

*Tolkien als religiöser Sub-Creator.* (Tolkien as religious sub-creator), Lit, Münster 2003, 369 pp.

With the release of Peter Jackson's film version of J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* is connected a sudden surge in popularity which leads to a great number of published works on this fantasy epic. They analyse the various different aspects of this work. The religious character of this work is arguably one of the most striking and often analysed aspects.

This book, based on a master thesis, examines this aspect out of a biographical approach. The author's aim is to show that Tolkien was a religious sub-creator who introduced consciously many religious aspects in his work. Such an argumentation has many points against it because after an author's death one cannot claim his intention and is it impossible to say which aspects he introduced consciously if he did not mention it.

Meyer's conclusion is based upon a detailed analysis of *The Lord of the Rings*, but it is obvious that he is not a theologian. So he only uses a theological dictionary from 1962 and makes many mistakes in the interpretation of religious and theological aspects because it seems that he does not understand them correctly, for example the resurrection and other christological aspects. Furthermore he does not use the *History of Middle-earth* or Tolkien's very important lecture *Beowulf. The monster and the critics* which is necessary for the understanding of his literary theory. Meyer collects many important quotations but his conclusions are often not consistent and wrong. There are many minor mistakes such as wrong names, ages or similar facts, too.

Moreover he does not refer to the main works of serious Tolkien criticism such as Tom Shippey, Richard L. Purtill, Patrick Curry, Verlyn Flieger etc. Therefore he cannot discuss their views on this matter which is necessary for a serious work on Tolkien criticism.

Consequently and because of the many errors this book shall not be used for a serious approach to the religious elements in Tolkien's work but only to know where one can find the suitable quotations for these elements.

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