

Alex Gunn

“I Got the Power”: Unifying Diverse Populations for the Greater Good

This paper will explore the aspects of leadership embodied in the character of Gandalf and argue that he is the epitome of a great leader needed by society and the only character in *The Lord of the Rings* who could form an alliance to face Sauron. Gandalf is a symbol of what we need in our world today and what our leaders should aim to emulate; he unites, guides and leads, but he shows no ambition to rule. Repeatedly, Gandalf demonstrates his impartiality and selflessness, which results in citizens from different races, who distrust each other, coming together. Part of what gives him the ability to lead and unite is that he does not crave power; he is diplomatic but not political. In a world that privileges individual or elitist social power, Gandalf still stands as a literary beacon of the characteristics needed to lead diverse groups of people in tumultuous times. For this reason, *The Lord of the Rings* is just as significant and relatable today as it was when it was originally published in 1937.

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