar' lle atara lanneina". (Roughly translated "Gondor has no pants, Gondor needs no pants") [Ed. In fact it reads "you smell and your mother dresses you funny"; since the elvish language is inexplicably lacking in words for pants.]

Getting to his feet with a slightly stoned expression on his wise face, Gandalf next proceeded, in a fell and mighty voice, to declare the ring verse:

"Ash nazg durbatulûk, ash nazg gimbatul, ash nazg thrakatulûk, agh burzum-ishi krimpatul"

A shadow seemed to pass over the high sun, the porch grew dark and all trembled. In the silence that followed, Elrond clasped both hands together and waggled his thumbs in circles, in an ancient Elvish gesture known in the common tongue as the "awkward-turtle".

The council swiftly came to the decision that the ring must be destroyed, and Gimli took it upon himself to do the deed with one blow of his axe. As he lifted it high above his head to cleave the band in twain the last rays of the dying sun caught the mystic runes on the shaft that spelled out "made in Taiwan". With an almighty crack the axehead broke into shards on the ring, leaving it whole. (Bilbo then called for refreshments from his Elvish hosts and was presented with small round pieces of lembas spread with orange preserve. His request for a can of fosters for dipping went unheeded).

Elrond called proceedings to order, saying, "The ring cannot be destroyed, Gimli son of Glóin, by any weapon that we possess. It must be taken to Mount Doom, deep in the dark lord's territory and cast back into the fiery chasm from whence it came.....one of you must do this thing". There followed a long pause, filled with the clamour of absolutely no volunteers. Finally Elrond added, "Frodo... would it be totally abusing your Ringbarer-ness to ask you to sort it out?"

Frodo looked somewhat shifty and enquired, "would it not be better to send one of the Eagles of Manwe with this burden?"

"No indeed", said Elrond. "The enemy would notice immediately if so conspicuous a visitor approached his stronghold. Sauron would bring the eagle down and take the ring for his own."

"But," pressed Frodo, "surely some other could do this thing?!"

"I think this task may have been appointed to Frodo" said Gandalf.

"I'll second that".

"Absolutely."

"Just the hobbit for the job."

"An excellent decision by the council" agreed Elrond. "And since you are all so keen to see Frodo sent to Mordor, perhaps you ought all to go with him, to aid him in his quest".

Whereupon Gandalf asked, "and what shall you do Elrond, to aid the cause?"

"I? My friend, it grieves me to say I could not possibly leave Imladris at this time. Arwen is of a difficult age and I shall soon have to beat the elven kings off her with a stick. No. You go. I'm sure you'll do an excellent job."

Thus, the fellowship of the ring, famed in song and tale, came to be.

By Kathryn Atwell

Masters of Doom, by Doom Mastered?
By Will Barter

"For this he was born into the world."
Ulmo on Eärendil

If events are pre-ordained, can they be heroic? If an act is destined, then are the movers of the event just actors, devoid of responsibility for it? And if the future is set and rigid in Tolkien's world, then must we jettison the concept of free will?

There are many apparent coincidences that occur in Arda. Soon after Thorin runs into Gandalf on the road to Bree there is a King under the mountain again, Smaug is defeated, and the Northern route into Eriador is secure. And, more importantly, the ring of power is found. Found by the very being who was meant to find it. It is clear that we have moved beyond the realm of coincidences; mysterious forces are present. Events are guided by greater powers. In earlier ages, the Valar clearly influence men (aside from fighting the War of Wrath, an event which clearly shapes the world). Ulmo guides Tuor to Gondolin, and gives him the words to speak unto Turgon. There is little Tuor can do to change this; the words he speaks are not his own, and seem to him as though they are being spoken by another through his mouth. The Valar have some control over the children, and can use their power to shape destinies, achieving much that is good. Yet it is arguably Tuor's son, Eärendil, who has one of the greatest destinies of the First Age. In Vingilot, he crosses the sea, and, reaching Valinor, moves the Valar to action against Morgoth. This is no small achievement. However, when discussing whether a mortal man may reach the Blessed realm and live, Ulmo announces that it was for this very reason that he was born into the world. This is a worrying idea. In everyday life, people may be defined by their deeds, great and terrible, failed and successful. Yet in Arda they are defined by their deeds before they have been committed. From the moment of his birth (whether he knows it or not), Eärendil's fate is

sealed. He has been born into the world in order to save it. At least some of those in the world are being manipulated (Bilbo was meant to find the ring). The manipulating power is concerned for those in it, though, and ultimately, that which we would consider good comes about through its efforts. However, the question lingers, if people cannot make decisions for themselves, then aren't they just pawns? If they are being manipulated, with their destinies controlled, are their achievements and failures their own? To what extent are those in the world morally responsible for what takes place?

In many ways the fate of the world is sealed. The world was sung into being, and all that happens has already being narrated. Those who take part are just actors in the Ainur's great cosmic symphony. Whilst the meaning of the later parts of the music and creation are known only to Eru, they have already been determined. Nothing can surely change that which has already happened in some form, and is destined to happen again.

Yet lives and destinies also unfold in other ways, on different levels. Morgoth places a curse on Túrin, which despite his best efforts, the master of doom cannot master. This is a different form of fate in Arda to the predestination form discussed above. Here, a man is cursed during his life (and not before it), so that the events which take place will turn to evil. Yet here, we also have hope. Túrin is given a chance. A dying Gwindor informs him to seek Finduilas, for she alone stands between Túrin and his doom. Túrin has this one chance to avoid evil. If he fails, it will not fail to find him. Unfortunately for our hero, he is held by Glaurung, and cannot reach her. Here we have a choice in our interpretation. Is there ever a chance that, briefly, Túrin may have been able to master doom? Can he be released from his fate? Or is he in the position where there is never any possibility he will reach Finduilas, and consequently never any possibility he will save himself. If the former, then a man's actions ultimately count for something (at least within this level of fate). But if the latter, then once again we find a man cursed from something he cannot escape.

Here, we must also consider the role that prophecies play. Prophecies serve as a glimpse of the future. Glorfindel knows truly that the Witch King will not die by the hand of man, as Malbeth knows that from the North Aragorn shall come, and driven by need, he shall take the paths of the dead. Yet Malbeth also sees possible futures. He sees Arvedui's claim to the throne of Gondor, yet cannot see the outcome. Like Galadriel's mirror, which sees things which yet may be, on this level, events may be manipulated, especially by someone with knowledge of the prophecy. Aragorn is comforted in taking the paths of the dead by knowledge of the prophecy. Indeed, he is even commanded to remember the prophecy by Elrond's sons, by way of counsel. Prophecies are often open to interpretation, and events are influenced by knowledge of them – the prophecies may bring about that which they prophesise. They are glimpses of a greater knowledge, held perhaps only by Eru (since the Ainur know little of what is to come in the latter days). Future events may well be set in stone, but no-one (save Eru) knows what every one of those events will be, and few are permitted anything more than a glimpse. The parallels with Christian theology here are dramatic – and to many Christians this is still an open topic. Is there pre-destination? Yet I shall not consider the Christian angle any further here. That would be a whole book in itself, and is, I am sure, sufficiently covered elsewhere.

On top of all this, it is far easier to look back and say such an event was predicted and destined (and understand a prophecy accurately) than it is to look forward and say something will occur with certainty. Hindsight is after, a form of perfect vision. It is unfair to look at destinies with hindsight – it is best to look at them how they appear in the moment. With this viewpoint, it seems that whilst on some grand level events are set in stone, people's choices remain important.

I would like to close by offering an interpretation of this. Free will is not a necessary construct for people to have to take responsibility for

their actions. In the strictest sense, free will may not exist. A person, influenced by their inner nature, will always take a certain path; it is impossible to imagine Sam leaving Frodo. However, this is because that person's own true nature does not allow them to take the other path. The character does not have a choice, their very being and everything they stand for means they could only take one route. Gollum will always desire the ring, and so he will always follow a certain course of action. Yet, because it is the character's true inner nature that influences this, they remain very much responsible for their actions. Whilst they have the illusion of seeing a choice before them (albeit a false choice, in that there is only one course of action they will ever take), they remain very much responsible for their works. This illusion of free will, the illusion of choice, is far more important than actual free will and choice. A person's true nature is of the utmost import, and it is through their works that we see its projection onto the world. From this point of view a person's own individual character is the source of their destiny. This rigid, set, evolution of the universe is deterministic. There is only one possible path for events to follow (Bilbo was meant to find the ring from the very beginning of the universe), yet a person is responsible for the actions that their inner nature leads them to take. The Ainur, as part of creation are also subject to this – Ulmo is destined to manipulate Tuor, and protect him on the journey to Gondolin. Yet Tuor himself achieves much independently on the journey. His cousin Túrin may be saved by reaching Finduilas, but unfortunately for him, his fate is already sealed, even though he, nor we, at the time of action, do not know how things will turn out (so here too there is an illusion of a non-deterministic universe). Prophecies provide glimpses of a fuller knowledge, set and known by Eru from the very beginning of the universe. With hindsight, people's destinies may be seen, but at the time, all we can do is try and follow the strands of fate, to predict where the road will take us.

Sauron featuring Lady GaGa

1 I wanna hold it like I did in former days,
Hold it, wear it, wield it, do things very evilly
(I love it!)
Stupid little Frodo really won't get very far,
And when I've had him captured I'll say "mwa-ha-ha-ha-ha!"

Chor Oh, oh, oh, oh, oh, o-o-o-o-oh oh
I'll have him caught, show him what I've got!
Oh, oh, oh, oh, oh, o-o-o-o-oh oh
I'll have him caught, show him what I've got!

Can't bear my, can't bear my, no he can't bear my Ring of
Pow'r!

(He'll be here in half an hour...)

Can't bear my, can't bear my, no he can't bear my Ring of
Pow'r!

(He'll be here in half an hour...)

P-p-p-poke his face, I'll p-poke his face (mwa-ha-ha-ha!)
P-p-p-poke his face, I'll p-poke his face (mwa-ha-ha-ha!)

2 When on my finger such a hard pair we will be!
Then finally I'll sit back watching Palan-TV!
Except for Desperate Entwives there'll be really not much on
But I don't really care that stick-thin Fimbrelthil has gone!

Chor Oh, oh, oh, oh, oh, o-o-o-o-oh oh
I'll have him caught, show him what I've got!
Oh, oh, oh, oh, oh, o-o-o-o-oh oh
I'll have him caught, show him what I've got!

Can't bear my, can't bear my, no he can't bear my Ring of
Pow'r!

(He's just gone past the tower...)

Can't bear my, can't bear my, no he can't bear my Ring of

Pow'r!

(He's just gone past the tower...)

P-p-p-poke his face, I'll p-poke his face (mwa-ha-ha-ha!)

P-p-p-poke his face, I'll p-poke his face (mwa-ha-ha-ha!)

3 I'll send Ringwraiths, I'll send orcs,
I'll send dorks, if needs be more,
With my smoking eye a-floatin'
I'm not lying in my land of Mordor.

I've got a very scary lighthouse,
Pyromaniacs on the top floor,
And there's Mount Doom, and the spider,
And, of course, my Black Riders!

Chor Can't bear my, can't bear my, no he can't bear my Ring of
Pow'r!

(He's about to drop it, sire!)

Can't bear my, can't bear my, no he can't bear my Ring of

Pow'r!

(He's about to drop it, sire!)

P-p-p-poke his face, I'll p-poke his face (mwa-ha-ha-ha!)

P-p-p-poke his face, I'll p-poke his face (mwa-ha-ha-ha!)

P-p-p-poke his face, I'll p-poke his face (mwa-ha-ha-ha!)

P-p-p-poke his face, I'll p-poke his face...(it's been
destroyed...)

By Jamie Douglas

