

# A Hierarchy of Love: Myth in C.S. Lewis's Perelandra

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## Abstract

In C.S. Lewis's *Perelandra*, the transposed creature is drawn up into its "kindly stede" as a sacramental symbol of Christ through that fictional planet's unbroken relationship between meaning and form. Although *Perelandra*'s "wheels-within-wheels" hierarchy may at first seem reminiscent of Catholicism's teachings on symbol, as a Protestant, Lewis believes that human beings cannot be truly sacramental symbols until the return of Christ. Lewis's optimistic depiction of a cosmic hierarchy is one of perfect love: superiors rule their subordinates with agape, and creatures who discover their submissive roles reciprocate with eros or adoring love. Every created being in *Perelandra* is part of the cosmic hierarchy and therefore must fill both of these mythical roles in their turn; thus happiness and meaning depend upon one conforming to one's position. God works to bring the three main characters--Ransom, Tor, and Tinidril--to maturity in their objective mythical roles, ultimately causing those roles to conform their bodies into sacramental images of Christ.

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