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Use this identifier to cite or link to this document: http://hdl.handle.net/10579/6733
Publisher: Università Ca' Foscari Venezia
Date: 2015-07-03
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Abstract:
The Purpose of this thesis is to understand the way in which the religious and in particular the traditional biblical myths are reinterpreted into such a peculiar literary genre like fantasy fiction. Fantasy, indeed, is a genre which has conventionally been related with surreal representation like myths, legends, folk and fairy tales. However, even though this particular genre has always been considered as literature of entertainment, this thesis discusses the way fantasy itself is capable of dealing with important issues like the traditional biblical myths of Creation, War in Heaven and Fall, and their moral values. These dominant myths are the sacred truths upon which the Christian faith is patterned and represent the essence of the Christian message. In particular, the thesis illustrates how these myths are reimagined and rewritten by some relevant authors of fantasy fiction, through the use of archetypes, recurrent themes and structures. On first examination, the thesis analyses John Milton's classic Paradise Lost, since in a way Milton can be considered as a great inspirer of this literary genre, which will be later called Christian Fantasy. More importantly, the thesis explains how Christian myths are reinterpreted in fiction from two antithetical perspectives. By looking at the works of J. R. R. Tolkien, we can see how he refashions Christian myths from his own Christian perspective, in order to celebrate and defend the essence of Christianity. On the other hand, the thesis takes into account Philip Pullman, a contemporary author that breathes new life into Christian fantasy fiction. What Pullman does is to offer a completely different version of the Christian story, in order to attack and destroy the essence of its meaning. Pullman's perspective is then anti-Christian. Overall, this thesis illustrates how these authors commonly follow the pathway of biblical myths, reinterpreting them from these two antithetical perspectives.

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