

### **The Silmarillion: Creator and Sub-Creator**

*The Silmarillion* (Ainulindalë, Quenta Silmarillion Chapters I-IX, XIX, XXIV)  
“Mythopoeia”: <http://home.ccil.org/~cowan/mythopoeia.html>

1. How is discord introduced into the music? What is Melkor’s motivation? How can Melkor’s gradual transformation be explained? Melkor spent time alone in the void -- what does this mean?
2. What are the three themes of Iluvator? Why does Iluvator’s attitude shift from one theme to the next? What is the significance of the final, decisive chord?
3. Is Iluvator the ultimate source of evil/discord? “No theme may be played that hath not its uttermost source in me.”
4. What are the similarities and differences between the account of creation in the *Silmarillion* and that in the Bible (especially Genesis 1)? Why do the Ainur have nothing to do with the creation of the “children of Iluvator” (the Elves and Men)?
5. Why do the Ainur see the world first in a form of a prevision? Why does the vision fade before the dominion of Man and the ending of the world? (19-20)
6. Compare and contrast the prehistoric and prehuman origin of evil (the marring of Ea by Melkor) with the account in Genesis.
7. How is the fall of Melkor explained? Compare with Milton’s Satan, and other parallels (e.g., in the Bible).
8. Why is it significant that Sauron was originally an associate of Aule?
9. Is Tolkien’s world truly polytheistic?
10. What does Tolkien mean by writing that the hearts of Men are fashioned by God to seek beyond the world and to find no rest therein (p. 41)? By making death “the gift of Iluvatar” to Men? Can this be reconciled with St. Paul’s doctrine (especially in Romans 3 and 5) that “the wages of sin is death”?
11. From the Elves’ perspective, Men most resemble Melkor (p. 42). Is this perception accurate or fair? If so, what makes Men particularly vulnerable to Melkor’s influence?
12. Why is it significant that the Elves first appear when Middle-Earth is in a state of perpetual twilight? (48)
13. Is Aule’s repentance the only example of success in Tolkien’s world? Was Sauron’s conversion (p. 285) genuine? Why was it cut short? Why is Aule able to destroy his creatures? Does Aule succeed, in the end, in subverting Iluvatar’s sovereignty?
14. How are the Rings connected to the Silmarils? How are they similar, and how different?
15. How are the rings of the Dwarves (p. 288 – “The Rings of Power”) different from those of the Elves, the Men, and the One Ring? What aspects of human nature do Dwarves represent, both positive and negative? What sort of thought-experiment do they represent? Why are Dwarves immune to becoming shadows and wraiths? Why are Dwarves the one humanoid type for which there is no evil counterpart (as orcs are to elves, trolls to ents, wraiths to men, etc.)?

16. Compare the eucatastrophes associated with Beren and Luthien, Earendil, and Frodo and Sam. What are the common elements?
17. Why does Luthien's song have such power? (Consider its effect on Beren, Morgoth, Mandos.) Is this an instance of Elvish "enchantment" (in Tolkien's sense)? Is it an image of the power of fantasy, poetry?
18. Melian foretells the future of Beren and Thingol, and yet counsels Thingol to "take heed". (p. 167) Could Thingol have escaped his fate? Why does Melian eventually withhold her counsel from Thingol? (Compare to Galadriel's mirror.)
19. Finrod Felgund sees the Oath of Feanor at work in Thingol's demand for a Silmaril. What does he mean when he says that "he that even names them in desire moves a great power from slumber"? What is the "great power"? The Valar? Morgoth? The hatred of the sons of Feanor? Something else?
20. Why does Finrod lose the contest of songs with Sauron? 171
21. Huan tells Beren that Luthien "with you must challenge the fate that lies before you -- hopeless, yet not certain." (p. 179) What does this mean? How does one challenge one's fate? How can something be hopeless yet failure not be certain?
22. How was Morgoth overcome? Why did the Silmarils become so heavy? 181
23. Why is Luthien's song before Mandos one of the "sorrow of the Eldar and the grief of Men"? (186-7) Why do the Elves sorrow and Men grieve, and not vice versa? If Luthien had appealed for all of Middle-Earth, as Earendil eventually did, would the appeal have been successful?
24. Why is Luthien given the choices she is? Why doesn't Mandos simply restore the status quo? 187
25. Contrast the Fellowship of the Ring with the cycles of dissension and conflict surrounding the Silmarils.
26. Is the ending of the Silmarillion an instance of Tolkien's concept of Eucatastrophe? Why was the process leading to the end fraught with so much tragedy?