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Joe R. Christopher

*(emeritus) Tarleton State University, Stephenville, TX*Follow this and additional works at: <https://dc.swosu.edu/mythlore>Part of the [Children's and Young Adult Literature Commons](#)

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Mount Purgatory Arises near Narnia

Abstract

Examines the image of the enclosed garden and pool at the top of a mountain as it occurs in Dante's Garden of Eden on Mount Purgatory and in *The Magician's Nephew* and *The Last Battle*, with some parallels in Morris's *The Well at the World's End* and Tolkien's "Leaf by Niggle."

Additional Keywords

Dante. Divine Comedy—Influence on C.S. Lewis; Lewis, C.S. Chronicles of Narnia

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Mount Purgatory Arises near Narnia

Joe R. Christopher

I. A Fuzzy Set of Images

In an essay, "Jack on Holiday," George Sayer describes C. S. Lewis on a slow train from Oxford to Malvern in his adult years:

Much of the journey is through lovely unspoiled country on the fringe of the Cotswolds. If the weather were fine and he had the seat that he wanted, [Lewis] would enjoy the changing scenery. Otherwise he would read in the little book that he would have brought with him. This would probably be a classic, perhaps a volume of Vergil or of his favourite poet, Dante, in the Temple Classics Edition. (203)

That reference to Dante as Lewis's favorite poet is the beginning point of this essay. Of course, there is no surprise that Lewis knew Dante. In his book *Studies in Medieval and Renaissance Literature* appear essays titled "Dante's Similes," "Imagery in the Last Eleven Cantos of Dante's *Comedy*," and "Dante's Statius." Further, Lewis's short didactic fiction *The Great Divorce* is an imitation of *The Divine Comedy*. These do not exhaust Lewis's factual references to Dante's work or his fictional allusions to it, but they are enough to suggest Dante's importance to Lewis and thus support, if support were needed, George Sayer's statement.

This paper is an investigation of garden-like settings on top of Narnian mountains or hills. With Dante's influence on Lewis, Dante's presentation of the Garden of Eden on top of Mount Purgatory is central to this study, but Lewis knew many other literary gardens (and springs of water, and other related images) and they have secondary consideration here. A comparison may make this clearer. Brian Attebery has argued that genres are fuzzy sets (he borrows the term from logic), "meaning they are defined not by boundaries but by a center" (12). Thus, if one wanted to define the epic genre, a critic may say that, in the western tradition, Virgil's *Aeneid* was the central work. Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* are near allied (one is not concerned with derivation here), for the *Odyssey* resembles the first six books of the *Aeneid* and the *Iliad* the second six books. Milton's *Paradise Lost* is further off, for it does not have a human sea-voyage or a human war; yet it does have a war

between angels which shows some similarities to Virgil's description of war; it also has stylistic characteristics, such as epic similes, catalogues, and invocations, that resemble Virgil's work. Perhaps further off still (although the distance might lead to critical argument) is Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseida*, which shares a setting and some characters with the *Iliad* and the second book of the *Aeneid*, and which has invocations of pagan gods, and which has some, if minor, emphasis on human war. (That another critic might want to classify *Troilus and Criseida* as a verse romance on the Matter of Rome is not a problem, for works on the edges of one genre may well overlap with another.) In the present study, the concern is not with a genre, but with an image cluster. Dante's Garden of Eden, with its trees, birds, and source of water, is central; Milton's Garden is close, since it is also on a hill. But the Biblical Garden of Eden, not being on a hill, is slightly further off. Related to this complex of images is the "verdurous wall" enclosing the Garden in *Paradise Lost* (4.143). Many an enclosed garden, a *hortus conclusus* (see below), appears in medieval literature, with some resemblance to Eden—such as the ironic version appearing in Chaucer's "Merchant's Tale" and, at a further distance, the enclosed barnyard of "The Nun's Priest's Tale" into which a fox sneaks. (In the latter tale, the rooster is compared to Adam in Fragment 7, line 3258, and the fox to a fiend in line 3286.) The enclosed Garden of Love in the *Roman de la Rose* has been taken by one critic as an anti-type of the Garden of Eden (Robertson 42-47), but it certainly shares some of the same imagery.¹ The Latin words *hortus conclusus* appear in the Vulgate version of *The Song of Songs* (4.12; cf. Matter xxiv-xxv)—but that metaphoric use surely is at the outer edge of the imagistic complex. Not everything that will be discussed in this essay is based on Medieval or Renaissance works, for Lewis knew more than his professional areas, and some of the works mentioned above will not re-appear; but it is well to remember that Lewis was quite aware of the long and complex tradition behind his children's books.

The Dantean imagery should be established here, as the basis for later discussion. When Dante, Virgil, and Statius enter the Earthly Paradise at the end of Canto 27 of *Il Purgatorio*, they see grass, flowers, and thickets (27.134). Dante speaks of entering "La divine foresta" (28.2), and Dorothy L. Sayers comments in the notes to her translation that Dante refers to the Paradise as a forest exclusively, not as a garden (293). She suggests that Dante is deliberately contrasting this with the wood in which he, as a character, was astray at the beginning of *Il Inferno*. No doubt this is so, but Dante was also aware of the groves on tops of hills or mounds in Israel that were sacred. The Canaanite fertility sanctuaries condemned by the prophets

(e.g., Hosea 4.10-14, Jeremiah 2.20, and Ezekiel 6.3-7) would not seem an appropriate allusion (but in Dante lust has been purged, so the image might remain); however, there are a few sanctuaries of Israel that appear in “high places,” whether or not they have groves (such as that at Gibeon, referred to in I Kings 12.31, and an altar on a bluff at Ophrah, Judges 6.25-26). In Dante’s Eden, a breeze blows (*Purgatorio* 28.7-10). The birds in the trees in Paradise sing (28.14-18). A very clear stream is encountered (28.25-33). A lady, later identified as Matilda (in Italian, *Matelda*), appears, singing and picking red and yellow flowers (28.40-42, 57; 33.118). The stream is identified as one of two—Lethe and Eunoë—that run from a spring (28.121-32). Two allegorical pageants are presented; in the first a Gryphon appears, symbolizing Christ in His two natures (29.108; cf. 31.118-26), and a chariot pole (the Cross) is bound to a dead tree (the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, from the Genesis account), which then breaks into blossoms (32.49-60). Although this latter image is an allegory of redemption, it does include, at the literal level, the Tree in Eden. And, of course, Beatrice appears to Dante (30.31-39, 73), his “God-bearing Image,” as Sayers calls her (311), following Charles Williams (229).

The Dantean influence on Lewis, which will be developed in later sections, is hardly a new idea. For example, Marsha Daigle-Williamson entitled her dissertation *Dante’s Divine Comedy and the Fiction of C. S. Lewis*. She is concerned, in her chapter on the Narnian volumes, primarily with two books—*The Silver Chair* and *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*—and, so far as mountains go, only with that of the third section of this paper (Daigle, ch. 6). But the point remains that some of the sources in this essay are common knowledge among Lewis specialists, but others are new—and most of the applications, the author hopes, are fresh.

A cluster of images then: a garden (or perhaps a grove), with flowers, trees, and a spring, perhaps with birds, perhaps with a wall around it (though not in Dante), all set on top of a mountain. In this case, one may begin by opening the door to a wardrobe: in the distance is a green hill.

II. A Miltonic Garden on Top of a Hill

C. S. Lewis published his seven children’s books between 1950 and 1956. Six of them tell of magical journeys of children of this world into the fantasy land of Narnia; the seventh is laid wholly in the Narnian world. For the purpose of the second part of this paper, only the last two of the books are significant: *The Magician’s Nephew* (1955) and *The Last Battle* (1956).

The Magician's Nephew contains the story of the creation of Narnia, as it is sung into being by Aslan the lion, the Christ figure in these Narnian tales. What is significant here, however, is an incident that occurs after the creation of Narnia. Aslan sends a human boy—Digory Kirke—on a quest to the lands to the west:

'Now the land of Narnia ends where the waterfall comes down, and once you have reached the top of the cliff you will be out of Narnia and into the Western Wild. You must journey through those mountains till you find a green valley with a blue lake in it, walled round by mountains of ice. At the end of the lake there is a steep, green hill. On the top of that hill there is a garden. In the centre of that garden is a tree. Pluck an apple from that tree and bring it back to me.' (141)

In this episode of Digory Kirke's mission, Lewis employs a Garden of Eden temptation motif following the Narnian creation, just as the Garden of Eden story in Genesis 2 and 3 follows the creation story of Genesis 1. But this is Genesis with variations. Here the garden with a central apple tree is to the west, not the east; the fruit is identified as an apple, as tradition and Milton—not the Torah—have it (*Paradise Lost* 9.585); the surrounding icy mountains, the green valley, and the blue lake all seem to be Lewis's inventions, sounding slightly like something William Morris might have described. The clearest resemblance to Dante and Milton lies in locating the Garden of Eden, or its Narnian imitation, on top of a steep hill. At this point, with just a hill, this seems more like Milton's comparison to a "steep wilderness" (4.135) than it does Dante's mountain that extends beyond the earthly atmosphere. In his *Preface to Paradise Lost*, Lewis analyses the effect of height and steepness in Milton's description of Satan's first approach to that hill-top Eden (47-49, cf. *Paradise Lost* 4.131-79). Milton *does* call it a "mountain" at one point (4.226); but there is never any suggestion it extends beyond the limits of the Earth's air.

There is a later description in *The Magician's Nephew*, when Digory, his companion Polly Plummer, and Fledge (their mount) reach the hill. It is twice referred to as a "green hill" (153, 154), as it was in the earlier quotation. Dante's hill is green enough at the bottom, with the reeds on the shore (Canto 1) and with flowers and grass in the Valley of Rulers (Canto 7); but most of Dante's and Virgil's adventures on the mountain are above the earthly atmosphere, so the only plants which appear are supernaturally supported, including the Garden on the top. Milton's hill seems lower, with trees up close to the Garden (4.137-43)—a green hill, but with evergreen needles and other tree leaves rather than grass.

There is another difference from Dante in the fuller description which follows:

All round the very top of the hill ran a high wall of green turf. Inside the wall trees were growing. Their branches hung out over the wall: their leaves showed not only green but also blue and silver when the wind stirred them. When the travellers reached the top they walked nearly all the way round it outside the green wall before they found the gates: high gates of gold, fast shut, facing due east. (*Magician's* 155)

Unlike Dante's Edenic groves and meadows, which are walled with the flames of the Cornice of Lust only, Lewis's description seems to draw on the medieval *hortus conclusus* tradition, with its physical wall. No doubt Lewis had in mind again Milton's *Paradise Lost*, where the Garden of Eden is set on a plateau—the "champaign head" of the comparison (4.134)—with a "mound" or "verdurous wall" around it (4.134, 143), presumably an earthen wall covered with grass. Inside the low wall is "a circling row / Of goodliest trees" (4.146-47). The foot of the hill has thickets so dense that even Satan chooses not to go through them; and there is a gate and evidently a road through the thickets, the gate facing east (4.174-79). Merritt Y. Hughes suggests that the hill with the plateau was influenced by Dante (Hughes 280, n. on 4.132-35), but Milton's wall and gate are not Dantean.

Lewis makes two additions to the Miltonic greenness of the hill, the physical wall, and the eastern gate. Written in silver letters on the golden gates is a rhyme which Lewis says is "something like this":

Come in by the golden gates or not at all,
Take of my fruit for others or forbear.
For those who steal or those who climb the wall
Shall find their heart's [sic] desire and find despair. (*Magician's* 155)

Perhaps the use of such an inscription was suggested to Lewis by Dante's inscription over the first gate to Hell, but inscriptions are so common to romances that it hardly seems worthwhile to suggest a precise source.

Lewis's second addition is that on top of the tree of silver, luminous apples is "a wonderful bird [. . .] roosting.[. . .] It was larger than an eagle, its breast saffron, its head crested with scarlet, and its tail purple" (156, 158). The bird is not identified here, but in *The Last Battle* the bird is called the Phoenix (179). According to a Latin bestiary of the twelfth century, the Phoenix is named from the Latin word for its reddish-purple color (Cambridge University Library ms. II.4.26, translated in White 125); certainly Lewis's bird, with its orange breast, red crest, and purple

tail, is reddish-purple enough. The Phoenix is a traditional symbol of Christ (White 126), its rebirth from fire being analogous to Jesus' resurrection. In Lewis's story it may function as a means of grace, perhaps giving Digory the power to resist the temptation to take a second apple and eat it. There is at least an intellectual parallel to *Il Purgatorio* here, in the fact that Dante meets Beatrice, what Charles Williams calls his God-bearer (29, 184), on top of the mountain; Digory also meets a God-bearer—that is, he meets a traditional symbol for Jesus, the Phoenix—a God-bearing image he does not recognize but one whose power he partially feels.²

What tree does Digory find in the center of the garden? Most readers will think of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, from which Eve picked a fruit in the Genesis account. But there were two trees in the Bible: the other was the Tree of Life, whose fruit gave immortality (Genesis 2.9, 3.22). D. W. Robertson, Jr., observes that a "tree [. . .] occupies a very important position in the story of the Fall, which involves the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil; and the Redemption involves another tree, the Tree of Life, or the Cross" (23). This suggests the Tree of Life becomes recast in thematic ways in later writing. In Dante's first pageant, the Chariot-pole, meaning the Cross, has been made from wood from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil (32.51)—not from the Tree of Life, as Robertson suggests is more common in the medieval discussions—but, nonetheless, the Cross bestows life on the Tree of Knowledge. In Lewis's version of the image, the tree itself, as a reader attempts to identify it, seems almost to blend the two Biblical trees. The use of apples on the tree suggests it is the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil; the Witch, as will be discussed below, says that the apples give eternal life, which suggests the Tree of Life. A very theological reading, such as Robertson offers in his essay, would identify the tree with its Phoenix as the cross bearing Christ—whether one believes the cross was made of the Tree of Knowledge (Dante) or the Tree of Life (Robertson's summary).

Robertson continues the above passage with these words:

In the Middle Ages, the very important position of these [two] trees in Biblical narrative gave rise to an enormous complex of associations. Any tree may be considered as an aspect of one of the trees just mentioned, or as a transitional growth between the two extremes. (23)

A possible blended understanding has already been suggested for Lewis's tree. And, as said, the presence of the Witch in the garden in *The Magician's Nephew* complicates the above interpretation. She calls the apple from the central tree "the apple of

youth[,] the apple of life" (159). Thus far, the reference fits the Tree of Life, but she has eaten an apple—not "for others," as the rhyme has it, but for eternal life for herself (158-59), and the effect on her is much like the fall of Adam and Eve but without repentance, a type of psychological misery (173). Thus, the tree (misused) is like the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil also. In *Paradise Lost*, the Tree of Life is the "middle tree" (4.195), so Lewis's placement of the tree in the center supports its being the Tree of Life (cf. *Magician's* 156; *Last* 179).

The situation becomes more complicated as one considers Digory's reactions. He picks a silvery apple, but its appearance and its attractive odor tempt him to pick another, to eat, against the command on the gate (*Magician's* 156). Perhaps the Phoenix's watching him keeps him from picking another; perhaps he would have resisted by himself—Lewis leaves the question unsettled (158). So far this reads like the Genesis account, with a *deus ex machina*—or a god in a tree, at least—but then the Witch (equivalent to the serpent of Genesis, no doubt) offers two more temptations.

The Witch suggests to Digory two reasons to eat a fruit: first, he will live forever and rule, with her, Narnia or the Earth (159); second, he can take an apple back to Earth and cure his mother's illness (159-60). The first two temptations which Digory undergoes seem to be based on Satan's first two temptations of Christ in the wilderness: (a) the temptation to turn stones into bread is related to Digory's temptation before the Witch appeared (Matthew 4.3-4); (b) the temptation to rule the kingdoms of the world is equivalent to the Witch's offer of rule (Matthew 4.5-8).

Above, *The Last Battle* was used to identify the bird in the tree as the Phoenix; this is appropriate, since the green hill in that book is a version of the image just considered. In the last chapter of *The Last Battle*, the protagonists have died and are in a new Narnia, an ideal Narnia in Platonic terms, equivalent to the New Earth promised in Revelation. They run, to the cry "Further up and further in," to the west, "till at last at the far end of one long lake which looked as blue as a turquoise, they saw a smooth green hill. Its sides were as steep as the sides of a pyramid and round the very top of it ran a green wall: but above the wall rose the branches of trees whose leaves looked like silver and their fruit like gold" (176). This fruit color is a change from the silver fruit of *The Magician's Nephew*. The text continues: "Though the slope was nearly as steep as the roof of a house and the grass was smooth as a bowling green, no one slipped. Only when they had reached the very top did they slow up; that was because they found themselves facing great

golden gates" (176). The protagonists are invited in by a Narnian who had disappeared on a quest several books earlier; they greet other characters from the earlier books. Three more passages need quotation, the first occurring just after the protagonists enter through the golden gates:

all of them passed [. . .] into the delicious smell that blew toward them out of that garden and into the cool mixture of sunlight and shadow under the trees, walking on springy turf that was all dotted with white flowers. The very first thing which struck everyone was that the place was far larger than it had seemed from outside. (179)

Dante mentions the fragrance of his Garden towards the beginning of Canto 28 of *Il Purgatorio* (28.6). He does not mention white flowers, although Marilda picks red and yellow flowers in the Garden (28.40-42, 55-56); perhaps Lewis's white flowers are there to suggest the purity of the Garden in the new Narnia. (If one moves out of *Il Purgatorio*, these white flowers may echo the white rose—"candida rosa"—of Dante's *Il Paradiso* 31.1, for that is a symbol of Heaven, and the children and others are here in the Narnian equivalent of Heaven.)³

However that may be, the hint about the size of the Garden is an important parallel also to *Il Paradiso*. Lewis suggests what Dante said of his cosmos, that the true relationship in sizes is reversed. As one of Lewis's characters says to another, "I see [. . .] world within world, Narnia within Narnia[. . .]" "Yes," the other replies, "like an onion: except that as you go in and in, each circle is larger than the last" (*Last Battle* 181). Dante's description in *Il Paradiso* of angels—the Intelligences of the spheres—circling God (Canto 28) does not make the inside of something larger than the outside; but it does suggest an inversion of what had been experienced to that point: God is not only outside of the Heavens, beyond the stars, but He is also the center of the universe, the point about which everything revolves. In short, Lewis's Garden, like Dante's solar system and stars, is ultimately paradoxical.

The protagonists reach the center of the Garden in *The Last Battle*, where "the Phoenix sat in a tree" (179); beneath the tree are two thrones, with King Frank and Queen Helen on them, the Adam and Eve of Narnia. This is the Garden of Eden motif, indeed, which Lewis makes quite explicit: "And Tirian felt as you would feel if you were brought before Adam and Eve in all their glory" (180). Here, in the new Narnia, the redeemed Adam and Eve welcome their descendants, their animal and mythological subjects, and the visitors to Narnia from Earth. This is more Miltonic than Dantean, of course, as the imagery of the green hill has promised; after all Dante does not put his Adam and Eve in his Paradisal forest: they appear

in *Il Paradiso*.⁴ Lewis's depiction of Frank and Helen, the Adam and Eve of his Narnia, sitting on thrones beneath the tree with the Phoenix, has an indirect Miltonic connection. Lewis, in *A Preface to Paradise Lost* (113-14), imagined how people would make a pilgrimage once in a lifetime to meet Adam in the Garden if he had not sinned and so become mortal; here Lewis places the hypothetical Miltonic episode in the next life.

The third passage which needs quotation is the most significant Dantean passage. Two of the characters in the new Narnia—Mr. Tumnus the Faun and Lucy Pevensie—whose conversation about the inverted size of the new Narnia has been quoted, are together at the low garden wall, and look over it at the green hill they easily climbed: "it sank down in shining cliffs thousands of feet below them and trees in that lower world looked no bigger than grains of green salt" (*Last Battle* 180). That is, as in the inverted size, things are not what they first appear. Probably the characters could easily climb the hillside earlier because they were saved, in Christian terms, but seen truly, seen from the inside, the "hillside" is revealed to be a formidable barrier to reaching the garden—more like climbing Mount Everest than a green hill. Love does things easily that without love cannot be done at all. *Perhaps* this is what Lewis suggests; all he offers is the image, leaving the interpretation to the reader. What is certain is that this mountain with "shining cliffs" is less like Milton's green hill and more like Dante's rock mountain.

This consideration of the green hill to the west of Narnia and to the west in the new Narnia has found it mainly Miltonic in its imagery, but sometimes Biblical and sometimes Dantean. However far from Dante's *Il Purgatorio* one wishes to place it in the fuzzy set, its relationship to its fellow works is clear.

III. A Spenserian Pool

One common characteristic of the above set of images has not been considered. The Bible mentions that a "river flowed from Eden to water the garden," before splitting into four rivers (Genesis 2.10). This seems to be the source of the spring that produces water in the later works. In *Il Purgatorio* it is "*una fontana*" whose waters split to produce Lethe and Eunoë (33.113); Dorothy L. Sayers translates "*una fontana*" as "one well-head" (334). In Milton, Dante's term is echoed, when "a fresh fountain" arises in the Garden (4.229), a "sapphire fount" (4.237)—although Milton has as the source of the fountain a river that flowed to the hill which supports the garden (4.223-32)—thus including the Bible's river also. Lewis mentions that "Even the fountain which rose near the middle of the garden made only the faintest

sound" (*Magician's* 156). (Pauline Baynes, in her illustration on the facing page, interprets this image as a fountain that sprays up, not just a spring [157].) Milton is probably Lewis's imagistic source for this placement, for Milton mentions that there is "a Fountain by the Tree of Life" (*Paradise Lost* 9.73).

This discussion is preparatory to considering the sixth and seventh chapters of *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader* (1952). In these chapters, a boy from Earth named Eustace Scrubb has gotten himself turned into a dragon in Narnia. The significant passage occurs when he is changed back into a boy. A lion comes to him in the night and leads him into the mountains. As he later tells it,

"So at last we came to the top of a mountain I'd never seen before and on the top of this mountain there was a garden—trees and fruit and everything. In the middle of it there was a well.

"I knew it was a well because you could see the water bubbling up from the bottom of it: but it was a lot bigger than most wells—like a very big, round bath with marble steps going down into it. The water was as clear as anything [. . .]" (101)

At this point, he is stripped of his dragon skin (several layers of it, stripped off one at a time) and bathed in the well, thus returning to the form of a boy.

Obviously, the garden on top of a mountain (not a hill this time) may be like Dante's or Milton's Edens, but it is the other details which are interesting. Eustace says that his experience with the lion may have been a dream (100, 103), although Edmund says it cannot have been one for he is wearing new clothes and he has been returned to his human form (103). This experience—at moments dreamlike, for Eustace cannot remember how he was dressed or how he was returned to the coast where the other voyagers are (103)—may, in its ambiguities, remind a reader that *The Divine Comedy*, technically a dream vision, is unlike other medieval dream visions, whether erotic or religious, for it does not have an opening in which the narrator falls asleep or a conclusion in which he wakes up: both of these accounts offer visionary experiences that avoid the easy dream vision formulas.

Second, the well is most obviously an image of baptism, the putting off of the Old Adam—the dragon nature—and being regenerate through immersion. But where does the image of the well come from, and why does Lewis put it in the center of a garden? Perhaps the place to start is with the fact that *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader* was written at least two years and perhaps as many as four years before either of the garden episodes in the *The Magician's Nephew* and *The Last Battle*.⁵ Thus, Lewis could put a well into the center of the garden in *The Voyage of*

the Dawn Treader because the image in the other two books of a central tree with a Phoenix in it had not yet been written. Of course, the contrary statement does not hold: Lewis had to be aware of the image of a central well in *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader* when he wrote *The Magician's Nephew* and *The Last Battle*. The idea behind these images is the same. Lewis is putting a garden with a spring on a "high place," as Dante and Milton had done.

The details of this well were given in Eustace's description. The bubbling up of the water from the bottom suggests a spring-fed well or pool. Although Lewis may have been influenced by a description of some Roman or Near Eastern mineral spring with steps down to it—the detail of the marble steps and use of the word *bath* suggest this—there is also the climactic well in William Morris's *The Well at the World's End*; Morris describes some steps cut in stone down a cliff at the seashore, and water comes from a spring into a man-made pool about seven-feet deep, with the overflow going into the sea. Morris's hero and heroine, however, do not bathe in the pool but just drink of it, gaining long lives (Bk. 3, Ch. 21). They do, afterwards, skinny-dip in the sea (Ch. 22), but not with baptismal intent.⁶ More in the tradition of Dante is J. R. R. Tolkien's "Leaf by Niggle," wherein a spring occurs in a rural landscape:

[Niggle and Parish] found the Spring in the heart of the Forest; only once long ago had Niggle imagined it, but he had never drawn it. Now he perceived that it was the source of the lake that glimmered, far away[,] and the nourishment of all that grew in the country. The few drops [from their tonics] made the water astringent, rather bitter, but invigorating; and it cleared the head. (88)

To fully explicate this passage would take this paper away from its topic, but the purgatorial setting (in the context of the story), the Forest—or garden—form of it (86), the significant Tree (85), and the Spring in the heart (center?) of the Forest all indicate a placement of Tolkien's work not too far from *Il Purgatorio* in the fuzzy set.⁷

In addition to these two examples written within sixty years of Lewis's books, Dante's crossing of Lethe involves immersion, although it is not a baptism. Marsha Daigle-Williamson, in her dissertation, emphasizes this last parallel when she writes, "just as a heavenly agent (Mathilda [*sic*]) immerses Dante's pilgrim in the water atop the Mount, so a heavenly agent (Aslan) immerses Eustace in the water atop this Mountain" (Daigle 203). Milton's fountain is further from Lewis's images, since Satan enters the Garden through it for his second entrance (9.69-76). The

best comparison with Lewis's well is, however, none of the foregoing. It is the "springing well, / From which fast trickled forth a silver flood, / Full of great vertues, and for med'cine good"—in short, "The well of life"—in which the Red-Crosse Knight falls after his first day of battle with the dragon in Book 1 of Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* (1.11.29.3-5, 9). Spenser's well is like Lewis's in that it is regenerative, it is symbolic of baptism, and it is involved with the overcoming of a dragon. Further, one of Spenser's comparisons to his well is "th'English *Bath*" which may have suggested the Roman baths to Lewis. This image ties back into Dante and Milton, however, since the Red-Crosse Knight is fighting the dragon to free Eden (1.12.26.1).⁸ At any rate, Lewis seems to be again taking traditional imagery—the immersion as in Dante and the *Didache*, the garden on a mountain as in Dante and Milton, perhaps the idea of a far-off well as in Morris, and the Roman bath with regenerative powers as in Spenser, in addition to the general matter of dragons and of Eden again—and modifying it for his purpose.

However, this discussion of *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader* has been closely focused on the *fontana* and the mountain pool. More generally, a Dantean parallel can be said to emerge. The Narnian and human adventurers sail to an island, as Dante's Mount Purgatory is on an island. There Eustace undergoes a purification of his character, being changed into a dragon and eventually stripped of his dragon skin, as Dante's characters on the mountain undergo various types of appropriate purification practices, according to their sins.⁹ Finally, Eustace and Dante are freed from their sins in somewhat different senses by their immersions. Thereafter, Eustace is a better boy and Dante (the character) ascends to Heaven. This larger picture shows a pattern of Dantean imagery most clearly (cf. Daigle 200-04)—and reaffirms again that Dante is the center, for Lewis, of this set of images.

IV. The Dantean Mountain of Aslan

Outside of the Narnian world proper lies another mountain, or mountain range, which needs to be included with these analogues of Mount Purgatory and Milton's Edenic hill. The image is first established at the end of *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*. In this book a group of Narnians, joined by three children from Earth (including Eustace), sail the Great Eastern Ocean until they reach the far edge of the flat Narnian world (208); there the few who travel furthest perceive "Aslan's country" on the other side of the rising sun (219):

What they saw—eastward, beyond the sun—was a range of mountains. It was so high that either they never saw the top of it or they forgot it. None of them remembers seeing any sky in that direction. And the mountains must really have been outside the world. For any mountains even a quarter or a twentieth of that height ought to have had ice and snow on them. But these were warm and green and full of forests and waterfalls however high you looked. (218)

This vision of the mountains fades as the sun rises, and all the children then perceive is the blue sky behind the sun (219).

The literalist will deny there is any connection between the garden-topped hill of the Western Wild or the mountain of Dragon Island and the great mountains. East and far West do not meet—at least, not on a flat world.¹⁰ But the student of imagery can make a case for similarity, if not equivalency. That is, there is another flat-topped mountain among these great mountains which is at least as much like the green hill in the Western Wild as the mountain of Eustace's "purgation" experience is and which suggests Dantean imagery again.

The approach to this identification will, however, take an intermediate step. What does the range of the mountains beyond the edge of the world have to do with Dante's Mount Purgatory, here announced? In *The Last Battle*, in an episode immediately after the discussion of inverse onion layers, Lucy Pevensie, with some type of spiritual sight, looks around the new Narnia:

[. . .] far out to sea she could discover the islands, island after island to the end of the world, and, beyond the end, the huge mountain which they had called Aslan's country. But now she saw that it was part of a great chain of mountains which ringed round the whole world. In front of her it seemed to come quite close" (181)

The "they" who called the huge mountain "Aslan's country" were those on board the *Dawn Treader*, including Lucy, who journeyed to the end of the world. What Lewis seems to have forgotten, however, is that they saw a mountain range, not a single mountain. His imaginative picture seems to have shifted to accommodate his description in *The Silver Chair* (1953), which will be quoted below. However, in this apocalyptic vision by Lucy, what is interesting is how both the green hill of the Western Wild and the mountain(s) at the east become part of the encircling mountain chain; this is probably what Lewis intended by saying the mountain chain came "quite close" to the green hill. In *The Magician's Nephew*, the green hill was surrounded by mountains; here, in *The Last Battle*, with the corresponding hill

in the new Narnia grown into a mountain, it still has mountains around it—or at least east of it.

There is, however, a difference between the eastern mountains and the western mountains. The eastern mountains, at the end of *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*, were described as green as high as one looks. But a reader may consider Digory Kirke's vision of the west in *The Magician's Nephew* as he describes it before he journeys to the green hill:

And beyond the cliff [where the country of Narnia ends] there are high green hills with forests. And beyond those there are higher ranges that look almost black. And then far, far away, there are big snowy mountains all heaped up together—like pictures of the Alps. And behind those there's nothing but the sky. (140–41)

Presumably the mountains with nothing but sky behind them are at the western edge (or possibly beyond it) of the Narnian world. That Aslan replies that the journey to the green hill will take Digory to “a green valley . . . walled round by mountains of ice” indicates that the green hill is in the midst of the furthest range of mountains (*Magician's* 141). Why the mountains to the west have ice on them and those to the east do not is unknown, though it probably is just an inconsistency between two texts written years apart.

In other words, the flat Narnian world—most clearly in its archetypal or redeemed version in Lucy's vision in *The Last Battle*—is encircled by mountains, at least two of which are identified as spiritual realms, those two at the extreme east and near the extreme west. Surely it is not absurd to assume that all of the mountains are Aslan's realm; that, in a simple symbol, their more-than-Alpine heights stand for spiritual heights; that their encirclement of Narnia symbolizes an ultimate surrounding of life by God's grace? “I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills,” says the Psalmist, and asks, “From whence cometh my help?” (Ps. 121.1).¹¹ In Narnia, the answer seems to have been: from the hills, from the mountains. In *The Last Battle*, after the reunions on the green hill, the characters begin to move west again.

[. . .] they found themselves all walking together [. . .] up towards mountains higher than you could see in this world even if they were there to be seen. But there was no snow on those mountains: there were forests and green slopes and sweet orchards and flashing waterfalls, one above the other, going up for ever. [. . .]

[. . .] Lucy saw that a great series of many-coloured cliffs led up in front of them like a giant's staircase. And then she forgot everything else, because Aslan himself was coming, leaping down from cliff to cliff like a living cataract of power and beauty. (182–83)

This passage removes the ice from the mountains to the west that they had in *The Magician's Nephew*; more significantly, it shows, if not divine aid, then divine love descending from the mountains.

The great mountain to the east of Narnia is described in the first two and the last chapters of *The Silver Chair*. When Eustace Scrubb and Jill Pole are called into Narnia, they find themselves “on the Mountain of Aslan, high up above and beyond the end of that world in which Narnia lies” (212). It seems to be a flat-topped mountain; certainly the part the children are on is level, and they look down from it, without having to look over any wall, of grass turf or otherwise; Lewis writes,

[. . .] no cliff in our world is to be compared with this. Imagine yourself at the top of the very highest cliff you know. And imagine yourself looking down to the very bottom. And then imagine that the precipice goes on below that, as far again, ten times as far, twenty times as far. And when you've looked down all that distance imagine little white things that might, at first glance, be mistaken for sheep, but presently you realize that they are clouds—not little wreaths but enormous white, puffy clouds which are themselves as big as most mountains. And at last, in between those clouds, you get your first glimpse of the real bottom, so far away that you can't make out whether it's field or wood, or land or water: further below those clouds than you are above them. (21)

This is clearly a higher mountain than that in the new Narnia from which trees looked like grains of green salt. Possibly Aslan's Mountain is properly higher than the equivalent of the Garden of Eden, for, after all, Dante's Mount Purgatory with its Garden only reached to the bottom of Heaven, below the Spheres, while God dwelt beyond the stars. But Lewis may have not been that thematic; in the passage quoted above, when Lucy looks at the mountain chain in the new Narnia, a huge contrast between Aslan's Mountain and the rest of the chain is not made clear. These mountains seem to adjust their heights to the purpose at the moment. They are spiritual truths, not physical geology.

The description in *The Silver Chair* of the mountain top includes sunlight, smooth grass, blue sky (19), tall cedar-like trees growing separately, varicolored birds singing as they fly (20), and one stream (27). In the first thirty lines of Canto 28 in *Il Purgatorio*, Dante mentions the sunlight; the meadows and trees; the perched (not flying) singing birds; a stream which Dante, the character, comes upon (although, as has been said, there turn out to be two streams); and a comparison to a pinewood. In short, the descriptions of the top of Aslan's Mountain and Dante's Garden of Eden are very similar.

The stream is the interesting variant in the setting. Dante uses his two streams—Lethe and Eunoë—for the final elimination of spiritual corruption from the mind. Jill Pole, however, comes to a stream (*Silver* 24-28) that, in a general way, seems to represent the “living water” which Jesus discusses with the Samaritan woman (John 4.7-15). Jill comes to this solitary stream of which she must drink or die, but she must approach it with Aslan there. After she is brave enough to drink of it and be refreshed (or renewed), she is given some commands to follow. Most generally, the stream on Aslan’s Mountain seems to offer a spiritual strengthening. It also could be taken as an odd type of baptism by drinking: Jill now begins her life of service to Aslan/Christ.

But Lewis does something else with the stream at the end of the book. Like Dante, this latter passage touches the regeneration of the dead. In the story, Caspian had died just before Jill Pole and Eustace Scrubb are returned by Aslan to his Mountain: “[. . .] the children looked into the stream. And there, on the golden gravel of the bed of the stream, lay King Caspian, dead, with the water flowing over him like liquid glass. His long white beard swayed in it like water-weed” (212). Slightly later, Eustace, on Aslan’s command, drives a thorn (from a first-time-mentioned thicket) into Aslan’s paw; one drop of blood falls into the stream; and Caspian is resurrected, with the appearance of youth (212-13). Perhaps, in terms of Dantean imagery, this scene depicts not the purging of sins on Mount Purgatory but the release from them, by God’s grace, and the achieving of the Garden. The imagery certainly depicts being saved (in one sense or another) by the blood of Aslan/Christ.

Lewis may have been influenced in this scene by the final Angel’s song in John Henry Newman’s “The Dream of Gerontius” (1865), which uses water imagery in its first two stanzas:

Softly and gently, dearly-ransomed soul,
 In my most loving arms I now enfold thee,
 And, o’er the penal waters, as they roll,
 I poise thee, and I lower thee, and hold thee.
 And carefully I dip thee in the lake,
 And thou, without a sob or a resistance,
 Dost through the blood thy rapid passage take,
 Sinking deep, deeper, into the dim distance.

Newman had earlier made it clear that this was an image of Purgatory (1. 879), as *penal* of “the penal waters” implies here; the last two stanzas of the Angel’s song promise a continued care and an eventual waking of the soul. Since Lewis elsewhere said that he believed in Purgatory, with praise for Dante’s and Newman’s versions (*Letters to Malcolm* 108), it is appropriate that Newman’s purgatorial image of the soul in water and blood and Dante’s climactic image of the Garden on top of Mount Purgatory should come together on Aslan’s Mountain in the quickening of the dead Caspian.

V. A Delight in Allusive Images

This survey of the imagery in Dante’s *Il Purgatorio*, Milton’s *Paradise Lost*, and other works that belong to the same fuzzy set shows that many of these images are paralleled in the Chronicles of Narnia. But, the reader may ask, what is the significance of these parallels for Lewis and the reader? To that question I offer two conclusions: one about Lewis’s theory of literary creativity, and one which focuses on the Narnian readership—how does a work of literature impress the varied readers in its audience?

Many things could be said about Lewis’s critical theories, about his choice of the fairytale form, about his writing from mental images. But perhaps most revealing is an early paper, written after Lewis’s conversion in 1931 as an address to “a religious society at Oxford” (181) and published in *Rehabilitations and Other Essays* in 1939. This essay is “Christianity and Literature.”

“Christianity and Literature” provides us with a valuable insight to Lewis’s approach to literature. He says that he finds a contradiction in attitude between the New Testament and modern critical theory. The New Testament tells the Christian to imitate Jesus, just as Jesus one time says he does nothing but what he sees the Father doing (John 5.19). Lewis finds an emphasis on imitation in the New Testament, but he finds an emphasis on originality and self-expression in modern critical theory (187-92). Lewis admits a Christian may have to write out of his own temperament—religious confessions, such as St. Augustine’s, are no doubt of this type—but, Lewis says, “if [a Christian’s] talents are such that he can produce good work by writing in an established form and dealing with experiences common to all his race, he will do so just as gladly. I even think he will do so more gladly” (195).

In the Chronicles of Narnia, Lewis is certainly writing in an established form, that of the fairy tale (in that term’s wider sense) or a child’s version of the prose

romance. Charles Huttar has argued—correctly, I believe—that the Chronicles are also like a Bible, running from creation (Genesis and *The Magician's Nephew*) to doomsday (Revelation and *The Last Battle*). But the established form that Lewis sought can also show itself in smaller aspects of the work: the Dantean touches, specifically here of *Il Purgatorio*, show Lewis using traditional imagery in a traditional way. If not an established form *per se*, these images nonetheless show an established type of artistry.¹²

An example may support the quotation from Lewis's essay. The purging of an evil self that Eustace undergoes is, no doubt, an experience "common to [many in] his race," the human race. There are many self-help books that tell how one may change one's bad habits, whether overeating or not controlling one's temper or whatever; the tale of Eustace suggests the process of changing is far more painful than reading a book—but the point is that Lewis is writing of an event common enough to human beings to be widely understood, and that he is writing about it using traditional images—a dragon and a pool. Certainly these are not typical of the self-help books—the former belong more clearly to the romance tradition—but the *exemplum* form is. A similar sort of argument can be made for the other parallels to *Il Purgatorio* and *Paradise Lost* in Lewis's books, for the image of a garden (or of a grove) and the image of a mountaintop, as was suggested earlier, are ancient symbols of holy places—and many humans seek holy places of one type or another.¹³ Streams and walled gardens also have their traditions—and their applications to human nature.

Thus, Lewis's works are not just filled with images as a type of personal game by the author—"See if you can recognize this," "See how recondite I can be"; the approach to literary art is part of a deliberate aesthetic. One need not argue that Lewis is right in his New Testament understanding in order to allow that his imitative approach is defensible within his terms.

What about Lewis's reader, however, who may not have read "Christianity and Literature"? What type of effects are Lewis's traditional images in his Chronicles of Narnia likely to have on such a reader?

This essay will set up hypothetical readers as its answer to this question. As said, this is not as certain as Lewis's Christian aesthetic, since he wrote an essay on it; but nevertheless the hypothetical readers will be useful for what they reveal.

First, let me posit a reader who is highly aware of, and responsive to, the organization of what he or she reads. Perhaps this reader will be aware of a certain type of framing order: the first book and the last book, in terms of the internal

chronology of Narnia, have valleys, lakes, green hills, walled gardens, eastern gates, central trees with a Phoenix in them. *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader* does not set up another example of a garden on a mountain in the middle of the series, for that book is the fifth of the seven (again, in their chronological order), not the true center, which is the fourth. If, however, *The Silver Chair* is added for its imagery of a mountaintop, then the traditional images considered here appear in the first, fifth, sixth, and seventh volumes. One could argue for an opening motif and a climactic emphasis—and certainly this may be the way the allusions will strike a reader.¹⁴

These sequences are of aesthetic interest, but these awarenesses of structure are not likely to be most readers' first reactions, which may well come from an individual image in a single book, not the series of images. A biographically-inclined reader might well notice the green hill, for example, and think simply that Lewis knew Milton—and that he was the type of author who delights in imitating and adding to a literary tradition. This is obviously true; and it ties to Lewis's comment in his autobiography that, when he came to read the *Iliad*, he liked it partly because he had already read and enjoyed Matthew Arnold's "Sohrab and Rustum" (*Surprised by Joy* 56)—Arnold had added to the tradition, although Lewis discovered the works in a non-historical sequence. Thus, the reader for biographical background will find the images of the hills to be important for what they suggest about Lewis's sensibility.

For another type of reader—one who is concerned with children's literature—a Biblical or Spenserian parallel, for example, adds to the texture of the fiction, so to speak, not with a change of the usually simple style but with a culturally enhanced image which enlarges the significance of the romantic plot in which it figures. Lewis himself suggests something like this in *Spenser's Images of Life*, both in his discussion of Spenser's use of iconographic symbols and in his chapter "Faceless Knights" that discusses literary works in which characterization is not greatly significant. Does it make a difference that Eustace is changed from a dragon back to a boy in a pool on a mountain top rather than one in a valley or on a plain? Surely the effect on the reader is somewhat different, whether or not he or she recognizes the allusion.

Fourth, a moralistic reader may be attracted to these books. The account of Eustace has an obvious moral; Jill's need to drink of the stream on the top of Aslan's mountain and her being given a task once she has refreshed herself can be easily moralized; Digory's avoidance of picking a second apple for himself to eat is

a neat contrast to the Adam and Eve story; even the meeting with Frank and Helen in *The Last Battle* can be said to mean “Honor your ancestors,” *ancestors* in a spiritual sense for the various types of Narnians. These fairly obvious morals vary in their traditional imagery, as has been said: Eustace’s immersion is somewhat like Dante’s; Jill’s stream may be like Dante’s, but she only drinks from it and is not immersed in it; Digory goes into a Miltonesque garden on top of a hill, and Frank and Helen are found in a version of the same garden on a same hill—or mountaintop. The morals are based on the characters’ actions; the settings are, to use one adjective for all those that have been considered, Dantean.

Finally—not of all possible readers, but of those discussed here—one may consider a child who has these books read to him or her, or the young teenager who reads and enjoys them: such settings become an indirect preparation for his or her later reading of Milton or Dante. He or she is like Lewis going from Arnold to Homer. Later, such a reader will find the Garden on the Hill to be, of course, appropriate, for the reader has “always known” that that was where it was. Again, in “Sometimes Fairy Stories May Say Best What’s to be Said,” Lewis writes that he thought his Narnian books would avoid a type of pre-conditioned response children had to Jesus and certain religious topics by allowing children to experience them freshly and imaginatively (37). What he did not think to say is that his type of allusive writing also prepares children for their later reading of other literature. Will not *Il Purgatorio*, for such a child when he or she has grown up, carry a nearly forgotten delight from childhood? Lewis, in describing his reaction to Homer after reading Arnold, drives his point with a quotation applied to traditional literature: “[O]gni parte ad ogni parte splende” (*Surprised* 57). The quotation is from Dante—from *L’Inferno* (7.75), not *Il Purgatorio*—Lewis’s “favourite poet.”

Appendix

Michael Murrin’s “Dialectic”

An essay by Michael Murrin, “The Dialectic of Multiple Worlds” (1982), discusses Lewis’s mountains (95-97). Murrin points to the end of *The Last Battle* and writes:

Then the children become aware of a new geometric pattern. They perceive that the peak which they call Aslan’s country is the center, while the separate worlds are necks of land which become narrower and closer to each other, as the children approach the great peak. [. . .] The new geometry presupposes a single high mountain, a center point to lower mountain ranges, which radiate from it as do spokes from the hub of a wheel. (96)

He accompanies this with a diagram of a central mountain, with Narnia and the garden to its left on a spoke, and England to the lower left on another. Some of the details do not seem to make sense: why are “mountain ranges” put to the lower right? As indicated below, Mr. Tumnus seems to think of a mountain range as Aslan’s country. Further, the illustration may have been somehow reversed, for in the story the children journey to the west (that is, on the map, to the left) from new Narnia to the garden. Here they would have to go to the east (to the right). This whole approach, with a central mountain seen from various directions by the children in various stories, is attractive to the mind, but it does not seem to fit Lewis’s intention. He has Mr. Tumnus say of the new England and the new Narnia: “That country and this country—all the *real* countries—are only spurs jutting out from the great mountains of Aslan. We have only to walk along the ridge, upward and inward, till it joins on” (*Last Battle* 182). Murrin is right to draw the English and Narnian ridges as coming together; but since Lucy has been looking back at the new Narnia when she sees England to her left, this implies it is north of her (if one uses the book’s directions of Narnia and the garden). Further, Mr. Tumnus uses the plural “mountains of Aslan,” not the singular. If there is one central mountain, Mr. Tumnus, who has been in the new Narnia for some years (if years have meaning there), has not discovered it. In short, it seems to be Murrin’s ingenuity, not Lewis’s. (The original English edition from Geoffrey Bles and the original American edition from Macmillan have been checked on the plural of *mountains*.)

One suspects that Murrin has made two basic errors: (1) he has identified the Mountain of Aslan (to the east) with the hill/mountain with the Phoenix (to the west), which explains why he has the children journeying the wrong direction (to the east) in his diagram; (2) he has assumed Lucy and Tumnus’s vision of the green hill as Mount Purgatory is literally (not just spiritually and paradoxically) true, and thus there is one taller mountain than all the rest; but the green hill from the outside never resembles a mountain—from the inside of its garden it is larger than it is from the outside. To be Dantean, a third possibility is that he is using Dante’s scheme of God outside of the universe in the *Paradiso* vision: the mountain(s) on the outer edge(s) of the Narnian world is (are) really the center of the world. Unfortunately, Lewis does not say so and does not describe such a vision. However Murrin’s confusion over the paradox occurred, it is unfortunate, for his essay was originally published in a major journal for Lewis studies and has been reprinted in a scholarly anthology—it is likely to have influences that its confusions do not deserve.

Acknowledgments

The checking of the American edition of *The Last Battle* for the reference in the Appendix was done by Marie E. Benware, then Assistant Archivist of the Marion E. Wade Center. Barbara Reynolds answered a last-minute question about the originality of Dante's garden on a mountain (cf. note 13). Marsha Daigle-Williamson read the first complete version of this paper and made a number of valuable suggestions—most of which were adopted in a revision.

Notes

- ¹ Lewis's knowledge of the *Roman de la Rose* is shown in the third chapter of *The Allegory of Love*. He describes the scene of Guillaume de Lorris's section of the poem this way:

the scene is 'at first, a river bank outside a walled garden; later the interior of the garden; and later still, a rose-plot surrounded by a hedge inside the larger garden'. [. . .] It is the same garden which we have met in Andreas and, before him, in Claudian. In some writers it means love; in Guillaume it is changed slightly and made to mean the life of the court, considered as the necessary sphere or field for love's operation. (119)

In the Narnian works, the erotic emphasis is not appropriate—but the imagery is part of the cluster.

- ² Lewis's use of the bestiary for this Phoenix may be compared to Dante's use of the Gryphon to pull the chariot in the pageant on top of Mount Purgatory (Canto 29). The Gryphon is, as Dorothy L. Sayers writes, both classical and heraldic (305); but, more to the point here, it also appears in the bestiary (White 22-24, as *Griffin*). Both the Phoenix and the two-natured Gryphon (in Dante, not in the bestiary) are symbols of Christ, in addition to the main symbols of Christ in the two works at this point—Aslan and (in a special sense as a God-bearing image) Beatrice.
- ³ If one were expecting rigid parallels to Dante, the appearance of a Mount Purgatory image inside of the image of Heaven (new Narnia) would be absurd; but, as Lewis handles the images, the garden on top of the mountain simply becomes a meeting place for the newcomers to Heaven to encounter those who have died earlier—the parallel to Dante is obvious, although the technical placement of the mountain is different. Another use of white flowers that has been compared to Dante's Rose is the Silver Sea's water-lily-like flowers (Ch. 16 of *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*; cf. Thomas 48 and Daigle 210-11).
- ⁴ Cf. Canto 26, for a meeting with Adam, and Canto 32 where both Adam and Eve are listed as being in the Celestial Rose.
- ⁵ The argument for this is more complicated than merely noting when the books were published. A person who checks Paul Ford's chart of when the Narnian books were

written, in his *Companion to Narnia* (4th ed., 451) will find that *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader* was begun in the fall of 1949 and finished in the winter of 1950. (Winter, in Ford's chart, is the first season of the year.) *The Magician's Nephew* was begun in the spring of 1951, but it was left off in the fall of that year and not resumed until the summer of 1953 and completed in the winter of 1954. Probably, since the visit to the green hill occurs in the latter part of the book, that episode was not written until 1953 or 1954; but there does not seem to be precise information about these matters. This account of the composition of *The Magician's Nephew* can be expanded with a few further details from a different source: it was "three-quarters of the book [that] was written" in October of 1951 with, however, a long episode which was later cut out (Green and Hooper 247). The visit of Digory to the Garden occurs slightly over three quarters of the way through the published version, so, again, it seems likely not to have been written in 1951. And *The Last Battle* was begun in the fall of 1952 and finished in the spring of the next year. Thus 1949-1950 vs. 1952-1954.

⁶ This brief discussion of *The Well at the World's End* arises from Lewis's love of Morris's romances: he wrote an essay of praise titled "William Morris" that appeared in *Rehabilitations*. Morris's book obviously is at one edge of the fuzzy set under consideration.

⁷ "Leaf by Niggle" belongs to a group of Dantean works produced by the Inklings, but it was written earlier than the main Dantean works of the others (in 1938-39, according to Tolkien [5]). Charles Williams' *Religion and Love in Dante* appeared in 1941 (two years after Williams was moved from London to Oxford with others of the Oxford University Press staff), *The Figure of Beatrice* in 1943, and his novel *All Hallows' Eve* in 1945 (*Descent into Hell* does pre-date Tolkien's work, in 1937); Lewis's essays on Dante (mentioned in the first section of this essay) appeared from 1940 to 1957, and *The Great Divorce* (also mentioned earlier) was written in 1944 and published the next year; Lewis's borrowings of images from Dante and quotations from his works extend throughout most of his writing career, at least from "The Queen of Drum" (finished by 1938) to *Till We Have Faces* (1956). (Knowles's *A Purgatorial Flame* has a chapter on "The Inklings in the [Second World] War," which, although it makes some errors—particularly about two characters in Williams's *Descent into Hell*—is interesting on the Dantean material.)

⁸ Doris T. Myers, in passing, has also identified this Spenserian allusion (146).

⁹ Daigle emphasizes the erasing of the seven P's from Dante's forehead and the stripping of layers of dragon's skin from Eustace (203).

¹⁰ In Lewis's *The Pilgrim's Regress*, his protagonist seeks an island first seen in a vision (which turns out to have mountains on it as it is described in Bk. 9, Ch. 6); but this "island" actually is the mountains near the protagonist's birthplace (as seen from the other side), for his quest for the island has led him around the Earth to an edge of a sea which separates him from those mountains. In short, the protagonist journeys west only to find the mountains that lay in the east. This imagery can be argued to prepare for parallels between the eastern and western edges of Narnia in Lewis's imagination.

- ¹¹ *The Book of Common Prayer* (U.S. 1929). Although the King James Version does not make the second clause a question, all of a half dozen modern translations checked included the question mark (*The Jerusalem Bible*, Moffatt's translation, *The New English Bible*, etc.).
- ¹² The narratives of the Bible and *Paradise Lost*, on one hand, and of the end of *Il Purgatorio*, on the other, may establish narrative patterns that come close to being established forms (or briefer patterns to be inserted in larger forms), but the argument of that case is not the purpose of this essay, which is concerned with imagery, not narrative forms. No doubt the imagery cannot always be separated from the action, but at least the intention in the earlier sections has been to keep the focus on images.
- ¹³ Dorothy L. Sayers, in her "Preface" to *Further Papers on Dante*, suggests that the image of Paradise (Eden) on high ground is traditional, citing Moses bar-Cepha (vii); on the other hand, William Anderson, in *Dante the Maker*, believes Dante's placement of Purgatory on a mountain in the southern hemisphere is original to him (qtd. in Reynolds 131). Both may be right: Dante may have been the first to combine Purgatory and a high-placed Eden into one imagistic pattern.
- ¹⁴ This discussion has been in terms of the internal chronology considered as an overarching aesthetic order. If one considers the imagery clusters instead in terms of the order of publication (which is, as most critics agree, the best reading order), then these images appear in

1. [*The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* (1950)]
2. [*Prince Caspian* (1951)]
3. *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader* (1952)
4. *The Silver Chair* (1953)
5. [*The Horse and His Boy* (1954)]
6. *The Magician's Nephew* (1955)
7. *The Last Battle* (1956)

It must be admitted that a pattern of third, fourth, sixth, and seventh is not as impressive in aesthetics.

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