Abstract

The Belfast-born British author C.S. Lewis is popularly known as a Christian apologist and consequently, his Fantasy Fictional series for children, *The Chronicles of Narnia* (*Chronicles*), is read predominantly within a Christian framework. This has arguably calcified a reading and reception of the series and neglects his lesser known persona as C.S. Lewis the academician and erudite scholar. This thesis attempts to reread the series under a rubric of the ludic possibilities of a Fantasy world. The genre of Fantasy Fiction may be understood as offering creative liberties to rewrite the Christian story, as was Lewis’s intention. This may be seen in the comfortable distance that is afforded in constructing a spatially and temporally distinct “other world”. In addition to this, the genre licenses an ad hoc amalgamation of literary tropes and genres which construct an “other world” and allows the Christian author to veer from the Biblical narrative as a governing model therefore opening the series to readings that do not follow a strict Christian parallel.

This dissertation argues that the playful possibilities of the Fantasy world allow one to reread Lewis’s *Chronicles* as a self-conscious amalgamation of literary tropes that mediates the Christian faith in a changing reality. Reading Lewis as a literary scholar first and theologian second, allows one to examine the series with greater respect to literary movements such as Modernism and examine how the genre of Fantasy Fiction engages questions similar to Postmodernist fiction. This approach places Lewis and *Chronicles* as our contemporary and rereads his Medievalism, lack of originality, and his critical engagement with literary, philosophical and cultural dialogues as a basis for the series. An amalgamation of literary tropes may be understood as both facilitating the navigation and participation of the Fantasy world for characters and readers, and permits the
researcher to offer Lewis’s writing dynamic as a possible reason for the sustained popularity of what is essentially seen as a Christian Fantasy in a secular context.