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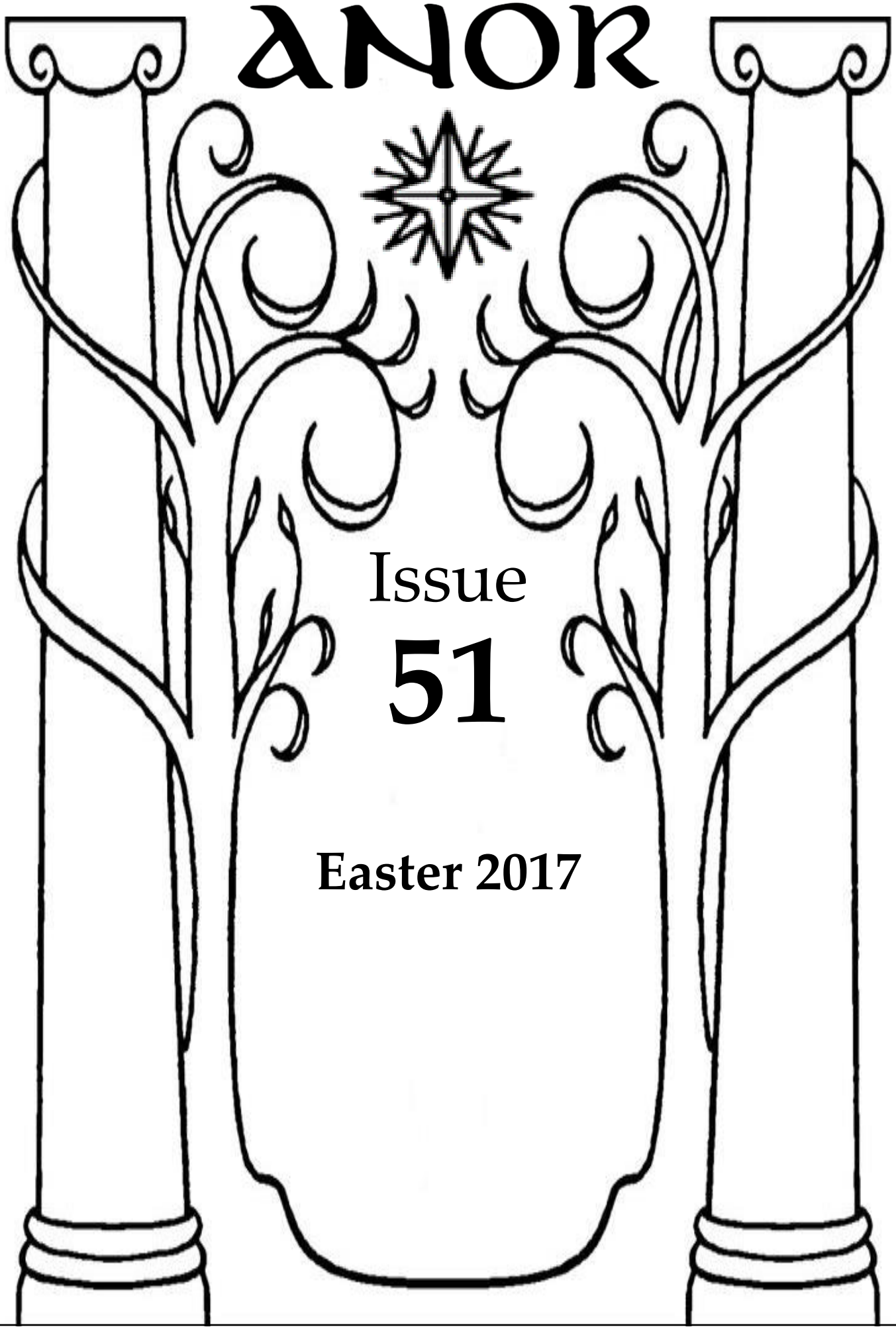

Issue

51

Easter 2017

EDITORIAL

Be merry and welcome!

The sun is shining on the gardens as I write this editorial, late in the evening, and all things are bright and beautiful. Moreover, exams have ended. Believe it or not, this conjunction of events is not pathetic fallacy on the part of your editor; in a decidedly un-English manner, it actually appears to be true.

This is not a very small issue, somewhat to your editor's amazement, given the preoccupation of most of us with other matters. My thanks go out to all the lovely contributors who have given their time to make this issue what it is.

Especial thanks go to the wonderful and talented Louise Vincent, who is responsible for the pretty new cover that you have just seen. May it serve for many issues to come!

This term we have a good balance between styles of content, from academic articles to poetry, via the Society's usual detour to the realm of the extremely silly. (There is, of course, a degree of overlap between these.) But don't take me at my word. Look on, and maybe even thou shalt find it. Farewell!

With warmest regards,

Daeron
alias Samuel M. Karlin, Editor of Anor

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"FAREWELL, FRIEND…"

Mythic Divergence in J.R.R. Tolkien and Michael Moorcock's Re-Characterisations of Kullervo

Brigid Ehrmantraut

"The great epics dignified death, but they did not ignore it, and it is one of the reasons why they are superior to the artificial romances, of which *Lord of the Rings* is merely one of the most recent" (126). So wrote prolific fantasy author Michael Moorcock in his notable 1987 critique of J.R.R. Tolkien's work, "Epic Pooh," where he rather bitingly reduced Middle-earth to the size and relevance of A.A. Milne's Hundred Acre Wood. This is ironic as both authors turned to the same source material, the suicide of the tragic character Kullervo from the Finnish national epic, *The Kalevala,* in order to lend death an air of dignity in their subsequent fantasy epics, Tolkien's *Silmarillion* (1977) and later *Children of Húrin* (2007) and Moorcock's *Elric of Melniboné* series (1961-present).

Moorcock's critique largely applies to *The Lord of the Rings,* not *The Silmarillion*, though he does have some ire to spare for the latter. In "Epic Pooh" Moorcock claims one of mainstream modern fantasy's chief faults is, "The humor is often unconscious because, like Tolkien, the authors take words seriously but without pleasure" and footnotes a specific example, "*The Silmarillion* (1977) is, of course, the finest proof of this argument" (122). Yet, when asked if Tolkien's Túrin and his Elric share a source, in 2004 he stated on his blog, "…I haven't read, of course, …the Tolkien, though I believe he began *The Silmarillion* earlier than parts of Lord of the Rings, at least. I have to admit here, too, that I haven't read large chunks of Lord of the Rings…" This presents two contradictory claims. Had Moorcock read any or all of *The Silmarillion* he would probably have realised that Tolkien drew from the same sources, thereby accomplishing just what Moorcock complained he should have: the creation of a greater sense of gravity surrounding the many deaths in his own epic tragedy. Ultimately, Tolkien and Moorcock both adapt Kullervo's death scene, producing narratives where death is treated with seriousness and dignity, but diverge in their respective portrayals of their (anti)heroes' motivations for suicide and the evolving autonomy allowed to their stories' swords, thus developing two very different conceptualisations of fate.

Kullervo's original story is as bleak as it is striking. The darkest and most conflicted "hero" of Elias Lönnrot's *Kalevala,* he begins life a slave after a family feud has gone awry. Following several unsuccessful attempts by his uncle Untamo, to kill him as a child, the boy is sold into slavery. Eventually, Kullervo uses black magic to turn the herd he is guarding into a pack of wolves and bears, which devour his captors, allowing him to escape. He reunites with his family but unknowingly seduces his long-lost sister, leading her to commit suicide by drowning. Kullervo then goes off to war, eager for vengeance against Untamo. He returns to find his surviving family members dead and wanders through the forest until he encounters the place where he defiled his sister, marked by barren earth where no vegetation will grow. After a brief conversation with his own sword during which the weapon decides that since it has shed plenty of innocent blood, it has no qualms about sheading its master's as well, Kullervo falls upon the blade, killing himself. The tale ends with a moral dictum about the dangers of raising children poorly, effectively attributing Kullervo's tragedy to his abusive upbringing.

Kullervo's development as a character was never particularly clear-cut and his convoluted genealogy in the tale itself is nothing compared to the complexity of his genesis as a composite character in Elias Lönnrot's imagination. An ethnographer looking to create a sense of unified cultural heritage for Finland in the wake of the Romantic Nationalist movements sweeping Europe in the 19th century, Lönnrot spent years compiling the collection of oral legends that form his poetic work, which was published in its final form in 1849. Most of the tales that comprise the epic were collected in Karelia, an area covering the eastern part of Finland and the western edge of Russia and, like most components of European oral traditions, assimilated popular fairytales, older mythologies, distorted historical events, and later Christian doctrine. Keith Bosley asserts that, "Lönnrot virtually invented the Kullervo of cantos 31-36 by combining poems about an orphaned child of Herculean strength… a departing warrior… incest… and about reacting to news of death… the main characters of these poems have various names, including Kullervo" (xxxii). Interestingly enough, Kullervo was a relatively minor figure in the original 1835 edition of *The Kalevala*, confined to one canto of bloody vengeance. In Niina Hämäläinen's words, it is only in the final 1849 version of the work that, "The Kullervo poem became a miniature epic in itself… amounting to six poems tracing the eventful life of the leading character from birth to death" (367). The character's evolution hardly stopped mid-19th century, however, as modern fantasy writers continued to adapt the already ambiguous figure.

Statements exist from both Tolkien and Moorcock mentioning *The Kalevala* as a specific influence on their works, though it seems neither writer read the other's retelling of the legend. Tolkien wrote to W.H. Auden that, "the beginning of the legendarium, of which [*The Lord of the Rings*] is a part (the conclusion), was in an attempt to reorganize some of the Kalevala, especially the tale of Kullervo the hapless, in a form of my own." Indeed, Tolkien produced a youthful attempt at translating and expanding the Kullervo section of *The Kalevala* in 1914 ("The Story of Kullervo"). This "germ of *The Silmarillion*" as he described it to his son, Christopher, eventually found a home in his tale of Túrin Turambar, the First Age hero cursed with an evil fate and bearing an equally cursed sword. Doomed by the original Dark Lord of Middle Earth, Túrin loses his family, slays the dragon Gaurung, and accidentally marries Niënor, his own sister. She casts herself into a river after learning the true nature of their relationship and he takes his own life, following a brief conversation with his "black blade" (*Children* 256). Tolkien solidifies the connection to Finnish myth by calling Túrin, "a figure who might be said… to be derived from elements in Sigurd the Volsung, Oedipus, and the Finnish Kullervo" (*Letters* 150).

Michael Moorcock's *Elric* series, which first appeared in print in 1961, though the occasional story is still being written non-linearly, also displays conscious *Kalevala* influence. On his blog, Moorcock states, "the Kalevala was read to us at my boarding school when I was about seven." The doomed albino emperor Elric of Melniboné is an avatar of Moorcock's genre-defying Eternal Champion, a hero (or antihero as the case may be) condemned to eternal reincarnation through endless cycles of the Multiverse, Moorcock's series of parallel worlds. The greyest and probably best known of Moorcock's major creations, Elric is dependent on his soul-devouring sword, Stormbringer, for physical vitality. He fails to save his lover and cousin Cymoril from her scheming brother and destroys his own civilisation before finally being called upon to perform his destiny as Eternal Champion and end the universe. Elric kills his wife and then best friend in order to gain the strength to usher in a new cycle of reality before Stormbringer dispatches him and flies away as the last vestige of Chaos in an orderly world, calling back a mocking retort. Interestingly enough, Elric's death was published in 1965, over a decade before Tolkien's *Silmarillion*, though if Moorcock may or may not have read Tolkien, it seems highly unlikely Tolkien was familiar with Moorcock's pulp fantasy.

At first glance Túrin and Elric may seem to inhabit quite different realms of sword and sorcery. However, in both writers' narratives the pedantic and nearly afterthought-like moral of Lönnrot's telling vanishes, making way for a concept of death refined by a much more palpable (if often confusing) sense of cosmic fate. The parallel evolutions of this concept of fate are largely demonstrated by varied motives for suicide and differing quantities of agency assigned to Kullervo's sword. In an essay addressing the iconographic representations of Kullervo's story, "The Making of Kullervo," Adriaan van der Hoeven determines that most depictions show their subject as a righteously indignant youth, resisting oppression (mirroring the manner in which Finland might resist its Russian and Swedish political and cultural oppression), or as a successful warrior. However, "As far as the tragic Kullervo who failed in life is concerned, a really archetypal representation doesn't exist" (83). While this "tragic Kullervo" becomes a primary focus of later fantastic literature (and it is his tragic features that seem most prominent in Tolkien and Moorcock's adaptations, thereby emphasising a more complicated view of mortality), the ultimate failure of his original depiction, as embodied by his death scene, remains as open-ended and far from "a really archetypal representation" as ever.

In *The Kalevala*, Kullervo's reasons for suicide are opaque, though on some level he obviously considers himself guilty of something. He asks his sword, "did it have a mind/to eat guilty flesh" and when "The sword followed the man's drift/it guessed the fellow's chatter" he receives the reply, "'Why should I not eat what I like/not eat guilty flesh/not drink blood that is to blame?/I'll eat even guiltless flesh/I'll drink even blameless blood'" (495). Kullervo is presumably directly prompted to suicide by the geographic reminder of his sister's death and the discovery that nature refuses to grow or heal over the location where the encounter took place. However, it is debatable how much this sense of guilt is an exclusive response to his incest and his sister's demise, how much it is due to general regret at the rest of his family's recent deaths, and how much results from sincere repentance for his earlier acts of violence. It may well be a combination. Pridmore *et al* are of the opinion that suicide is purely an "escape option" (321) and thus Kullervo "completed suicide to escape distress" (323), though just what this "distress" entails is never spelled out.

Critics do not agree on the role fate plays in Kullervo's actions. The text itself states,

> Kullervo, Kalervo's son
> the blue-stockinged gaffer's child

pushed the hilt into the field
pressed the butt into the heath
turned the point to his breast
rammed himself upon the point
and on it he brought about
his doom, met his death.
And that was the young man's doom
the Kullervo fellow's death—
the end for the fellow, death
for the ill-fated. (495)

The extent to which Kullervo has any personal agency in death is debatable. For Michael Branch, the Kullervo of the 1849 edition of *The Kalevala* is quite clearly "condemned by the fates to destruction" (xxxi). In contrast, Benjamin Gallagher sees the tale as a cycle of vengeance and thwarted hope, stating in "Kalevala's Kullervo Sequence: a Tragedy of Hope," that "Kullervo, now that his hopes of returning to an innocent past and of receiving for him-self a happy future have both been crushed, returns to the vengeance that began the cycle. While there was no force of fate at work on Kullervo, a sense of social and moral obligation and of the need for revenge has served as a fate-surrogate" (34). Thus, for Gallagher, Kullervo's suicide is a socially redemptive act and the text's "doom" does not deny its hero free will.

On the other hand, Peter Christensen identifies three possibilities for the myth's conception of destiny, "[First] the existential one, in which the hero takes his destiny into his own hands. Second, Kullervo's death may be the result of a premeditated, horrible fate against which he can do nothing to escape… This I call the tragic/fatalistic view. Finally… a third view: life is meaningless because death wipes out all life, all achievement, and all distinction between good and evil… I call this the nihilistic view" (84). These sentiments imply that Kullervo could just as well have consciously chosen to kill himself as he could have been predestined to. In the end it might not matter because the result is the same with or without free will. Given the myriad of sources for the tale, it is likely that some or all of the above proposed theories could reflect different components of the folk tradition behind *The Kalevala*. Yet, because no one interpretation is independently affirmed by the text, the death scene and the motives behind it could be adapted rather freely and with ease by later interpreters.

In Tolkien's *The Children of Húrin*, a more detailed retelling of a section from *The Silmarillion*, Túrin's reasons for killing himself are more obviously his knowledge that he has committed incest with his sister and that, upon discovering this fact, she has taken her own life. Unlike *The Kalevala* original, there is no delay between the Kullervo-character's discovery of these events and his decision to die. After murdering Brandir, the man who brought him the news of his sister's demise and their incestuous relationship, Túrin turns to his sword, taken from his Elven friend, Beleg, after he mistakenly killed him earlier in the story. His final moments clearly mirror his Finnish predecessor's:

> Then he drew forth his sword, and said: 'Hail Gurthang, iron of death, you alone now remain! But what lord or loyalty do you know, save the hand that wields you? From no blood will you shrink. Will you take Túrin Turambar? Will you slay me swiftly?'
>
> And from the blade rang a cold voice in answer: 'Yes, I will drink your blood, that I may forget the blood of Beleg my master, and the blood of Brandir slain unjustly. I will slay you swiftly.'
>
> Then Túrin set the hilts upon the ground, and cast himself upon the point of Gurthang, and the black blade took his life. (256)

In Tolkien's adaptation, the question of fate vs. free will is more pronounced, but still slightly muddy. Unlike Kullervo's vague sense of cosmic moral recompense, Túrin has actually been cursed by Morgoth, in retaliation for Túrin's father's defiance,

> Behold, the shadow of my thoughts shall lie upon them wherever they go, and my hate shall pursue them to the ends of the earth… upon all whom you love my thought shall weigh as a cloud of Doom, and it shall bring them down into darkness and despair. Wherever they go, evil shall arise. Whenever they speak, their words shall bring ill counsel. Whatsoever they do shall turn against them. They shall die without hope, cursing both life and death. (64)

Jesse Mitchell comments on Richard West's assertion that "Tolkien frequently refers to Kullervo as 'hapless,' and this element is certainly retained in Túrin, but the story that Tolkien called 'most tragic' has had the tragedy intensified" (291), stating "Tolkien undertook Túrin as an answer to and reinvention of the buffoonish

Kullervo with very much the same story, but with a complexity of character that evokes a sympathy that is missing with the Finnish original" (100). For all that Tolkien can be said to have raised the myth to a higher level of tragedy, and dignified death in a way even Moorcock might approve of, the issue of destiny remains problematic.

Mitchell asks, "Is Túrin merely ending Morgoth's curse by killing himself (which would mean that he has no control over his fate after all), or is he committing suicide… out of pride, vengefulness, and hate that drive toward ruin, thereby making Morgoth's curse a self-fulfilling prophecy?" (108). However, to some degree Mitchell has already answered his own question, when he writes earlier in his essay, "Túrin's and Kullervo's deaths are deliberate, though not premeditated… Both… believe that they are not committing suicide so much as they are executing the fullest penalty upon their respective follies… Because only they know the full extent of their sins, only they have the right to act as their own executioners" (104). Of course in Túrin's case, this is not strictly true. Túrin is not the only one that knows the full extent of his sins—both Morgoth knows them and Túrin's father, Húrin, whom Morgoth has imprisoned on the top of Angband so he can watch the Dark Lord's multi-generational vengeance unfold. What's more, Túrin knows Morgoth is watching him and is keenly aware that he has lived out his life in the shadow of his curse. Therefore, while the immediate text does not clarify whether Túrin actually had any free will in the matter or not, he may not believe he does by the time he kills himself and thus Tolkien's version of the story takes on a much stronger sense of fatalism than Lönnrot's.

The greater degree to which Tolkien develops his Kullervo-character heightens this increased role of destiny. Túrin's story is longer than Kullervo's and involves heavier loss and more destruction. Whether it's truly predestined or not within the fictional realm, both the reader and Túrin realise Túrin's suicide is unavoidable as the narrative speeds towards its inevitable conclusion, picking up pace as it rushes along through escalating carnage. If Kullervo himself falls somewhere between Christensen's three possible meanings, Túrin seems much closer to the fatalistic/tragic option, if only because, as Elizabeth Broadwell writes, Túrin believes, "that the 'dark shadow' of Morgoth's curse dominates his destiny to such an extent that his life must end in calamity" (36).

Where the role of fate is disputed in *The Kalevala* itself and still under debate in Tolkien's retelling, it seems utterly inscrutable in Michael Moorcock's Eternal Champion series. Colin Greenland terms the Champion, "a representative, not just of a cause or a people, but of mankind. Eternally reincarnated, he becomes an aspect of Everyman… The hero risks himself for the cause, but can never win or lose altogether… Nor is it always a meaningful fight" (125). The brooding ruler of a decidedly nonhuman race, Elric himself may or may not be accurately characterised as an "Everyman," but the fundamental confusion as to his role in more universal events is common to all his incarnations. As far as the series contains a tangible goal, the Champion's purpose is often to fight or mediate between the amorphous and equally dangerous forces of Law and Chaos in order to reach some sort of balance. This equilibrium is commonly referred to as the Cosmic Balance, but its true nature is presented as largely unknowable. As Greenland phrases it, "The efforts of gods and men are as grains of sand in one pan or the other. The idea seems impartial and reassuring—but there is a hand holding the Cosmic Balance. Does that determine its vacillations, or is there free will?" (127). We never really learn anything more about the Hand in question and what the reader does manage to glean from the sprawling series about the Balance is, more often than not, contradictory or tinged with narrative unreliability. Fate is subject to change as sequels dictate, but it is seldom obvious which timeline(s) of the Multiverse have been altered.

The true tragedy of Elric's sequence comes from the sheer incomprehensibility of meaning on a grand scale. After participating in an apocalyptic battle between Law and Chaos that destroys and remakes the earth, Elric stands on the brink of a new world and asks, "But what is the meaning of it all?... That I have never fully understood" (646). He does not receive a particularly elucidating answer from the object of his query, an enigmatic being nominally in the service of the Balance.

> "Who can? Who can know why the Cosmic Balance exists, why Fate exists and the Lords of the Higher Worlds? Why there must always be a champion to fight such battles? There seems to be an infinity of space and time and possibilities. There may be an infinite number of beings, one above the other, who see the final purpose, though in infinity, there can be no final purpose. Perhaps all is cyclic and this same event will occur again and again until the universe is run down and fades away as the world we knew has faded. Meaning, Elric? Do not seek for that, for madness lies in such a course… Perhaps even the gods seek meaning and pattern and this is merely one

> attempt to find it… The gods experiment, the Cosmic Balance guides the destiny of the earth, men struggle and credit the gods with knowing why they struggle—but do the gods know? (646-7)

Nonetheless, poor Elric does end up with the semblance of consolation, if only briefly.

When all is said and done, Elric observes, "the outline of a gigantic hand holding a balance and, as he watched, the balance began to right itself until each side was true. And somehow this relieved Elric's sorrow… 'There is something, at least,' he said, 'and if it's an illusion, then it's a reassuring one" (648). However, while Moorcock's reader never really finds a more conclusive answer concerning fate and balance, there is another force at work in the scene. Of its own volition, Elric's sword, Stormbringer,

> …struck his chest, he felt the icy touch of the blade against his heart, reached out his fingers to clutch at it, felt his body constrict, felt it sucking his soul from the very depths of his being, felt his whole personality being drawn into the runesword. He knew, as his life faded to combine with the sword's that it had always been his destiny to die in this manner… It was as if… he was merely a manifestation of Stormbringer… And as he died, he wept again, for he knew that the fraction of the sword's soul which was his would never know rest but was doomed to immortality, to eternal struggle. (648)

That accomplished, the blade has a little more to say.

> The entity that was Stormbringer, last manifestation of Chaos which would remain with this new world as it grew, looked down on the corpse of Elric of Melniboné and smiled.
>
> "Farewell, friend. I was a thousand times more evil than thou!'
>
> And then it leapt from the Earth and went spiraling upwards, its wild voice laughing mockery at the Cosmic Balance; filling the universe with its unholy joy. (648-9)

With barely two and a half final pages, Moorcock sets up an unknowable answer pertaining to destiny and divine order, appears to give it the semblance of a solution, and promptly dashes all hope of ever truly understanding his cosmology, while

adding innumerable deeper levels to Elric's relationship with fate, the Balance, and his demonic weapon. The affinity to Kullervo is there, but it only seems to add more questions. Elric's death may more properly be considered murder than suicide, but how much did he help to facilitate it himself? His struggle seems infinite, but does he ever have a choice in any of his actions?

It is evident from their respective portrayals of death that both Tolkien and Moorcock develop the motif of fate to a greater degree than the original *Kalevala* story. Both Túrin and Elric die with some modicum of dignity, but where Tolkien enlarges this theme to create a tragic hero who believes he is trapped in an ordained course of action, Moorcock produces a world that defies easy understanding or categorisation. In the end, analysing the evolution of Kullervo's motivations alone can only take us so far, and for a more concrete answer regarding the nature of fate in the developing tradition, we must also look to the growth of Kullervo's sword as both a symbol of its narrative's view of destiny and a character gaining increased agency in its own right.

Kullervo's sword is originally presented simply as a tool. In *Kalevala Mythology,* Juha Y. Pentikänen asserts that, "In speaking to his sword, Kullervo speaks to death itself, which is symbolized by the impartial and ready sword. The tragedy of death is a tragedy only for the human who suffers it. Death itself is no longer touched by this. For death, guilt and innocence are the same" (219). The blade, while suddenly vocal, does nothing to suggest any particular motivation; it has no prior history independent of its wielder. It represents fate only in the sense that death is the inescapable end of every life. For all the critical controversy over how much autonomy Kullervo actually possesses, the story's portrayal of destiny fundamentally simplifies to the impartial inevitability of death. It is immaterial whether or not the original Finnish hero has free will because in the end he will die, not because he is guilty or innocent, not because he has seduced his sister or practised dark magic, not for his many bloody deeds or his ultimate repentance, not even exclusively, as the final stanza of the poem claims, because he was raised poorly. It is not important if his life meant anything or conveyed any moral lesson. Kullervo must die because he is mortal and that is all the fate that matters.

Intriguingly, in "On 'The Kalevala' or Land of Heroes," an essay about Kullervo's story, Tolkien wrote, "If a sword had a character you feel it would be just such as is pictured there: a cruel and cynical ruffian" (253). Jesse Mitchell sees Túrin's

Gurthang as a symbol, much like Kullervo's unnamed blade, writing, "The replies of [Kullervo and Túrin's] respective swords illustrate their projections of their internal voices of justice accusing them" (104). However, unlike *The Kalevala's* sword, Túrin's weapon is not merely a reflection of his own conscience, but has a backstory of its own.

In fact, while Richard C. West identifies the role of the sword as the strongest parallel between Kullervo and Túrin's narratives, as "the talking sword that agrees to take the despairing hero's life [is] something which… happens only in the stories of Kullervo and Túrin, and is a powerful scene in both" (292), Tolkien has already begun to depart from the original myth by furnishing his adaption of the "ruffian" blade with an independent history. Rather like the Germanic sword Tyrfing, forged for revenge, Gurthang's beginnings do not bode well for its future masters. Originally termed Anglachel, *The Silmarillion* reveals that it "was a sword of great worth and it was so named because it was made of iron that fell from heaven as a blazing star; it would cleave all earth-delved iron. One other sword only in Middle-earth was like to it… made of the same smith… Eöl the Dark Elf, who… gave Anglachel to Thingol as fee, which he begrudged" (201). After Túrin's flight from the Elves who briefly fostered him, Beleg asks the Elven King Thingol for a sword to follow the brash hero with. Thingol's wife Melian the Maia warns, "'There is malice in this sword. The dark heart of the smith still dwells in it. It will not love the hand it serves; neither will it abide with you long" (202), but to no avail. Túrin acquires the "black and dull" blade, which he renames Gurthang ("Iron of Death"), when he accidentally kills his friend, only to realise that still "It mourns for Beleg" (209).

Gurthang, then, is not a symbol of detached death like Kullervo's sword. Nor does it simply reflect its wielder's internal feelings. Its lineage is as cursed as Túrin's and it remembers the wrongs that it has been used to commit, reminding Túrin before it kills him that, "I will drink your blood, that I may forget the blood of Beleg my master" (256). The text is also adamant that "the black blade took [Túrin's] life" (256) as opposed to Kullervo, who "rammed himself upon the point/and on it he brought about his doom, met his death" (495). Tolkien unmistakably puts Gurthang in an active role in contrast to Kullervo's sword's passive position, giving it more agency as an independent being. The fact that Túrin comes to be recognised by the sword, earning the name "Mormegil, the Black Sword" (210) binds his fate more tightly to his weapon, bringing down not just Morgoth's curse upon him and his friends and family, but also Eöl's murderous discontent (which is strong enough in the case of

Gurthang's twin, Anguirel, to help bring about the downfall of Gondolin). The presence and characterisation of Gurthang as an entity distinct from its master intensifies the sense of Doom already pressing in on Túrin, demonstrating that in Tolkien's retelling, supernatural forces and curses do significantly contribute to characters' fate.

Tolkien's Gurthang, while a valid interpretation on its own, can be viewed (chronologically if not causally) as an intermediate evolutionary stage between Kullervo's apathetic sword and Moorcock's actively malicious Stormbringer. Like Gurthang, Stormbringer is black and has a comparably sinister twin, Mournblade, and like Gurthang, it has an independent will that grants it increased autonomy. However, Stormbringer's hold on Elric is far stronger than any of its predecessors' since the albino's physical condition requires its ability to feed him the souls of his enemies (and loved ones), and in the end, it does not so much aid in its wielder's suicide as kill him outright in an act of betrayal. In "The Dreaming City," the first Elric story written, after destroying his cousin and people with the evil blade, Elric realises that "it was possessed of more sentience than he had imagined. Yet he was horribly dependent on it," and tries to rid himself of its toxic influence (479). He attempts to throw it into the sea, but it refuses to sink and he cannot keep from swimming out to reclaim it, understanding "He was beaten—the sword had won… He and the sword were interdependent… Bound by hell-forged chains and fate-haunted circumstance" (479-80). From Elric's first appearance in print, the reader knows he has lost; everything after that is merely the apocalyptic fallout of his actions as Champion and his surrender to his "runesword of black iron—the feared Stormbringer, forged by ancient and alien sorcery" (455).

Stormbringer has its own agenda, which brings it as far from the original Kullervo's sword as possible in terms of self-determination. Its genesis, created by Chaos to destroy Chaos, is frequently cited by others, but as far as anyone can tell it belongs neither to the forces of Law and Chaos nor to the Cosmic Balance. The Eternal Champion may theoretically fight for the Balance, yet his/her greatest struggle is not with Order or Entropy, but against the very weapon that gives him/her strength while paradoxically containing some element of his/her own essence. And yet the reader knows little more about Stormbringer or the fate that apparently "haunts" it, even as it defeats Elric (quite possibly a wayward agent of fate himself) to scorn the very Balance it supposedly helped preserve. While Gallagher claims, "Kullervo's decision to kill himself is the only way to truly remove vengeance from the order of

the universe. Kullervo in a sense takes vengeance on vengeance" (35), Elric's death renews the cycle of struggle; the idea that he has removed "vengeance" from the universe is quickly subverted by the description of Stormbringer as the "last manifestation of Chaos… laughing mockery at the Cosmic Balance; filling the universe with its unholy joy (648-9)."

Stormbringer's "Farewell…" (649) is a farewell not just to Elric, but ultimately to the character of Kullervo entirely, as the protagonist's blade replaces the protagonist in narrative prominence and supersedes its wielder in agency and ability to shape events. It is a farewell to a concept of fate that is not important in the face of death or predominantly guided by the curses and divine plans of greater forces; a farewell to any definitively interpretable fictional cosmology. Moorcock presents the reader with a myriad of worlds and a plethora of possibilities. Fate may or may not exist and it may or may not matter, but, as Stormbringer illustrates to the perplexed audience, we can never know concretely. Moorcock's reticence to discuss any final or official idea of destiny is, indeed, as close as we ever get to his version of destiny.

Both Tolkien and Moorcock's "great epics dignif[y] death," but neither "ignore[s] it." The departures from *Kalevala* tradition in these authors' depictions of their respective protagonists' death scenes reveal the evolving function of fate in their fictions; each writer expands on the basic myth to introduce a darker, more present sense of destiny, but their ultimate implications diverge. This divergence is illustrated both through the characterisation and motivation of their Kullervo-characters at their moments of death and, more explicitly, through the changes made to the role and response of their swords. In the original myth, death trumps any sense of fate, but both Tolkien and Moorcock bring a new, stronger force of destiny to the story, largely through the swords' increased agency. However, while Tolkien balances the forces of tragedy and fate through Túrin's demise, demonstrating the powers of believed prophecy and doom, Elric's death creates more questions, presenting the reader with the notion that, in a Multiverse where all permutations of a tale are possible, no ultimate answer can exist.

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THE FLAME IMPONDERABLE

Samuel Cook

We all know the scene, be it from the book or the film: Gandalf is standing on the Bridge of Khazad-dûm, facing down the Balrog[1]. He's shortly going to smash his staff down, break the bridge, and send the Balrog plummeting into the abyss, though not before it manages to pull him over with it. The rest of the Fellowship then escapes to Lórien and Gandalf and the Balrog spend eleven days[2] playing King of the Hill, before Gandalf dies, is resurrected as the New, Improved Gandalf the White, and goes off to save Middle-earth. However, before all this happens, Gandalf speaks a memorable line: 'I am a servant of the Secret Fire, wielder of the flame of Anor. You cannot pass. The dark fire will not avail you, flame of Udûn. Go back to the Shadow! You cannot pass.' (*The Lord of the Rings*, page 322). The Balrog looks a bit nonplussed, decides he's bluffing and then finds out a bit late that he wasn't. All good dramatic fantasy oration and duelling. But what is the Secret Fire, or indeed the flame of Anor? Who does Gandalf serve and what does he wield?

You'd think this would be obvious, but neither of those expressions, as far as I'm aware, recur anywhere, nor are they explained at any point. So it's time for a bit of minimally-informed conjecture to attempt to work out what's going on[3]. First, let's look at the second bit: 'wielder of the flame of Anor', as this is perhaps more obvious. *Anor*, as you should know if you're reading this august publication, is the Sindarin name for the Sun. So, taken literally, this would mean Gandalf has a giant solar-fusion-powered flamethrower on his person. As far as we're told, this isn't the case[4]. But he does have three things he could be said to be wielding: Glamdring, his staff, and the ring, Narya[5]. Of these, Glamdring doesn't seem likely; it's an Elvish sword, but it doesn't set fire to things or catch fire, or anything like that. It glows blue when Orcs are around, but, last time I checked, the Sun wasn't blue[6]. Also, I fail to see why the Balrog would be particularly bothered by a bit of glowy Elvish

[1] With or without wings and/or fluffy slippers, depending on your personal tastes.
[2] The confrontation of the bridge occurs on the 15th March; the final battle on the peak of Zirakzigil on the 25th. It was a very long bout, to put it mildly.
[3] Everyone's favourite kind of Tolkien investigation!
[4] Or, if it is, he doesn't use it, which seems rather an oversight.
[5] Though none of the Fellowship know this—only Círdan, Elrond and Galadriel, in addition to Gandalf himself, knew for certain where the ring was.
[6] It's sunny whilst writing this, and I can confirm the big shiny thing in the sky isn't blue. If it were, the Earth would be in all sorts of trouble, from an astrophysical point of view.

metal—it would have fought plenty of Elves with equally-glowy swords in the First Age and killed them[1]—so this seems an unlikely thing for Gandalf to be boasting about.

His staff is a possibility. He does use it to set fire to things on several occasions—the pine cones in *Out of the Frying and Into the Fire* in *The Hobbit*, the wood on Caradhras to save the Fellowship from hypothermia when they're caught in the snowstorm, and the grove of holly trees in which they're attacked by wargs after coming down from Caradhras—and he also uses it to give light on the way through Moria. He can also produce bigger flashes of light, as when Thorin and Company are grabbed by the Goblins whilst sheltering in the cave in the Misty Mountains, and in Hall 21 of Moria to give the Fellowship a better idea of their surroundings. This sounds more like a bit of solar fire. Except, he doesn't use it to attack the Balrog, only to break the bridge, and it breaks apart once he has done so. If the staff was worthy of being named in an effort to daunt the Balrog, one might think that it wouldn't shatter quite so easily. And, again, I can't see the Balrog being terribly bothered by a bit of wood, no matter how magical its bearer claims it to be.

That leaves the third possibility: Narya. Which, importantly, is the ruby-garnished Red Ring of Fire. This sounds more like it. More importantly, one of the three Elven Rings might actually give a Balrog a pause for thought; it would be something worth announcing. It would also explain why Gandalf's announcement is so cryptic—he doesn't want everyone present to know he's got Narya, so he makes up some mumbo-jumbo that sounds good. Going further out on a limb, it seems reasonable to expect that, as an Ainu, the Balrog would probably have been able to divine that Gandalf was carrying some trinket of power and might have been able to guess that that was what he was referring to[2]. It is important to note that Narya is never referred to as having any particular relation to the Sun, beyond the generic fire element. However, of the three things that Gandalf could wield, it seems the best fit.

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[1] The Balrogs, after all, were key in the deaths of Fëanor and Fingon, whose swords would have been just as potent as Glamdring, if not more so.

[2] Whether it would have been able to work out it was one of the Three is uncertain. The Balrog had been awake since 1980 of the Third Age (i.e. over a millennium), but had missed all the palaver surrounding Sauron and Celebrimbor's original forging of the Rings, the Last Alliance and so on. It's possible it might therefore have been entirely unaware of the existence of Rings of Power. It would have encountered the one borne by the Dwarf Kings of Moria when it first awoke, but that doesn't mean it would have deduced the existence of other Rings. Sauron might have communicated with it, though, and filled it in on what had been going on whilst it took its career break, so we can't be certain whether it knew of the Three.

There is one further possibility: Gandalf may have just been referring to his own innate powers. Nearly all of Gandalf's magic that we see is fire or light-based. He may have just been telling the Balrog 'Look, I'm really good with fire too, so there's no point trying to use that on me'. This would be borne out by his setting the 'flame of Anor', which, by extension, is the good, pure light of the Sun, against the 'dark fire' and 'flame of Udûn'[1] a few words later. In effect, he's telling the Balrog that they're two sides of the same coin—the cleansing fire of the Sun versus the destroying fire of Hell—and that, consequently, the Balrog should beware. The whole sentence also implies the superiority of Gandalf's fire against the Balrog's, which, I think, is where Narya really comes in. In terms of raw power, Gandalf and the Balrog are probably fairly evenly matched—they're both Maiar a level or so down from the likes of Sauron and Eönwë—but with Narya Gandalf gets that bit of extra (fire)power that means he outmatches and can destroy the Balrog. As the champion of Good that he is, he's giving the Balrog fair warning that, if it comes to it, he is capable of winning a straight-up fight between them, albeit at great personal pain and cost. That the Balrog doesn't believe him, starts a fight and is thus killed is not his fault. He tried to warn it.

Turning now to the first part of the sentence ('I am a servant of the Secret Fire'), this is equally unclear. However, I think an explanation can be advanced. The first point to note is that Gandalf says '*a* servant', not '*the* servant'. So whatever it is has multiple servants. It must also be on the side of Good and in some way superior to Gandalf, otherwise he wouldn't be serving it. And, fairly obviously, it has to be hidden in some way. And fiery. The only thing that seems to fit the bill is the Flame Imperishable, which is described in the *Ainulindalë*. Exactly what it is is never made clear, but it's the thing that Eru used to create the Ainur and which lies at the heart of the world, sustaining or creating it in some way. The crucial passage for the present discussion, though, is 'He [Melkor] had gone often alone into the void places seeking the Imperishable Flame; for desire grew hot within him to bring into Being things of his own…Yet he found not the Fire, for it is with Ilúvatar.' (*The Silmarillion*, p.16).

This excerpt makes several things clear: the Flame is in some way identical with Eru; Melkor, and by extension all his servants, wished to claim it for himself and be its

[1] Udûn being the Sindarin form of Utumno, Morgoth's original stronghold before his first defeat and imprisonment by the Valar.

master; and it is well-hidden. So calling it the 'Secret Fire' and claiming to be its servant would seem entirely logical in Gandalf's case. Gandalf is a loyal Maia, servant of the Valar and thus Eru, who is the guardian of the Flame[1]. The Flame is most certainly a Fire and, from the Evil side's point of view, it is most definitely Secret, as they were never able to find it. And Eru has, indeed, a multiplicity of servants. It would therefore seem that it satisfies all the criteria I posited above, making Gandalf's utterance rather more intelligible.

To sum all this up, you could recast Gandalf's rather cryptic expostulation as:

'I am Eru's besty, so don't mess with me, and I also happen to know a lot about fire and my fire is better than your fire, and I have a +10 fiery power-up, so bugger off and leave us alone or I will end you, see if I don't.'

It's probably for the best that Tolkien wrote it as he did rather than like that, though. It would have somewhat changed the tone of the book. That said, at least it would have been clearer and the Balrog might have understood him better, which could have saved both their lives[2] and avoided a whole lot of hassle. Something to think about next time you're defying an evil daemonic being—plain-speaking may serve you better than cryptic fantasy allusions, even if you do lose points on your Heroic Actions Bingo Board.

[1] Or, indeed, *is* the Flame. As I said, it's not entirely clear how far the Flame is a separate thing and how far it's just a manifestation of Eru's power. My feeling is that it's the closest Tolkien comes to invoking the Holy Ghost.

[2] Don't forget that, in all probability, Gandalf is responsible for making Balrogs go extinct. One imagines Yavanna had Words with him when he got back to Valinor.

ONOMASTIC MONARCHICAL IDIOSYNCRASY

Name That Ruler (Something Different)

Samuel Cook

I apologise in advance for an article that most are likely to find incredibly obtuse, but I like Appendix A, so I'm going to write it anyway. Even if it does end up just being a meander through some recondite corners of medieval history with no real conclusion. You have been warned.

There are a lot of monarchs in Middle-earth. Tolkien was very keen on his royal houses, after all. Out of the ones we have a decent amount of information about, we have 25 Rulers of Númenor[1], 34 Kings of Gondor, 25 Kings of Arnor/Arthedain, 16 Chieftains of the Dúnedain, 26 Stewards of Gondor[2], 18 Kings of Rohan[3] and a semi-complete family tree of the Heirs of Durin, listing 15 Dwarvish Kings[4] and a few accessory family members[5]. All of these are lovingly presented in Appendix A, which means, I'm sure, that most readers completely ignore them. They are quite useful, though. In a very restricted sense of the term. Provided you are overly interested in the sparsely chronicled history of a small part of an imaginary world.

Anyway, to get to the point, what this means is that we have quite a lot of information about the names[6] of rulers in Middle-earth. A total of 159 names, in fact. And what is surprising is the lack of repetition in them. In reality, royal dynasties tend to have certain names that recur frequently and a smattering of less-popular names that turn up once or twice in the historical record. The popular names often hark back to the founder of the dynasty or a particularly lionised forebear, or symbolise some message that the dynasty wants to get across. So, considering the Plantagenets[7], out of fourteen kings, we find five instances of

[1] The list in Appendix A misses out Tar-Ardamin (after Tar-Calmacil).
[2] Plus Húrin of Emyn Arnen, Steward of King Minardil, from whom they were all descended and Pelendur, Steward of Ondoher, who ruled for a year after the fall of Ondoher and before the accession of Eärnil II.
[3] Plus Elfwine the Fair, son of Éomer; Léod, father of Eorl, and Frumgar, an earlier chieftain of the Éothéod.
[4] And another four Durins by implication.
[5] I appear to have just written the world's worst version of the Twelve Days of Christmas.
[6] Not deeds, necessarily. That would be asking too much.
[7] Including the cadet Houses of Lancaster and York.

'Henry'[1], the name of the dynasty's founder and one of its greatest monarchs[2], five Edwards, a name used to link the dynasty more firmly with the English and Arthurian past[3], and three Richards, the first being the idolised Lionheart and the other two named predominantly in his image. The remaining monarch is, of course, the popularly hated John, after whom, unsurprisingly, no later rulers were named.

A similar pattern is evident in France among the Capetians and their various cadet branches, who ruled France from 987 AD until the final overthrow of the monarchy in 1848[4]. Here, out of 37 monarchs, we find 13 called Louis, a name dating back to the early Carolingians[5], the preceding ruling dynasty; 7 named Charles, a popular name ever since Charlemagne; 6 Philips, the first receiving the name from his Greek mother, which then made it an established family name, people thinking he'd done a decent job; and 4 with that pan-European royal name of Henry. The remaining seven comprise two Johns, two called Francis, one Hugh, one Robert and one Louis-Phillippe, which isn't so much a different name as two of the most popular ones concatenated.

And, to prove the point that this isn't just a Western European thing, out of the 36 Ottoman Sultans, 6 were called Mehmet, another 5 were called Murad, 4 were Mustafas, 3 each were Ahmed, Osman and Selim, and two each were Bayezid, Mahmud, Abdulhamid and Suleiman. The remaining four were Orhan, Ibrahim, Abdulmecid and Abdulaziz. I'll stop listing names of real rulers there, but I think the examples above make clear that royal dynasties tend to repeat the same names quite frequently. This is even the case where multiple dynasties rule the same state—England had another five Edwards and two Henries after the Plantagenets, for instance, and Byzantium managed eleven Constantines and eight Michaels and Johns across a millennium and twenty-four different families.

Let's compare this to Middle-earth: of the 25 rulers of Númenor, none of them have the same name. None. It's the same for Rohan. Gondor manages three repetitions

[1] Six, if we include Henry the Young King, the eldest son of Henry II, but he was never sole ruler, so I've left him out of the total as well.
[2] Henry II.
[3] Primarily Edward the Confessor, but, more generally, to pre-Norman times when Arthur was supposed to be running around, being great.
[4] With a small break occasioned by the French Revolution and Napoleon.
[5] The first Louis being the son of Charlemagne, who was popularly regarded as one of the greatest French monarchs. This is wrong on several levels, not least that he was as much German as French, insofar as either of those labels meant anything in the 8th and 9th centuries, and did some not very nice things.

over its 34 monarchs: two each of Narmacil, Eärnil and Atanatar[1]. The Stewards do much better, with five names repeated twice each: Húrin, Túrin, Belecthor, Denethor and Ecthelion. With Arnor, the situation is a little more complicated, because, in a sense, there are two separate dynasties: the Kings of Arnor (10) and the Kings of Arthedain (15). Even so, the kings of the united Arnor are all one-of-a-kind[2], whilst the Kings of Arthedain struggle to two each of Argeleb and Arveleg. The Chieftains of the Dúnedain do a little better, but still poorly, with two each of Arahad, Arathorn and Aragorn. It seems the Kings of Men were very keen on being unique in at least one way. This is very odd, certainly among the Númenorean cultures, whose obsession with genealogy and antiquity might lead one to think that they would only ever be naming themselves after their illustrious forebears.

Before completely panning Tolkien's onomastic tendencies, though, there are maybe a couple of mitigating factors. For Númenor, the royal title of a ruler wasn't their actual name, but more of an epithet, based on their character, interests and so on. As the heir was usually well into their second or third century before they acceded, they had plenty of time to acquire a by-name. So, for instance, Tar-Meneldur (literally 'Lover of Heaven') gained his name from his passion for astronomy. His actual name was Irimon. His son, Tar-Aldarion (literally 'Son of Tree' or words to that effect), meanwhile, was so named for his concern for the forests of Númenor[3]. His given name was Anardil. Therefore, it's hardly a surprise that none of the rulers had the same name—if a name recurred, it would suggest that they were completely indistinguishable from a previous ruler, which would be rather surprising.

For Rohan, there is also perhaps a case to be made for the lack of repetition not being unusual. If you look at the names of Anglo-Saxon Kings of England, ten from

[1] There are also two Romendacils and Hyarmendacils, but these are titles referring to a ruler's achievements rather than their actual names, so I'm leaving them out here. Gondor's geopolitical situation made it inevitable that several kings would be fighting Easterlings and Southrons, so having multiple kings calling themselves East-victor and South-victor isn't really surprising. It would be like being surprised that, if the fashion were the same in England, we ended up with several rulers called French-killer.

[2] Though some of their names are shared with Gondorian rulers. Both kingdoms were ruled by an Eldacar and a Tarondor. And Elendil and Isildur are counted as rulers of both kingdoms.

[3] Admittedly, this was purely to ensure he had enough timber to build more ships, rather than some sort of ecological concern, but it's better than nothing.

Æthelstan[1] to Harold Godwineson[2], who perhaps best represent a similar level of sophistication and naming practice, there are only two repetitions—one each of Edmund and Edward[3]. It is perhaps still surprising that the Rohirrim, with their greater number of named monarchs, never repeated any regnal names, but it can be argued that the more primitive Anglo-Saxon-style level of development they represented, versus the more medieval/early modern level seen in Arnor and Gondor, had less repetition in the names of rulers. Instead, name elements tended to be repeated between father and son, rather than the whole name—think Fréa to Fréawine to Goldwine, or Brytta to Walda to Folca to Folcwine to Fengel to Thengel to Théoden. In Anglo-Saxon England, we get the series Edmund to Eadred to Eadwig to Edgar to Edward, showing much the same thing.

The Stewards can also be forgiven their lower-than-would-be-expected repetitiveness: rather than naming themselves after their own dynasty, they tended to be named after heroes of the First Age, both Elves and Men. In total, 14 of the Stewards, i.e. slightly more than half, are named after someone illustrious who fought in the Wars of Beleriand: Denethor, Ecthelion, Orodreth, Túrin, Húrin, Turgon, Beren, Barahir, Hador and Dior. Interestingly, the Stewards seem to have been very scatter-gun in their approach: they chose both Elves and Men, people directly related to the Númenorean royal line and those who aren't, and major and minor figures[4]. One would perhaps have expected the Stewards to privilege the heroes of the Edain of the First Age and, perhaps, the Elves directly related to the royal line[5]. Perhaps, as the last outpost of Mannish Númenorean lore, they felt they had to do as much as possible to keep the memories of the First Age alive—though in that case, it is less obvious quite why the other 12 Stewards weren't named after similar figures. One can only assume there was also a need to reflect names more

[1] Æthelstan was the first person to claim the title of King of England, even if most people think it's his grandfather, Alfred the Great, who fulfilled that role. Alfred did a good job, but he only ever controlled the southern part of the country.

[2] There were some Danish rulers interspersed in this, including another Harold, but I'm ignoring them as being from a different dynasty and culture.

[3] Æthelred the Unready was also Æthelred II, but Æthelred I was a much earlier King of Wessex, so I'm ignoring him here.

[4] Let's be honest: the original Denethor's main achievement, apart from bringing the Laiquendi to Beleriand, was getting killed in the First Battle. Not the most significant First-Age hero and certainly not from the point of view of Men—Denethor had been dead for a few centuries before Men even made it to Beleriand.

[5] I don't think they would have named themselves after Númenorean rulers—I feel that would have been felt as too close to *lèse-majesté* if it were the earlier rulers; and they would have wanted to forget the later ones and the fall of Númenor.

common among Third Age Men, so that the populace at large didn't lose their identification with central authority.

However, for Gondor, Arnor and the Dúnedain, the same arguments cannot really be made. The names are nearly all the given names of those rulers[1], they're not named after First Age heroes, and name-element repetition would a) not be expected and b) doesn't happen on a large scale[2]. Given the obsession of the Realms in Exile with the past, one feels that their rulers, as the later Stewards were, would be largely named after illustrious heroes of yore. This, however, is not the case. Why? There is no clear answer to this question. It perhaps relates to a continuation of Númenorean practice, where repetitions were avoided to ensure each ruler was remembered as an individual. Perhaps, it is an expression of pride—the Exiles were humbled after the Akallabêth, but pride was the way Númenor had fallen and was ever a weakness among Men[3] that could be exploited by the Shadow—the majority of rulers therefore wanted to differentiate themselves and their children from their own forebears, no matter how illustrious. The lesser and even more backwards-looking House of the Stewards, as Gondor declined, as discussed above, did then start the practice of taking names of First Age heroes, but the royal lines, even the nearly forgotten Heirs of Isildur, maintained a belief in their own exceptionalism that continued throughout the Third Age. Or, to put it more positively, they continued to believe that each ruler should be remembered and judged on their own merits, rather than trading on the name and achievements of others.

Moving away from Men, strangely, it's the Line of Durin that most closely resembles a real-world dynasty. Of the 19 listed or implied Kings, 7 are, of course, Durins, but there are also 3 Thorins and 2 each of Thráin and Dáin. So, 14 out of 19 known Heirs of Durin have non-unique names, with the most common name being that of the illustrious founder of the dynasty. This is exactly what tends to happen in the real world. Perhaps because, unlike Men, Dwarves had no Fall of Númenor to cloud their history—plenty of disasters, certainly, some of which could be said to be due to their own greed[4], but nothing to compare with trying to attack Valinor whilst

[1] Excepting Falastur and the aforementioned Romendacils and Hyarmendacils.
[2] Ignoring very common name endings such as -(n)dil and -(n)dur, which don't really count, and the Ar- prefix of the later kings of Arthedain and Chieftains of the Dúnedain.
[3] Think of Boromir—his pride can be argued to be the main driver of the sequence of events leading to his death at Parth Galen. Or, even more so, Denethor II—his pride directly led to his own self-immolation.
[4] If they hadn't had as much gold, Smaug wouldn't have attacked Erebor, nor would the settlements in the Grey Mountains have attracted draconic envy. Similarly, if mithril hadn't been so coveted, the

bewitched by evil. Dwarves also believe that their ancestors are occasionally reborn amongst them—hence the seven Durins—so using the names of ancestors was always a part of their culture in a way it never seemed to be among Men. For Dwarves, being named after an illustrious forebear seems to be regarded as an honour, suggesting you were thought to have the potential to live up to that person's achievements[1], rather than a negation of your individual exceptionalism and identity. There is also an important point to note, which is that the names we have for the Dwarves are not their true, inner names, but outer names they took or were given to them by other peoples in the area. For the kings, one imagines it was a case of 'took' rather than 'given', but the same reasons still stand—rulers wanted to honour their ancestors and gain honour themselves by identifying with a great ancestor. It also enabled a sense of continuity to be maintained, which, given the enforced peripatetism of the Dwarves, was one of the few ways this could be achieved. Without knowledge of the inner names of Dwarves, though, it is difficult to say how far the trends in outer names were reflective of actual Dwarvish culture.

To sum up, it is clear that the naming practices of most royal and ruling lines in Middle-earth is distinctly at variance with those recorded in human history. However, the differences between them and between Middle-earth and reality can explain these, in the main, though more information would be required to make a definite judgement as to which set of explanations is most valid.

Balrog might never have been woken. Dwarves were, to some extent, victims of their own success more than anything else.

[1] Or might even *be* that person, given their attitudes to reincarnation.

THE DECALOGUE OF MANWË

Samuel Cook

As given to Men by Eagle airlift in Hildorien upon their awakening. It is not recorded whether the falling tablets of stone were noticed or even read, as the wonder of Arda was still strong upon the newly awakened race, and, for all they knew, falling rocks were a common occurrence. Given the later history of Men in Middle-earth, one suspects they weren't noticed. Except by the squirrel they crushed on landing, whose opinion is, unfortunately, irrelevant.

1. Thou shalt have no God but Eru.
2. Thou shalt not make for thyself any idol, nor bow down to it nor worship it, especially if it suggests that burning people is a good idea.
3. Thou shalt not misuse the name of Eru and anyone who does is a very naughty boy.
4. Thou shalt remember thy mortality be a gift from Eru and thou shalt accept it when it cometh; yea, thou shalt even embrace it willingly. *
5. Respect the Valar unless thou wantest to be sunk.
6. Thou shalt not commit murder, unless it be of Orcs, in which case, go right ahead.
7. Thou shalt not commit adultery, though, seeing as no-one in this universe seems to get any anyway, this is unlikely to prove a problem.
8. Thou shalt not seek to steal the immortality of the Eldar or the Valar. Really. I mean it.
9. Thou shalt not betray thy lawful, divinely-ordained sovereign. What dost thou think this place is? An anarcho-syndicalist commune?
10. Thou shalt not be envious of your neighbour's daughters or shiny things. Especially if thy neighbour be called Fëanor or Thingol. Trust us on this.

* Some exceptions may apply.

A small extra pebble was dropped a few days later, splatting a mouse, but also failing to be read by its intended audience.

11. Sorry about Morgoth. We're working on it, honestly. It might just take some time. Try to ignore him and don't trust any tall, black, spikey dudes. Use your common sense. Think that's all. Yavanna, did you want anything in here about not wantonly maiming *olvar* and *kelvar*? Ilmarë, why are you still

writing this down? I know I told you to write everything do—no, not this either! Look, I'll wear this hat when I'm dictating. No, don't write this down! I know I'm wearing the hat, but that was just to show you! Varda, you need to train your handmaidens better, dear. Are you still writing? Oh, for goodness's sake, just give it here!

THE SHIBBOLETH OF IGOR

An Unexpected Cross-over

Samuel Cook

Before I start, I will only say that this is all Rachel's fault. Well, mainly. Somewhat. Partially. It's slightly my fault too. Especially the puns.

As is recorded in *The Shibboleth of Fëanor* (*The History of Middle-earth* XII), Fëanor was very keen on pronouncing original 'th' in Quenya as 'th' and not 's', as many of the Noldor were starting to do. This is therefore an example of what some of *The Silmarillion* should really have sounded like. I take, as my source, the section of *The Annals of Aman* (*The History of Middle-earth* X) entitled 'Of the Speech of Fëanor on Túna' from just before Fëanor starts speaking, which is virtually identical to *The Silmarillion* text for the same point, but with some added detail.

He claimed now the kingship of all the Noldor, since Finwë was dead, and he scorned the decrees of the Valar.

'Why, O my people,' he cried, 'why thould we longer therve thethe jealouth godth, who cannot keep uth, nor their own realm even, thecure from their enemy? And though he be now their foe, are not they and he of one kin? Vengeanthe callth me henthe, but even were it otherwithe, I would not dwell any longer in the thame land with the kin of my father's thlayer and the thief of my treasure. Yet I am not the only valiant in thith valiant people. And have ye not all lotht your king? And what elthe have ye not lotht, cooped here in a narrow land between the jealouth mountainth and the harvethtlethth Thea? Here onthe wath light, that the Valar begrudged to Middle-earth, but now dark levelth all. Thall we mourn here deedlethth for ever, a thadow-folk, mitht-haunting, dropping vain tearth in the thalt thankleththth Thea? Or thall we go home? In Cuiviénen thweet ran the waterth under unclouded thtarth, and wide landth lay about where a free folk might walk. There they lie thtill and await uth who in our folly forthook them. Come away! Let the cowardth keep thith thity. But by the blood of Finwë! unlethth I dote, if the cowardth only remain, then grathth will grow in the threetth. Nay, rot, mildew, and toadthtool.'

And, as for the Oath of Fëanor:

'Fair thall the end be,' he cried, 'though long and hard thall be the road! Thay farewell to bondage! But thay farewell altho to eathe! Thay farewell to the weak! Thay farewell to your treasureth—more thtill thall we make! Journey light. But bring with you your thordth! For we will go further than Tauroth, endure longer than

Tulkath: we will never turn back from purthuit. After Morgoth to the endth of the Earth! War thall he have and hatred undying. But when we have conquered and have regained the Thilmarilth that he thtole, then behold! We, we alone, thall be the lordth of the unthullied Light, and mathterth of the blithth and the beauty of Arda! No other rathe thall outht uth!'

Then Fëanor swore a terrible oath. Straightway his seven sons[1] leaped to his side and each took the selfsame oath; and red as blood shone their drawn swords in the glare of the torches.

'Be he foe or friend, be he foul or clean,
brood of Morgoth or bright Vala,
Elda or Maia or Aftercomer,
Man yet unborn upon Middle-earth,
neither law, nor love, nor league of thordth,
dread nor danger, not Doom itthelf,
thall defend him from Fëanor, and Fëanor'th kin,
whotho hideth or hoardeth, or in hand taketh,
finding keepeth or afar cathteth
a Thilmaril. Thith thwear we all:
death we will deal him ere Day'th ending,
woe unto world'th end! Our word hear thou,
Eru Allfather! To the everlathting
Darknethth doom uth if our deed faileth.
On the holy mountain hear in witnethth
and our vow remember, Manwë and Varda!'

From this, we can clearly see that Fëanor was, in origin, a Discworldian Igor[2]. We are certainly never told how many hearts he had. Or digits[3]. Or whether his famously bright eyes were, in fact, his.

Points in favour of this novel theory:

- Both Fëanor and Igors like tinkering with things
- Both lisp

[1] Theven Thonth?
[2] It is perhaps worth saying that, if you're not at least vaguely familiar with the Igor characters created by Terry Pratchett, the rest of this article is going to be somewhat incomprehensible.
[3] The Seven Thumbs of Fëanor? I'm not apologising for that. Ever.

Points against:

- One is in Middle-earth; the others are in Discworld
- One is an Elf; the others are (probably) Men
- Fëanor likes smithwork, mechanisms and linguistic things; Igors like biology and lightning
- Igors are inherently servile; Fëanor very much isn't
- Fëanor's sons and parents appear to be normal Elves[1], not weird Igor-Elf hybrids
- Several thousand pages of Tolkien and Pratchett's writing

So, as I was saying, Fëanor is clearly an Igor. This apparent improbability can be explained as follows:

- The Igors, just like any other extended family, must have their black sheep. Therefore, the existence of at least one Igor that didn't go in for the scars, squishy things, servility and obvious extra digits, but was instead tall, Elf-like, domineering and interested in Engineering and all such things is not improbable
- This deviant Igor was presumably left alone/locked in the loft to get on with what were, from his family's point of view, his strange pursuits
- He designed and successfully built a time machine
- As time machines are wont to do, this went wrong when he tried to use it
- This disintegrated his original body, but his spirit, through frantic prayer, was rehoused in the nearest available dimension, as were Rincewind and Twoflower in *The Colour of Magic*; this was made permanent due to the loss of his Discworld body
- This happened to be in the newly conceived son of Finwë and Míriel, with Ilúvatar's connivance. Therefore, 'Fëanor' had an Elvish *hröa*, but an Igorian *fëa*[2], but Ilúvatar made it work because Blind Io asked nicely
- Therefore, from a biological point of view, he was Elvish, so his sons were apparently normal Elves
- The interdimensional disaster and his subsequent salvation only convinced him he was destined for greatness and had been right all along, making him even more unbearable
- He never quite got rid of the lisping, though
- Upon his death, the fundamental incompatibility between *hröa* and *fëa* was revealed, hence why his body spontaneously self-combusted

[1] Insofar as any member of the House of Fëanor or Finwë can be said to be 'normal'.
[2] Or body and spirit to give them their closest English translations.

This unforeseen alteration to the Music of the Ainur explains why Manwë seemed totally unable to effectively deal with Fëanor—he wasn't supposed to have happened like this, but to have been the greatest and nicest of the Noldor with a lovely *fëa* lined up. The Valar just had no effective back-up plan for such a radical shift. It may also elucidate the origins of the Orcs, Dragons and various other spawn of Morgoth: clearly, the initial disaster, which manifested in Discworld as a gratuitous existence failure for several large buildings and several Igors, led to one Igor being dumped in Utumno several Ages earlier in time. There, being hauled before the ultimate Dark Lord, he happily agreed to serve Morgoth, who let him do whatever sort of weird biological experiments he wanted and provided constant lightning, as long as he got the occasional (race of) minion(s) out of it. Given the Igorish proclivity and facility with biology, this means the Orcs could have been created from almost *anything*[1].

It is therefore incontrovertible that Fëanor was an Igor—it is perfectly rationally explicable within the internal logics of both worlds, and explains several things about his character, as well as one or two other thorny issues in the legendarium. For my next trick, I shall prove that Tom Bombadil is really the Dragon Reborn, or Azor Ahai, or both; that black is white and will get run over on the next zebra crossing.

[1] Or, indeed, several anythings.

THENGELS

James Baillie

Editor's Note: Modified from "Angels" by Robbie Williams, and to that tune.

I sit and wait
As Thengel contemplates his fate
And does he know
His realm will fill with woe
When he's grey and old?
'Cause I have been told
Of creations in Saruman's stronghold,
But when our enemies have fled,
From stallions that we raised and bred,
And I see the dawn is red
I'm loving Thengel instead

For through it all the riders bring protection
Riding out in all directions,
Going to right some wrongs.
And down the Rauros falls
Where e'er my steed may take me
The Uruk-hai won't break me
When they come to call; he won't forsake me
I'm loving Thengel instead

When the Mark was weak
He and Steelsheen, for the throne did seek,
I look above
To the Golden Hall that he's master of
And as the muster grows
I hear a horn that blows,
And the dawn is red
I'm loving Thengel instead

For through it all the riders bring protection
Riding out in all directions,

Going to right some wrongs.
And down the Rauros falls
Where e'er my steed may take me
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POETRY FROM EAGLE DEBATES

Various members of the Society

Editor's Note: Most terms, the Society holds an Eagle Debate. According to this format, a question is chosen (e.g. "Which of Tolkien's characters is the best wizard?"), each participant picks a character or group of characters who they believe to be the answer, and several rounds are held wherein one participant is eliminated—or, to put it more colourfully, thrown off the eagle—every round, with the winner being the last person standing. Typically, these debates are rather silly; for the aforementioned wizards debate, one of the rounds was a job interview for a wizardly teaching position. We have a tradition of holding a poetry contest as one of the rounds. Some of the poems from Eagle Debates of the 2016-17 academic year are shown here.

"Most annoying character"

Eleanor Smith (for Túrin Turambar)

Author's Note: I have used a Welsh poetic metre called englyn milwr*, which requires three-line stanzas with end-rhyme, and lines of seven syllables each (although of course these don't really count as* englynion milwr*, being in English).*

My nickname is Mormegil;
I use my black sword to kill;
Beleg lies dead, bloody, still.

My nickname is Mormegil;
I claim not to have free will;
Loved ones left alive: *nihil*.

My nickname is Mormegil;
Finduilas's cry was shrill
When she called me, that went ill.

My nickname is Mormegil;
I killed Morgoth's Orcs until
Glaurung came, with evil will.

My nickname is Mormegil;
I've racked up a mighty bill
Of blood-debts upon this hill.

My nickname is Mormegil;
My sword never has its fill;
All my choices will go ill.

Samuel Karlin (for Manwë Súlimo)

Mine are the arms to which Eä was entrusted
Mine is the strength that should guard you all
Mine is the arse that does sit on Taniquetil
Hap'ly enthroned, yet I care not at all.

I care for Elves but not anyone other.
Men, Dwarves and Ents? Let them die in hate.
Morgoth takes over? Meh. I'll let them suffer.
I just like Vanyar to tell me I'm great.

Pretty boys praising me, that's what I'm liking.
Sitting with Varda my beautiful bride.
Responsibility? Duty? Compassion?
Screw it. All I care about is my pride.

Samuel Cook (for Gandalf the Grey)

Editor's Note: To the meter of Legolas's "To the Sea" from The Return of the King.

Istari, Istari, the Grey is annoying;
Hot air he's spouting, and his brow is furrowing.
West, west away, his masters are laughing
Poor Men, poor Men, you must bear his mocking
His condescension to you people is beyond belief
So so smug, so so smug, to all he is but a grief
For he claims to know all, but dispenses little
He will all of you forever belittle.
He will ride away when he's most needed;
He will scorn you greatly if he's not heeded;
Be warned, peoples of Middle-earth, Gandalf is most annoying;
Why else do you think we are him to you a-sending?

"Best couple"

Eleanor Smith (for Legolas and Gimli)

Author's Note: I have tried to make these sound something like the characters, so Gimli's poem is octosyllabic, like the Song of Durin, and Legolas's poem is fairly careless with the metre, like his Song of the Sea.

Gimli
In Kheled-zâram once of old
The stars made all the water bright;
In mountain darkness deep and cold,
They filled old Durin's heart with light.

I saw the caverns of Helm's Deep,
The living stone, the lake of glass;
I saw the crystal halls that sleep
Beneath the peak; but let them pass.

I saw him in the open air,
The sight of him could banish fear:
The mountain's night was in his hair,
And in his eyes the starry mere.

Legolas
Fair is the wind in the trees singing and sighing,
Fair is the wave on the shore and the white gull flying,
Fair is the sunlight's glow as it sinks in the West,
But fairest of all is the sight of the one I love best.

Fair is the bright elanor on the green sward,
Fair is the clear water rushing through the ford,
Fair are the autumn leaves, the forest is fair,
But fairer still the colour of flame in his hair.

Fair was the light of the Trees in days gone by,
Fair are the stars of the evening drawing nigh,
Fair is the Sea that calls me to its shore,
But fairest and best is he: I ask no more.

Cici Carey-Stuart (for Celeborn and Galadriel)

Editor's Note: Based on "Sixteen Going on Seventeen" from The Sound of Music.

You wait, young Sinda, on an empty stage
For rings to keep the light on
Your world, young Sinda, is a fragile place
That Noldor want to fight on

You are Teleri going on Sinda,
Mortals will fall in line
Eager young men and Dwarves and fast Ents
Will ply you with trees so fine

Totally unprepared are you
To stand up to their pleas
Naïve and sweet and kind are you
To beings we outlive with ease

You need someone more beautiful and terrible
Advising your life choices too
I'm a Noldo and a ring-bearer
I will do everything for you

Choong Ling Liew-Cain (for various couples)

There once was a pony called Bill
whose life was truly a thrill.
His friends suddenly left
him for six months bereft
and then Sam returned, loving him still.

My precious, my love, is a ring,
And to precious sometimes we sing.
With Hobbits we riddled,
Filthy Hobbitses fiddled,
Nasty Hobbits took ring with the sting.

There once was a Ringwraith named Steve
whose companions all wished he'd leave.
So close to the Ring,
But could see not a thing,
And killed all friends in fir'y cleave.

There once was a hobbit named Frodo,
the unfortunate orphan of Drogo.
He went on a quest
which turned out for the best,
but Bagginses then joined the dodo.

Brigid Ehrmantraut (for Beren and Lúthien)

Author's Note: In the style of a Shakespearean sonnet.

Lúthien Tinúviel—fair maid upon the green,
Sweet nightingale, sweeter evening's song,
Elven princess, pale elven queen,
Eternal youth, forever young.

Beren—son of man with fleeting life,
Whose years will quickly take to wing;
Too long must you endure such strife,
As poets in after times shall sing.

Together Silmarils to steal and deeds to dare,
Great wolves to fight and Morgoth's wrath
To brave, despite all Arda's terror;
To Mandos's halls we make our path.

Immortality's gift once given,
Death proved the dearer living.

CONSEQUENCES

Various members of the Society

Aragorn during his rebellious punk phase met a distraught relative of Boromor in a pocket dimension inside a Silmaril inside Carcharoth.

Aragorn said, "Well, I don't know what you think you're doing here, but some of us are *trying* to plot to assassinate the King of Númenor."

The relative of Boromor replied, "Aragorn, Aragorn, wherefore art thou Aragorn?"

And valiant was their battle, but their foe was too many and too great, and once again the Tripos defeated all in its path.

As a result, aliens burst out of everyone's chests and things got messy.

Every character ever played by Sean Bean met Hera, Greek goddess of marriage, cows, *et cetera*, in the Angband Family Fun Park.

The Sean Bean characters said, "Didn't know any of your kind lived here. What you doing? ******* immigrants."

Hera replied: "Same to you."

They went fishing and accidentally caught a Silmaril.

As a result, the days were blackened, and sunscreen got a lot cheaper.

The Eye of Argon met Carcharoth in Gondolin.

The Eye of Argon said: "Where is the horse? Where is the rider? Where is the horn that was blowing?"

Carcharoth replied, "How dare you take that tone with me? I'm practically a Disney princess."

They did unspeakable things.

As a result, Túrin was reborn and the world committed collective mass suicide.

Published by the Cambridge Tolkien Society