

Discussion Points for Ainulindale (Music of the Ainur)

- Similarities and differences with Genesis
 - Considering different types of creation myths*
 - From Nothing Creation (*Ex nihilo*)
 - Sound vs Sight contrast
 - Reliance on speech
 - “*Ēa!* Let these things Be!” vs. “Let there be light.”
 - Point of contrast Use of the Ainur and Valar for subcreation vs single source of creation
 - Similarities between angels and ainur?
- Stylistic differences between Ainulindale and the rest of the Silmarillion.
 - Written as myth
- While there are distinct references to Norse culture throughout the Silmarillion (names, creatures, naming of weapons, oathbreaking, language, heroics and honor), there is none of that in the Ainulindale.
 - Creation elements in Norse myth: Emergence (from World Tree, no beginning from nothing), From Chaos (the primordial chasm between the fire realm and the Land of Mist), and World Parent elements .
- The coming of the children of Iluvatar.
 - The 3rd theme and the final vision
 - Within the context of transitions between the 1st and 2nd themes.
 - Melkor’s role in their conception
- The secret fire vs the Flame imperishable
 - Within the Valar, he kindled the Flame Imperishable (purpose, mission, stuff of life)
 - One the same page, a separate reference to “secret fire” within the context of the end of days, when one final and great chorus will reveal all.

>Interesting point: Early on, Tolkien abandoned the idea of starting with a spherical world at the suggestion of an associate.

>The Ainulindale was re-written numerous times between 1918 and 1948.

➤ CREATION TYPES

EARTH DIVER CREATION: in which someone, or something, plunges to the seabed through a primordial ocean to bring up sand or mud which develops into a terrestrial world.

Example: The Cherokee creation belief describes the earth as a great floating island surrounded by seawater, hanging from the sky by cords. Beaver's Grandchild, the Water Beetle descended from the sky and wanted to see what was below the water. He scurried over the surface of the water, but found no solid place to rest. He dived to the bottom of the water and brought up some soft mud. This mud expanded in every direction and became the earth.

EMERGENCE CREATION: beings pass through a series of worlds and metamorphoses until reaching the present world.

The San People of South Africa believe that humans did not always live on the surface of the earth. At one time people and animals lived underneath the earth with Kaang, the Great Master and Lord of All Life. In this place people and animals lived together peacefully. They understood each other. No one ever wanted for anything and it was always light even though there wasn't any sun. During this time of bliss Kaang began to plan the wonders he would put in the world above.

First Kaang created a wondrous tree, with branches stretching over the entire country. At the base of the tree he dug a hole that reached all the way down into the world where the people and animals lived. After he had finished furnishing the world as he pleased he led the first man up the hole. He sat down on the edge of the hole and soon the first woman came up out of it. Soon all the people were gathered at the foot of the tree, awed by the world they had just entered. Next, Kaang began helping the animals climb out of the hole. In their eagerness some of the animals found a way to climb up through the tree's roots and come out of the branches. They continued racing out of the world beneath until all of the animals were out.

CREATION FROM CHAOS: Creation by the sundering of primordial unity such as the cracking of a cosmic egg, or drawing from the from the abyss. **Of the void...**

Babylonian creation myth describes the union of Tiamat, the goddess of chaos and the oceans, with Abzu, the god of fresh water, in a primal realm.

WORLD PARENT CREATION: The world parent creation myth involves the ending of a primeval state as a result of a union of two parents or dismemberment of a primordial being.

Prophecy of the Völva from the Poetic Edda. Father Sky and Mother Earth from the Maori.

EX NIHILO CREATION: Creation is through the thought, word, dream or bodily secretions of a divine being.