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Uncovering Christianity within C. S. Lewis's Fantastical Universe

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Abstract

This essay explores C. S. Lewis's *The Space Trilogy* which consists of *Out of the Silent Planet* (1938), *Perelandra* (1943), and *That Hideous Strength* (1945). I argue that Medieval culture influences the author's rhetoric to create an apologetic text within his fantasy fiction. In applying intertextuality and close reading approaches, I investigate the presence of monsters, nature, Biblical allusions, and pre-Copernican cosmology in Lewis's choice of setting, characterization, and plot development. The setting in each book follows the Medieval model of the universe to indicate Godliness, with a Fallen Earth being the farthest from God and the unfallen worlds of Malacandra and Perelandra being closer to divinity. Lewis draws from Medieval mythology and literature to imagine and revive monsters, aliens, and angels. He creates fantastical worlds, wherein an imagined geography is central to his argument in defending the Christian faith as a unifying truth. The concept of station in life, or hierarchy, relative to the Medieval individual's quest for order and one's God-given purpose, foments Lewis's characterization of humans and fantastical beings. The *Trilogy's* main protagonist, Ransom, undergoes spiritual growth and takes the readers on a didactic journey. He embodies hope for Christians through acting as both a Christ figure and an Arthurian hero. Furthermore, the author emphasizes Christianity as the only theology that comes close to explaining the origins of the universe and the existence of a Creator. Undeniably, Lewis writes a Christian narrative encoded within a didactic fantasy and inspired by the fruitful Middle Ages. In our contemporary world, plagued with war threats, social diseases, and disasters, Lewis's body of work remains relevant because it offers guidelines that can lead Christians and non-Christians closer to God.

Keywords: C. S. Lewis, Fantasy, Space, Medieval studies, Christian Apologetics, Pre-Copernican Universe, Eschatology, Mythology, Good and evil, God and Nature, Virtues and Vices, Fallen World.