

Cynthia Ann Smith

Tolkien and Mormons

Currently there are many Mormon authors, and many of those authors write speculative fiction. This is a pertinent topic since one article five years ago came up with over fifty authors who have ties to Utah. Granted not all of them are Mormon and not all of them write speculative fiction, but a large number do. Why is this? Interestingly, there are some commonalities with Tolkien, specifically with the *Ainulindalë* and Mormon belief with regards to creation. Mormon belief also ties in very well with Tolkien's own theories on sub-creation.

This paper will first give justification for looking at Tolkien through a Mormon lens by considering Cary Nelson's article "Always Already Cultural Studies: Two Conferences and a Manifesto." I argue that if race, class, and gender are valid ways to look at literary works, which is what Nelson argues, then religion is just as valid. I also touch on the necessity of considering Tolkien's legendarium as a whole as Dimitria Fimi argues in *Tolkien, Race and Cultural History: From Fairies to Hobbits*. It then will go through some of the commonalities, and differences, in the creation myth. Specifically, I look at some of the observations made by Ronan H. G. and Jessica Hooley on their respective blogs. After this, it will discuss ways in which Tolkien's theories on sub-creation resonate with Mormon thought, particularly in light of Bruce G. Charleton's observations on his blog. Finally, I point to areas where further research would be useful.

After getting her Masters in Library Science, Cynthia Smith found employment as the librarian for Provo College in Utah. She has read and loved Tolkien since she was thirteen.



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