

ABSTRACT

THESIS: Susa Young Gates, Early Mormon Feminist: A Rhetorical Analysis of Selected Writings

STUDENT: Karen M. Hansen-Morgan

DEGREE: Master of Arts

COLLEGE: College of Communication, Information, and Media

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This study conducted a generic and thematic analysis of the positioning of a selection of Susa Young Gates' text within early suffrage literature and its inherent themes of power, agency, and choice as it described the events of the late 19th and early 20th century Mormon establishment of their religion and settling of the territory and state of Utah. The generic analysis identified the text as a participant in the early suffrage genre, with unique characteristics that suggest a hybrid with the genre. The thematic analysis revealed that early Mormon women exhibited characteristics of power, agency, and choice in their contributions towards building a new social and cultural environment based on their religious beliefs of building a kingdom of God on the earth. These findings provide insight into the unique cultural context that existed during the early Mormon Church, and provide opportunities to expand the current feminist conversation by adding previously-unrecognized voices.