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The Lord of the Rings as a Defense of Western Civilization

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Introduction

When readers in England recently were asked to name "the greatest book of the century," they chose J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*. Many critics were scandalized, finding it incomprehensible that the public could honor a work the literary community had largely dismissed as old-fashioned, didactic, and escapist. Yet the survey was far from a fluke. Tolkien's writings have sold more than 100 million copies worldwide, spawned fan clubs and scholarly organizations, and inspired music and artworks by a number of gifted artists. Now Hollywood is releasing three major live-action motion pictures based on the saga.

What is so special about Tolkien's work? Why is it still worth reading nearly a half century after its publication?

Of course, *The Lord of the Rings* is a spell-binding story. But it also is a remarkable, if implicit, defense of Western civilization—a defense that we sorely need. Tolkien did not create his work as some sort of allegory of current world affairs. Allegory was a form of writing that he disliked.[1] But Tolkien wasn't against what he called "applicability,"[2] and he did not deny that his work could be applicable to many things in the contemporary world. It is in that spirit of "applicability" that Tolkien's work may be read as a defense of Western civilization—that glorious melting pot of Greco-Roman, pagan Northern European and Judeo-Christian cultures.

In a literary sense, *The Lord of the Rings* might be regarded as a defense of the West by its virtual resurrection of the literary forms and themes from the West's greatest cultures. In a century when writers and artists routinely scorned the wisdom of the past— an age dominated by the anti-heroes of the literary naturalists, the nihilism of the cultural relativists, the purportedly scientific atheism of writers on the brink of suicide—Tolkien's work arrived like a bracing mountain wind, for it introduced modern readers to forms of literature that are unafraid to explore truth as well as ambiguity, beauty as well as ugliness, good as well as evil, and heroism as well as cowardice. To read Tolkien is to read more than a thousand years of Western literature encapsulated into one tale. C.S. Lewis traced the roots of *The Lord of the Rings* back to *The Odyssey*. Tolkien himself wrote: "I was brought up in the Classics, and first discovered the sensation of literary pleasure in Homer."[3] Tolkien's mythology draws on the Oedipus plays, the Bible, and above all, the Norse sagas.[4] As literary scholar Janet Blumberg has pointed out, Tolkien's epic also draws on Anglo-Saxon and High Medieval writings.[5] Tolkien defends the literature of Western civilization by showing his readers its breathtaking vitality.

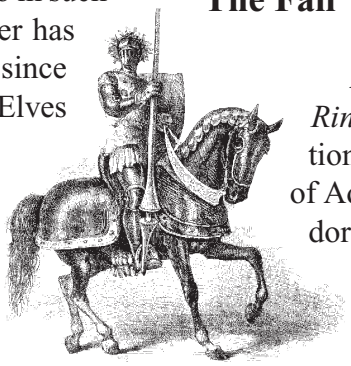
In an even more profound sense, however, *The Lord of the Rings* is a defense of Western civilization because of its articulation of four overarching themes that serve as cornerstones for the entire Western tradition.

Natural Law

The first theme is natural law. For more than 2,000 years in the West, the leaders of politics and culture had no difficulty drawing what they thought were objective moral distinctions between good and evil. From Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* to Cicero's *De Republica* to the writings of Paul, Augustine, and Aquinas to the documents of the American Founding, the standard teaching of the West was that we could—and should—make public moral judgments, because there is a universal moral order binding on all human beings.

It was this objective moral order to which the Founding Fathers appealed in the Declaration of Independence when they spoke of the "Laws of Nature and Nature's God" and declared that all men are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights. Indeed, this belief in an objective moral order supplies the basis for the Western commitment to universal human rights—rights that are possessed by all people, not just the

blessed few in one favored culture. This universal moral law spanning time and culture permeates Tolkien's saga. Indeed, said C.S. Lewis, it provides "the basis of the whole Tolkienian world."[6] To highlight merely one especially important passage: In *The Two Towers,* the character Aragorn is asked: "How shall a man judge what to do in such times?" And Aragorn replies, "As he ever has judged… Good and ill have not changed since yesteryear; nor are they one thing among Elves and Dwarves and another among Men."[7]



In other words, good and evil are the same across cultures. There is not one moral standard for Elves and another for Dwarves or men. Tolkien in this dialogue seems to recall a famous passage from Cicero in *De Republica,* where Cicero wrote: "And there will not be different laws at Rome and at Athens, or different laws now and in the future, but one eternal and unchangeable law will be valid for all nations and all times."[8]

We still live in a time when cultural elites need to hear Tolkien's clarion defense of natural law. For some people morality is either relative, or worse, an illusion. It is dictated completely by arbitrary cultural preferences or by the non-moral process of survival of the fittest. In the words of sociobiologists E.O. Wilson and Michael Ruse, "Morality… is merely an adaptation put in place to further our reproductive ends… In an important sense, ethics as we understand it is an illusion fobbed off on us by our genes to get us to cooperate."[9]

Of course, the horrific events of September 11 seem to have startled even our culture-makers into acknowledging that there are some things that are really evil—at least to a point. The president of ABC News was asked by journalism students whether he thought the Pentagon had been a "legitimate military target" chosen by the terrorists. He replied that while "perhaps" he might be able to take a position on that question in his "private life," "as a journalist" he felt "strongly" that he "should not be taking a position" on whether the attack on the Pentagon "was right or wrong."[10] To read *The Lord of the Rings* is to be reminded afresh of why such comments are so bankrupt. And this reminder is a ringing affirmation of the best of the Western tradition.

The Fall

A second theme in *The Lord of the Rings* that embodies the Western tradition is the Fall. From the Genesis account of Adam and Eve to Hesiod's tale of Pandora's Box to the works of Madison and Hamilton and the other American Founding Fathers, Western philosophy, politics and literature are shot through with the inevitable imperfection of human beings. "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God," declared Paul in Romans.[11] "[A]ny man who has power is led to abuse it," said Montesquieu in *The Spirit of the Laws*.[12] "If men were angels, no government would be necessary," added Madison in Federalist #51[13], clearly implying that men are far from angelic. Because of the recognition of the inevitability of human imperfection, there is a profoundly anti-utopian strain in Western political thought.

From the mixed government of Aristotle to the checks and balances of modern constitutionalism, Western political thought has urged the need to balance power against power because no ruler is perfect. "So that one cannot abuse power, power must check power by the arrangement of things," wrote Montesquieu[14]. "Ambition must be made to counteract ambition," echoed Madison.[15]

Western thought also has proclaimed the utter foolishness of believing that human leaders and human institutions can somehow bring about a heaven on earth. In the words of George Washington, "the best Institutions may be abused by human depravity; and… they may even, in some instances, be made subservient to the vilest of purposes."[16]

According to Tolkien, the concept of fall was one of the three great themes in his mythology of Middle Earth. "There cannot be any 'story' without a fall," he wrote."…at least not for human minds as we know them and have them." Indeed, "all stories are ultimately about the fall."[17] In *The Lord of the Rings,* the utopian attempt to deny the reality of the Fall forms the necessary backdrop to the story, though most readers probably don't realize this fact.

In *The Lord of the Rings,* we meet Sauron already full-grown in his evil. But you will miss Tolkien's point if that is all you know about Sauron, for Sauron was not always evil incarnate. In *The Fellowship of the Ring,* the reader is given a hint of this when Gandalf says, "Nothing is evil in the beginning. Even Sauron was not so."[18] Elsewhere, Tolkien explained how Sauron initially won over many of the Elves by seeking to "reorganize" and "rehabilitate" the lands ruined by the great war against the First Enemy in Middle Earth. Sauron "was still fair in that early time," writes Tolkien, "and his motives and those of the Elves seemed to go partly together: the healing of the desolate lands. Sauron found their weak point in suggesting that, helping one another, they could make Western Middle-earth as beautiful as Valinor. It was really a veiled attack on the gods, an incitement to try and make a separate independent paradise."[19] In other words, Sauron sought to create heaven on earth as a substitute for the real heaven. Thus he appropriated to himself the prerogatives of the gods and becomes "the reincarnation of Evil."[20] Because of the Fall, we cannot create heaven on earth, and if we try, we are more likely to bring forth Hell instead.

Tolkien did not write *The Lord of the Rings* as a commentary on modern totalitarianism, but he certainly recognized that his saga did implicitly critique the utopian claims of both Nazism and Communism—and the claims of inevitable progress made in the name of modern science and technology in democratic countries. Utopianism wears many disguises. It can be the ruthless attempt to impose a universal good by tyranny, but it can also be the stubborn unwillingness to face *necessary* evils—such as war.

The Lord of the Rings does not glorify war, but it does suggest that its profound tragedy may be unavoidable in a fallen world. When the Warden of the Houses of Healing in Gondor laments to Lady Eowyn that "the world is full enough of hurts and mischances without wars to multiply them," Eowyn responds tartly: "It needs but one foe to breed a war, not two."[21] Good people cannot stop a war merely by turning the other cheek.

At a more general level, Tolkien in *The Lord of the Rings* challenges the utopian thinking that prevents one from taking sides in a moral controversy because no side is perfect. Far from portraying the conflict between good and evil as a battle between cardboard people who are perfectly good or perfectly evil, *The Lord of the Rings* does a superb job in uncovering the conflicting and even dishonorable motives of those on the "right" side of the controversy—think of Boromir and Denethor. But part of the recognition of the Fall is to realize that though no person is wholly good or wholly evil, one is still obliged to fight on the side of justice, even if one's side is tainted by sin and impure motives. "There are… conflicts about important things or ideas," wrote Tolkien. "In such cases I am more impressed by the extreme importance of being on the right side, than I am disturbed by the revelation of the jungle of confused motives, private purposes, and individual actions (noble or base) in which the *right* and the *wrong* in actual human conflicts are commonly involved."[22]

This does not mean that Tolkien thought we should be blind to the evils on our own side as long as our cause is just. In fact, *The Lord of the Rings* powerfully warns those fighting on the right side about the dangers to their own souls, particularly the dangers posed by blind vengeance. For all the warfare in *The Lord of the Rings*, Tolkien's epic is far more about mercy than vengeance—mercy to Gollum, mercy to

Saruman, mercy to the Quisling Hobbits in the Shire at the end of the story. Recall how Frodo commands in "The Scouring of the Shire" that there be no killing of fellow Hobbits even as the tyranny is overthrown. Recall how both Frodo and Gandalf are against killing Gollum. It is not so much that Gollum, or Saruman, or disloyal Hobbits don't deserve death. They do. It is what the taking of their lives in vengeance will do to the victors that Tolkien is concerned about. Here Tolkien is at his most Christian in appreciating that none of us is so good that he cannot fall, and that vengeance even in a righteous cause is so overpowering that it will destroy us—and will only lead to further cycles of violence. One need only think of the seemingly intractable hatreds in places like Bosnia, Northern Ireland, and the Middle East to understand the truth of Tolkien's insight.

While Tolkien insisted that *The Lord of the Rings* was not about World War II, it is certainly true that its theme of the need for mercy even during wartime had a real world parallel. As Tolkien was working on his epic, he corresponded with his son Christopher about an article in the local newspaper that seriously advocated the systematic exermination "of the entire German nation as the only proper course after military victory: because, if you please, they are rattlesnakes, and don't know the difference between good and evil!" "What of the writer?" mused Tolkien. "You can't fight the Enemy with his own Ring without turning into an Enemy," he concluded, "but unfortunately Gandalf's wisdom seems long ago to have passed with him into the True West."[23]

Actually, Gandalf's wisdom had not quite departed Middle Earth, for after World War II the Western allies did a truly remarkable thing in the history of the world—rather than take vengeance on the countries they vanquished, they rebuilt them, turning foes into friends. Gandalf's wisdom can be seen again today, as the West sends thousands of tons of food to the Afghanistan people even as we root out the Taliban.

Yet Tolkien's warnings about the universality of the Fall—and how it touches every part of our lives—is something we still need to hear today.

Freedom

A third key theme in Tolkien's saga is freedom. Freedom or liberty is surely one of the cardinal principles of Western civilization, underlying literature, politics, philosophy, and religion. It is so central to the West's self-understanding that it is often debased and misused by propagandists, a fact that Tolkien lamented. Yet the cheap rhetoric of demogogues does not diminish the power of authentic freedom. Among its major features is moral freedom—the idea that we are not merely cogs in a cosmic machine of fate, but we are called to make genuine moral choices, and therefore are morally accountable for our choices. This is not to deny that there are powerful forces impinging on our choices, but it is to maintain that even in the midst of the forces that act on us we have genuine moments of moral freedom, and those moments are crucial for determining our individual destinies.

This concept of genuine moral freedom is at the heart of the traditional western legal system, and it is also at the core of such great works as Dante's *Divine Comedy*. In Canto 16 of the *Purgatorio*, Dante writes that "your Free Will… though it may grow faint in its first struggles with the heavens, can still surmount all obstacles if nurtured well. You are subjects of a greater power, a nobler nature that creates your mind, and over this the spheres have no control."[24] In *The Lord of the Rings*, Frodo, Gollum, Denethor and others all experience moments of genuine moral freedom. At the end of *The Fellowship of the Ring*, Tolkien provides a particularly compelling account of one such moment during a struggle within Frodo on the summit of Ammon Hen: "[T]wo powers strove in him. For a moment, perfectly balanced between their piercing points, he writhed, tormented. Suddenly he

was aware of himself again. Frodo, neither the Voice nor the Eye: free to choose, and with one remaining instant in which to do so. He took the Ring off his finger."[25] Time and again, the characters in *The Lord of the Rings* remind us that we are given the opportunity to make genuine choices and we are morally accountable for them.

A second type of freedom central to the West is political and social—the right to live one's life in accord with the moral law free from micromanagement by either one's neighbors or one's rulers. "Countries are well cultivated, not as they are fertile but as they are free," wrote Montesquieu.[26] "[T]he mass of mankind has not been born with saddles on their backs, nor a favored few booted and spurred, ready to ride legitimately, by the grace of God," declared Jefferson.[27]

The freedom to be left alone—especially the freedom of ordinary people to be left alone by the elites who want to rule them for their own good—is a central theme in *The Lord of the Rings*. It is shown perhaps most clearly by the Hobbits, most of whom are perfectly willing to live their quiet, boring, and mundane lives without any interference from officious busybodies, thank you. Tolkien's heart was clearly in the Shire, and he even called himself a Hobbit on occasion.[28] But even outside the Shire, one sees that self-government in family and community was prized. In *The Two Towers*, Eomer of Rohan declares to Aragorn: "We desire only to be free, and to live as we have lived, keeping our own, and serving no foreign lord."[29] And the Company of Nine itself was supposed to represent all of what Tolkien called the "Free Peoples"—Dwarves, Men, Elves, and Hobbits—those who lived in the freedom of self-rule rather than under the slavery of Sauron's totalitarianism. They fought to maintain their freedoms, not to set up a new universal empire.

True, the story ends with the ascendancy of a King, but this is a King who believes in self-government, not absolute rule from the top down. Revisiting the village of Bree near the end of the book, Gandalf engages in a discussion with Mr. Butterbur of *The Prancing Pony*. When Gandalf informs Butterbur that there is a new King and the old highway will be reopened, Butterbur shakes his head and says, "We want to be let alone." "You will be let alone," replies Gandalf. As they continue their discussion, Butterbur accepts that the new developments "will be good for business, no doubt. So long as [the King] lets Bree alone." "He will," says Gandalf again. "He knows [Bree] and loves it."[30] The new King will not be a meddler.

The Lord of the Rings thus embodies Tolkien's passionate belief in a limited government that does not overmanage the lives of citizens. In the midst of writing *The Lord of the Rings,* Tolkien sent a somewhat whimsical to his son Christopher, then 18, and in the RAF:

> My political opinions lean more and more to Anarchy (philosophically understood, meaning abolition of control not whiskered men with bombs)—or to 'unconstitutional' Monarchy. I would arrest anybody who uses the word State… and after a chance of recantation, execute them if they remained obstinate! Government is an abstract noun meaning the art and process of governing and it should be an offence to write it with a capital G….Anyway, the proper study of Man is anything but Man; and the most improper job of any man, even

> saints… is bossing other men. Not one in a million is fit for it, and least of all those who seek the opportunity… Give me a king whose chief interest in life is stamps, railways, or race-horses….[31]

Tolkien believed that governments should operate with strictly limited objectives because he thought that this would safeguard *genuine* cultural diversity. Bureaucratic centralization—national standards applied from the top down—was deadly in his view. In another letter to his son, Tolkien expressed his fears of the world centralization that might follow even if England won World War II:

> The bigger things get the smaller and duller or flatter the globe gets. It is getting to be all one blasted little provincial suburb. When they have introduced American sanitation, morale-pep, feminism, and mass production throughout the Near East, Middle East, Far East, USSR, the Pampas… the Danubian Basin, Equatorial Africa, Hither Further and Inner Mumbo-land… and the villages of the darkest Berkshire, how happy we shall be. At any rate it ought to cut down travel. There will be nowhere to go.[32]

One can only wonder what Tolkien would have thought of the European Union and its growing batallions of bureaucratic planners. Tolkien's articulation of the reasons for freedom defends Western civilization by warning us of the dangers in our midst of nationalized planning, cultural homogenization, and rule by hordes of state experts who give us endless instructions on what we ought to do.

The Transcendent

A fourth defining theme of *The Lord of the Rings* is its sense of the transcendent, an acknowledgment that the material universe is not the sum total of reality, and that human beings are not—and never will be—the rulers of the cosmic order. While the understanding of the transcendent reaches its most sublime pitch within the Judeo-Christian tradition, it can also be found in Platonic idealism and Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, as well as in the pagan religions of Northern Europe. Throughout Western history, the transcendent has manifested itself in many ways and many forms. It is at the root of the notion of a higher law binding on all human cultures. It is the source of the maxim that "man has no right to play God." It is the foundation for doctrines of Providence and Fate, the idea that human beings are not ultimately in control of the history of the universe. At a more practical level, a sense of the transcendent provides another justification for limited government—because it recognizes that man is not God and therefore has no right to rule in the place of God. It supplies another reason to be anti-utopian, because even if we were morally perfect (which we are not), we would still be finite. We are not omniscient, and we cannot see with clarity into the future; therefore if we try to act as if we are omniscient, we will botch things horribly. In the words of Hawthorne, "no human effort, on a grand scale, has ever yet resulted according to the purpose of its projectors… We miss the good we sought, and do the good we little cared for."[33] Finally, a sense of the transcendent is the inspiration for the belief that man is made for more than bread alone—the belief that the fundamental realities are spiritual rather than physical.

The transcendent has always had its detractors in the West, of course. In the ancient and medieval worlds, it was opposed by those who sought to invest their human rulers with divinity, or at the least with the authority of the divine. Clothed with absolute powers, such rulers

could not be expected to follow the limitations of ordinary human beings. By making men gods they denied the reality of the true God. Today, however, the chief enemy of the transcendent is scientific materialism—the assertion that all we are and all we believe can be reduced to matter in motion. A corollary to this claim is the belief that once we understand the forces that shape matter, we can reshape the world to our liking. Tolkien identified scientific materialism as one of the embodiments of the "evil spirit" in the modern world.[34] By reducing all things to matter in motion, it denies the transcendent and its spiritual realities outright. And by claiming that we can discover scientific laws that will allow us to reshape human destiny, it promotes an unrelenting utopianism that has left devastation in its path. In the past, it inspired crude efforts in eugenics through forced sterilization, barbaric experiments with techniques like lobotomies to eliminate anti-social behavior, and even Hitler's pseudo-scientific "final solution." In the future, who knows? We can look forward to the expanding frontiers of bioengineering—unrestrained by the maxim "man has no right to play God," because God isn't supposed to exist.

According to Tolkien, the conflict in *The Lord of the Rings* in its most fundamental sense is over this denial of the transcendent. "It is about God, and His sole right to divine honour," he wrote. "The Eldar and the Numenoreans believed in The One, the true God, and held worship of any other person an abomination. Sauron desired to be a God-King, and was held to be this by his servants."[35]

The Lord of the Rings defends the transcendent by exposing the bankruptcy of attempts to replace God with anyone or anything else. It likewise opens the door to the transcendent by continually emphasizing the finiteness of created beings and their lack of omniscience. Even Gandalf cannot see the future exhaustively. "For even the very wise cannot see all ends," he tells Frodo in *The Fellowship of the Rings*.[36] It is a saying that keeps popping up in the story, as does the sense that there is much more to the story than Tolkien is able to tell us. The characters are free to make genuine choices, to be sure, but do those choices alone dictate the history of Middle Earth? Perhaps not. Early on, Gandalf lets Frodo know just how incredible it was that his friend Bilbo happened upon the One Ring. "Behind that," he says, "there was something else at work, beyond any design of the Ring-maker. I can put it no plainer than by saying that Biblo was *meant* to find the Ring, and *not* by its maker. In which case you also were *meant* to have it. And that may be an encouraging thought."[37] "It is not!" protests Frodo, but for the reader, it really is an encouraging thought—if nonetheless a mysterious one. As the plot moves along, the mystery deepens, for everything does *not* seem to happen just by chance or necessity. Could it be design? *The Lord of the Rings* does not give us a final answer, but it certainly raises the question in the minds of thoughtful readers. And by raising the question of whether there is some intelligence other than ourselves who is moving history, Tolkien nudges readers to think about whether this may also be the case in our own lives.

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So Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* can be read as a defense of Western civilization, but by now it should be clear that it also is a critique of certain trends that have come to dominate the West during the past century. So to say that *The Lord of the Rings* is a defense of Western civilization is not to say that it is a defense of our civilization as it exists. Instead, it has much to tell us about the disrepair into which Western civilization has fallen. As Tolkien would sometimes write, we face "Mordor in our midst."[38] Since September 11, it is easier for most of us to believe that. Lest we have any doubts, we can see the poisonous fruit produced by the forces of Mordor in the rubble of the World Trade Center.

But what should be our response to Mordor in our midst?

I think Tolkien's epic provides guidance.

Certainly part of our response should be support for the military efforts currently underway. *We* did not seek war; war was declared on *us*, and now we must respond. However, *The Lord of the Rings* suggests that the terrorists are far from our only danger. During wartime, we must of course look to the enemy without—but we must also look to the enemy within ourselves. For in a fallen world, even those fighting a righteous cause can face temptations destructive of their souls. Two of the main temptations are embodied in Tolkien's story by Saruman and Denethor.

Saruman the White was the greatest wizard of Middle Earth. He had been a tremendous force for good, and he knew it. His achievements made him proud, and in his pride he overestimated both his knowledge and his power. He came to think that he could defeat Sauron by using Sauron's methods. He optimistically believed that he could take Sauron's place and rule the world for its own good. In other words, he aspired to God-like power just as Sauron had. He blasphemed against the transcendent by denying that there were any limits that he was obliged to follow. In the end, his optimism was shown to be foolish. He was not as omniscient as he had thought; and had he been, he merely would have become another Sauron. Saruman is a warning to those who are so certain we will win over our enemies because of our superior wisdom and strength. After all, aren't we the world's leader in technology? Don't we have the most firepower? Isn't our economy still the strongest in the world? Saruman is also a warning to those who are willing to win at all costs—the end justifies any means. Following that road, we may in fact win, but only at the price of becoming our enemies.

Denethor's temptation is also borne of pride. He is certain that he sees the future as well, but that vision feeds despair, not optimism. Denethor becomes convinced that resistance is futile because the future has already been decided. He usurps the role of God just as much as Saruman does, both because he refuses to leave room for God to act in history, and because he claims the type of omniscience that only God can have of the future. Denethor is deluded into denying his own finite knowledge of the world, and this denial leads him into madness and annihilation on the very eve of victory.

In their own ways, both Denethor and Saruman denied the transcendent—to their own destruction. Together they illustrate what C.S. Lewis thought was the underlying moral of *Lord of the Rings*: to "recall [us] from facile optimism and wailing pessimism alike, to that hard, yet not quite desperate, insight into Man's unchanging predicament by which heroic ages have lived."

That moral is especially appropriate for us today. We do not know what tomorrow will bring. Bio-terrorism, chemical attacks, nuclear annihilation. We do not know how many hundreds—or thousands—will die in the years ahead. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* reminds us that it is not in our power either to know or to command what will happen in the future. All we are responsible for is to go about our appointed tasks with as much wisdom and justice and courage as we can muster.

"Let us have faith that right makes might, and in that faith, let us, to the end, dare to do our duty as we understand it."[39] So declared Abraham Lincoln on the eve of the American Civil War. We can fortify his words with the hope of Gandalf that "there [is] something else at work [in history], beyond any design of" of latter-day Saurons.[40] And if we wish, we can add to that the comfort of Galadriel who tells Frodo and his companions, "Do not let your hearts be troubled"[41]—for we know someone else who says those words, and His word is true.[42]

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Dr. West is author of *The Politics of Revelation & Reason* and *The Disney Live-Action Productions*, winner of a 1995 Silver Angel Award from Excellence in Media. Other publications by Dr. West include the *Encyclopedia of Religion in American Politics*, *The C.S. Lewis Readers' Encyclopedia, The New Federalist Papers* (co-editor of all), and the fifth volume of *The Encyclopedia of the American Constitution* (assistant editor and contributing author). He has published articles and essays in a wide range of scholarly and popular outlets, including *The Encyclopedia of the American Presidency*, *Wake Forest Law Review, Policy Review, The St. Louis Post-Dispatch, The Kansas City Star, The Detroit News,* and *The San Diego Union-Tribune*. An archive of some of his work is now available at www.discovery.org.

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[2] Ibid.

[3] Tolkien to Robert Murray, December 2, 1953 in Humphrey Carpenter, editor, *The Letters of J.R.R. Tolkien* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1981), p. 172.

[4] See Tolkien to Milton Waldman in *Letters*, p. 150.

[5] See Janet Blumberg, "The Literary Background of *The Lord of the Rings*," paper presented to the Celebrating Middle Earth Conference, Seattle Pacific University, November 10, 2001.

[6] C.S. Lewis, "Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*," in Walter Hooper, editor, *On Stories and Other Essays on Literature* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1982), p. 87.

[7] J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Two Towers* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1965), Bk. III, Ch. 2, p. 50.

[8] Cicero, *De Republica* [Vol. XVI of Loeb Classical Library volumes of Cicero] (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1927), Bk. III, Ch. xxii, p. 211.

[9] Michael Ruse and E.O. Wilson, "The Evolution of Ethics," in James Hutchingson, *Religion and the Natural Sciences: The Range of Engagement* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich College Publishers, 1993), p. 310.

[10] "Media Leadership in Our Time," *The Weekly Standard,* November 12, 2001, p. 44. Under uniform public criticism, the ABC president later apologized for his statement.

[11] Romans 3:23.

[12] Montesquieu, *The Spirit of the Laws,* edited by Anne Cohler, Basia Miller, and Harold Stone (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989), Bk.11, ch. 4, p. 155.

[13] James Madison, Federalist Paper #51 in Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, John Jay, *The Federalist Papers* (New York: New American Library, 1961), p. 322.

[14] Montesquieu, *Laws,* Bk. 11, Ch. 4, p. 155.

[15] Madison, Federalist #51, *Federalist Papers,* p. 322.

[16] George Washington, "[Proposed Address to Congress]," in John C. Fitzpatrick, editor, *The Writings of George Washington from the Original Manuscript Sources,* 1745-1799 (Washington, D.C.: United States George Washington Bicentennial Commission), Vol. 30, pp. 301-302.

[17] Tolkien to Milton Waldman, *Letters*, p. 147.

[18] *Fellowship of the Ring,* Bk. II, Ch. 2, p. 351.

[19] Tolkien to Milton Waldman, *Letters*, p. 152.

[20] Ibid., p. 151.

[21] J.R. R. Tolkien, *The Return of the King* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1965), Bk. VI, Ch. 5, p. 292.

[22] Tolkien, "Notes on W.H. Auden's review of *The Return of the King*," in *Letters*, p. 242.

[23] Tolkien to Christopher Tolkien, Sept. 23-25, 1944, *Letters*, pp. 93-94.

[24] Dante, *Purgatory* in Mark Musa, editor, *The Portable Dante*, Canto XVI, lines 76-81.

[25] *Fellowship of the Ring*, Bk. II, Ch. 10, p. 519.

[26] Montesquieu, *Laws*, Bk. XVIII, Chp. 3.

[27] Jefferson to Roger Weightman, June 24, 1826 in Thomas Jefferson, *Writings* (New York: Library of America, 1984), p. 1517.

[28] "I am in fact a *Hobbit*…." Tolkien to Deborah Webster, October 25, 1958, *Letters*, p. 288.

[29] *Two Towers,* Bk. III, Ch. 2, p. 43.

[30] *Return of the King,* Bk. VI, Ch. 7, p. 337.

[31] Tolkien to Christopher Tolkien, Nov. 29, 1943, *Letters*, pp. 63-64.

[32] Tolkien to Christopher Tolkien, Dec. 9, 1943, *Letters*, p. 65.

[33] Nathaniel Hawthorne, "Chiefly about War Matters," in *The Writings of Nathaniel Hawthorne* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1900), Vol. XVII, p. 403.

[34] Tolkien to Christopher Tolkien, Jan. 30, 1945, *Letters*, p. 110.

[35] "Notes on Auden's Review," *Letters*, p. 243.

[36] *Fellowship of the Ring,* Bk. I, Ch. 2, p. 93.

[37] Ibid., p. 88.

[38] Tolkien to Rayner Unwin, Aug. 29, 1952, *Letters*, p. 165.

[39] Abraham Lincoln, "Cooper Institute Address," February 27, 1860 in *Abraham Lincoln: Speeches and Writings, 1859-1865* (New York: Library of America, 1989), p. 130.

[40] *Fellowship of the Ring,* Bk. II, Ch. 7, p. 462.

[41] Ibid., Bk. I, Ch. 2, p. 88.

[42] "Let not your heart be troubled," John 14:1.

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