12-15-1976

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Abstract
Reacting to a description of Narnia as analogous to Southern France, argues that “for Lewis, the way to God lay through the North,” and Narnia is a Northern landscape. Discusses at length the symbolism of North and South in various mythologies, and touches on the significance of Northernness in Tolkien and Williams as well.

Additional Keywords
Cardinal Directions—Symbolism; Lewis, C.S. Chronicles of Narnia—Geography; Northernness in the Chronicles of Narnia; Southernness in the Chronicles of Narnia; Valerie Protopapas; Karen Yungkurth

This article is available in Mythlore: A Journal of J.R.R. Tolkien, C.S. Lewis, Charles Williams, and Mythopoeic Literature: https://dc.swosu.edu/mythlore/vol4/iss2/2
Narnia and the North: The Symbolism of Northernness in the Fantasies of C. S. Lewis

by Nancy-Lou Patterson

"Narnia impressed us as a 'painted land,' much like southern France." —Group Discussion Report, Mythprint.

ROGER LANCelyn GREEN and WALTER HOOPER tell us, in their indispensable biography of C. S. Lewis, that "when Geoffrey Bles, the publisher, received the story originally called Narnia and the North, he...disliked the title." Lewis countered with several suggestions, and Bles replied, "I like best The Horse and the Boy, but what about the Horse and his Boy, which is a little startling." Thus the title of one of the most popular volumes in Lewis's Narnian Chronicles was selected by his publisher. Apparently the titling of his books was not one of Lewis's strong points, for the above scenario recurs in Green and Hooper's account.

In most cases the published title, worn smooth by familiarity, seems the only right one, and The Horse and His Boy is indeed "startling." But Narnia and the North goes to the heart of the story, and Lewis's first choice reveals something central to his life. Corbin Scott Carnell has written extensively of Sehensuch, the "troubling joy" which preceded C. S. Lewis's conversion to Christianity, and devotes a number of pages in his excellent study Bright Shadow of Reality to Lewis's experience of "Northernness." Carnell writes, "Lewis believed that there was an erotic element in his response to 'Northernness'. But it was not a cheap or morbid eroticism." Rather, it was "the poetry of the flesh" (p. 42). Carnell writes of Lewis:

His interest in religion...was overshadowed by Northernness partly because it contained elements which his religion ought to have contained but did not. Northernness had a quality of aesthetic exaltation about it which Lewis had not found in Christianity and which he was seeking in the occult. Where religion had failed, Wagner and Norse mythology were able to awaken that strange excitement which at times he had experienced in his childhood. (p. 42)

This excitement Carnell calls "that stab of joy which came out of the North" (p. 47). He finds that Lewis refers for the first time to "Northernness," "that exultant yet strangely tragic emotion" (p. 78), in his essay on William Morris in Rehabilitations.

In that essay, Lewis defends Morris against charges of "fake medievalism." Morris's style is not florid, he says, but "consistently departs from that of modern prose in the direction of simplicity" (p. 220). It is as Lewis attempts to account for the inexhaustible pleasures of Morris that he mentions Northernness: "I knew one who could come no nearer to an explanation of Morris's charms than to repeat, 'It's the Northernness—the Northernness.'" (p. 219). In expanding on this theme of Morris's simplicity of style, Lewis remarks: "Other stories have scenery: his have geography," and explains: "...the effect is at first very pale and cold, but also very fresh and spacious. We begin to relish what my friend called the 'Northernness'. No mountains in literature are as far away as distant mountains in Morris" (p. 221). These remarks of Lewis come very close to the heart of the meaning which he attaches to the idea of the North and Northernness.

It is no accident that Narnia and Northernness are associated by Lewis: in his seven novels about Narnia the North is one of the basic elements in the symbolic structure. Interestingly, the same structure appears, with less emphasis, in the writings of J. R. R. Tolkien and Charles Williams. The Northernness of Narnia is so essential that when I read in the Mythopoeic Society Group Discussion Report quoted in my epigraph, that someone could think of Narnia as being located in the South, I was moved to begin the research for this present essay.

As Lewis began his lifetime of references to this theme with an essay on William Morris, I will begin at the same place. Morris wrote in his Preface to his translation of The Volsunga Saga, "This is the great Story of the North, which should be to all our race what the Tale of Troy was to the Greeks." We must remind ourselves that the British use the word "race" to mean something like what North Americans mean by "nationality" rather than in a strict genetic sense, and with the further suggestion of language as a determining factor. When my husband and I moved to Canada we were required to state our "race." We called ourselves "Caucasian," but this was not acceptable. My husband was recorded, at the officer's insistence, as "Scottish" because his last name is Patterson; I was called "German" because my maiden name was Gellermann, and our two children at that time were recorded as Scottish because they have their father's name. It was this sort of "race" that Morris had in mind. Nevertheless there is a certain "racial" element in these matters, as we shall see.

Morris was working on his translations of the Sagas—from the Iceland—during the period when his marriage to his wife Jane, a magnificently beautiful woman who was a major prototype of the Pre-Raphaelite form of beauty, was strained and she was being pursued by his close friend Dante Gabriel Rossetti. Much of his pain at this Arthur-Guinevere-Lancelot situation he poured into his translations. At the worst point—when Mrs. Morris and Rossetti moved together into the new house, Kelmscott, which Morris had just purchased, Morris made a long-awaited trip to Iceland to see for himself the places where the events of the poems and stories of the Sagas had occurred. He departed early in July of 1871 on the journey which Philip Henderson (in his biography of Morris) calls "both a catharsis and an initiation into a new world" (p. 119). Morris kept a journal of his experiences, which he found overwhelming, and wrote of his first view of the island:

...a terrible shore indeed: a great mass of dark grey mountains worked into pyramids and shelves, looking as if they had been built and half-ruined; they were striped with snow high up, and wreaths of cloud dragged across them here and

As each new prospect greeted him in his travels around Iceland, Morris had a similar reaction. On 22 July 1871, he wrote, "...surely it was what [I] 'came out for to see,' and yet for the moment I felt cowed, and as if I should never get back again: yet with that came a feeling of exultation too..." (p. 123). When he returned to England, he wrote to a friend, "I am going to try to get Iceland next year, hard as it will be to drag myself away from two or three people in England: but I know there will be a kind of rest in it, let alone the help it will bring me from physical reasons. I know clearer now perhaps than then what a blessing and a help last year's journey was to me; what horrors it saved me from" (pp. 130-35). The hell from which the purgatory of Iceland had saved him was of course the need to witness the love of Rossetti for Jane Morris. But what especially concerns us is the "feeling of exultation" in the face of the overpowering and desolate landscapes of the quintessential Northern Land.

Marghanita Laski has thrown light on this exultation in her Eostary, A Study of Some Sacred and Religious Experiences (London: The Cresset Press, 1961). She compares numerous accounts of the ecstasies which she has recorded and studied: of special pertinence here is the "ecstasies of desolation." She describes one subject who "felt 'overpowered' by the mountains, as if 'they would come crashing down to crush me,'" and another subject who "speaks of 'two enormous menacing peaks' that towered above her..." (p. 209). Again, she reports that the subject "says the mountains looked dark and unfriendly," and another subject "speaks of blinding rain, swirling mist" (pp. 209-10). She observes in discussing many similar examples, "I have the impression that in some cases feelings of desolation are themselves taken as indicating the presence of deity" (p. 212). Laski herself does not believe that deity is actually present, and Morris's exultation (he calls it that, and not "exaltation") probably contained, like those of Lewis which Carnell calls "erotic," an element of sexual sublimation. But recognizing the use of these motifs to imply the presence of deity is important for my argument.

We must now see for ourselves what Lewis has written about his own first approach to these northern shores. These moments have been both quoted and paraphrased elsewhere (especially by Carnell) but for the sake of accuracy I will report the two most famous passages in full. I hope this will explain the error Carnell makes in referring to Longfellow's poem, "Tegnér's Drapa," as "Tegner's Drapa," as if it were a translation by Longfellow of a work called Drapa by Tegnér, rather than the poetic encomium of Tegnér's death which Longfellow actually wrote.

Lewis had apparently acquired a book of Longfellow's poems: a number of editions were published in the late nineteenth century. The first work he refers to is a long sequence of poems in a number of different styles about the conversion of the north from the old Norse religion to Christianity: the series of poems is called The Saga of King Olaf. The Christian elements in this poem cycle and in the poem "Tegnér's Drapa" do not seem to have impressed any of the commentators on Lewis's experience, and probably Lewis himself was not caught so much by the Christian elements as by the evocations of the Norse religion which he had never before. Nonetheless, in view of what came of Lewis's intuitions of Northernness—I mean his ultimate conversion to Christianity as an adult—which is the whole point of his including them and nearly everything else in Surprised by Joy, I think the point ought to be made. At any rate, Lewis wrote:

...I had become fond of Longfellow's Saga of King Olaf.... But then, and quite different from such pleasures, and like a voice from far more distant regions, there came a moment when I idly turned the pages of the book and found the unrhymed translation of Tegnér's Drapa, and read

I heard a voice that cried,  
Balder the Beautiful  
Is dead, is dead!  
And through the misty air  
Passed like the mournful cry  
Of sunward-sailing cranes.

The poem describes the death of Balder, the end of the age of the Gods, and the appearance of a new earth, which the poet associates with Christ's coming. The last verse, then, advises rather primly,

Sing no more,  
O ye bards of the North,  
Of Vikings and of Harold!  
Of the days of Eld  
Preserve the freedom only,  
Not the deeds of blood!

Longfellow could not foresee that what "deeds of blood" were to be done in the name of Odin, by Adolf Hitler, when this whole range of thematic material became at least temporarily besmirched. But the poet obviously saw that the "days of Eld" could give an alternative vision of things.

Bishop Tegnér was a Swedish poet of whom Longfellow first became aware in 1828. But it was not until 1835...
during the first week of his arrival in Sweden that he read the actual poems and began, which his embryonic Swedish, to attempt translations. He travelled on to Holland and read Frithiof's Saga in translation, expressing in his Journal disapproval of the translator's style. Longfellow published a review, in The North American Review (XLV [1837], pp. 149-85), which included some fragments of translation of his own. These were praised by Tegnér himself. The Bishop wrote: "I have not been fully satisfied with any one, except the Herr Professor's" (Hilen, p. 52). This encouraged Longfellow to go on with the project and his translations are considered among the finest in English. Andrew Hilen said in 1947, "They still reveal a greater technical skill than possessed by any of the new numerous English translators" (p. 53).

Longfellow published his poem "Tegnér's Drapa" ("Drapa" means ecomium or eulogy), which was originally entitled "Tegnér's Death" (Hilen, p. 61), in 1846 when Tegnér died. He had made a note—"Baldur the Beautiful is dead. A Monody means ecomium or eulogy"—which was originally entitled "Baldur the Beautiful is dead. A Monody means ecomium or eulogy" (Hilen, p. 61). A major motif of the poem is expressed in this verse:

> The law of force is dead!  
> The law of love prevails.  
> Thor the thunderer,  
> Shall rule the earth no more,  
> No more, with threats,  
> Challenge the meek Christ.

This concern with the conflict of Thor and Odin with Christ was fully expressed in Longfellow's poem cycle, The Saga of King Olaf, which Lewis mentions reading, above.

We have Lewis's own mention of the sunward-sailing cranes to show the long-lasting effects of the words of "Tegnér's Drapa." I wonder if the following passage from The Voyage of the Dawn Treader does not contain an expansion of this great image:

> Then something seemed to be flying at them out of the very centre of the rising sun. . . . They were birds, large and white, and they came by hundreds and thousands and alighted on everything.

One bird places "something in its beak that looked like a little fruit, unless it was a little live coal" in the mouth of Ramandu the Star, and the others consume the splendid feast laid out on the Stone Table. Afterwards, "These birds rose from their meal in their thousands and hundreds, and took their flight back to the rising sun." (p. 174)

Having turned to the Narnian Chronicles for examples of the motif of Northerness, we will now examine the exact passages which contain the phrase from which the title of this paper is taken. The book is The Horse and His Boy, as we have seen. When Bree, the Talking Horse, and his young companion, the unwilling slave boy Shasta, set off on their escape from bondage in Calormen, Bree instructs him in riding: "Don't look at the ground. If you think you're going to fail just grip harder and sit up straighter. Ready? Now: for Narnia and the North." 3

It proves to be a very long trip, and it is not until he is high up in the capital of Calormen, Tashbaan, that Shasta is able to gaze across the wide desert to catch a first glimpse of his goal (the mountains bordering Archenland, to the North of which Narnia lies); he looks down the northern slope of Tashbaan, past the northern wall, the river, and its gardens:

> But beyond that again there was something he had never seen the like of—a great yellowish-grey thing, flat as a calm sea, and stretching for miles. On the far side of it were huge blue things, lumpy but with jagged edges, and some of them with white tops. "The desert! the mountains!" thought Shasta. (p. 67)

He recognizes the scene because while in Tashbaan he has been mistaken by a group of Narnians for Prince Corin, and has overheard Sallowpad the Raven, who advises their leader to get to Archenland and warn the occupants of Anvard, the guardian castle, that Prince Rabash of Tashbaan is on his way to surprise them with an attack, someone should cross the desert by a "Western way," riding northwest towards Mount Pire, which will be known by its double peak.

While still mistaken for Prince Corin, Shasta is told by a Narnian faun—it is the very Mr. Tumnus who first meets Lucy in Narnia in The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe—

> to get some sleep before boarding the Narnian ship Splendour Hyalene: "I'll call you in plenty of time to get on board. And then, Home. Narnia and the North!" (p. 62). Shasta manages to slip away, and makes his way down the northern slopes of Tashbaan and out of the gate. There he must wait by the menacing tombs of ancient Calormene rulers until Aravis comes. His night alone there is made less terrible by the presence of a cat whom he later learns is Aslan in disguise. "There it sat down bolt upright with its tail curled round its feet and its face set towards the desert and towards Narnia and the North, as still as it if were watching for some enemy" (p. 71).

Shasta is not the only one to have difficulties passing through Tashbaan; as Bree had exclaimed on first seeing the great city: "But I wish we were safely through it and out at

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He does not know whom he is meeting, but "after one glance Narrian demon that appeared in the form of a lion" (p. 140). He particularly noticed one blue height that divided into peaks at the top and decided that it must be Mount Pire. (p. 74)

Clearly, these are to be mountains "as far away as distant mountains in Morris," and so they prove to be, in an exhausting ride across the desert. When at last the young Calormene Tarkheena Aravis arrives at the toms with Hwin and Bree, they all set off across the desert with Mount Pire as their goal. Again, Bree takes charge: "Who? Are you ready, Hwin? Off we go. Narnia and the North!" (p. 107).

As they travel, "the double peak of Mount Pire, far ahead, flashed in the sunlight" (p. 108). Their terrible trip across the desert draws to a close when they arrive at a spot, predicted by the Raven and heardwhere by Shasta, where "a little cataract of water poured into a broad pool" (p. 112). They begin to travel up "the valley itself, with its brown, cool river, and grass and moss and wildflowers and rhododendrons" (p. 113). Their path leads them up among the mountains:

To the right there were rocky pinnacles, one or two of them with snow clinging to the ledges. To the left, pine-clad slopes, frowning cliffs, narrow gorges, and blue peaks stretched away as far as the eye could reach. (p. 116).

This is the very landscape of Marghanita Laski's subjects' desolation ecstasies; and one may compare it with William Morris's first view of Iceland. The account culminates with a paean by Bree:

"Broo-hoo-hoo, the North, the green North!" neighed Bree, and certainly a lower hill, a little greener and fresher than anything that Aravis and Shasta, with their southern-bred eyes, had ever imagined. (p. 117)

In this passage the full symbolism of the North (and its opposing South) is suggested by Lewis, and it is to be among these mountains that Shasta encounters "the presence of death" when he first, amusingly meets Aslan. He has been sent on ahead, after the arrival of the four travellers in the mandalic enclosure of the Hermit of the Southern March, to find King Lune and warn him. This done, he has followed the riders to the rescue of Anvard, but becomes lost in the mountain fastness.

After a while he becomes aware of a companion in the darkness. "It darted into his mind that he had heard long ago that there were giants in these Northern countries" (p. 137). But the Thing beside him proves to be neither a giant nor a ghost. It is in fact a Lion, one who has already played many roles in Shasta's life. "Lucky Shasta had lived all his life too far south in Calormen to have heard the tales that were whispered in Tashbaan about a dreadful Narrian demon that appeared in the form of a lion" (p. 140). He does not know whether he is meeting, but "after one glance at the Lion's face he slipped under the saddle and fell at its feet. He couldn't say anything but then he didn't want to say anything, and he knew he needn't say anything" (p. 140).

When his meeting with Aslan is over, Shasta finds that he is actually in Narnia, and that there lies at his feet a footprint left by the Lion. "As he looked at it, water had already filled the bottom of it. Soon it was full to the brim, and then overflowing, and a little stream was running down on past it, one body of the grass" (p. 141). He drinks, and rises refreshed, descending into the heart of Narnia where he meets a group of native Narnians, talking animals who live in the forest far from the doings of the court. There he eats his first real Narnian meal, bacon and eggs and mushrooms fried together by Duffle the Dwarf. Soon after, he is reunited with the Narrian court. He finds himself to be Prince Cor, brother of Prince Corin, and son of King Lune. He is soon after this to find that he is the future occupant of the throne of Archenland.

Bree, meanwhile, makes his own preparation to enter the North which he has so long awaited. He takes a last roll in the clouds, certainly that much regalia, when indulged in by the talking Beasts of which he is now to become merely one more. "Now I'm ready," he said in a voice of profound gloom. "Lead on, Prince Cor, Narnia and the North." (p. 179).

Shasta, or Prince Cor as we must now call him, comes to the time at last of the rescue brought them out from among the trees, and there, across green lawns, sheltered from the north wind by the high wooded ridge at its back, they saw the castle of Anvard. It was very old and built of a warm, reddish-brown stone" (p. 180). He has come, the inquisitive Aslan has predicted for him, a foretaste of that ultimate inheritance which He has prepared for us all. As Shasta said, "I'm a Narrian, I believe: something Northern anyway" (p. 65).

It would be well, now, to examine the symbolism of North (and South) in world culture. A popular dictionary defines "North" as "that of the four Cardinal points of the compass which lies in the plane of the true meridian, and on the left hand of a person facing due east; the direction opposite south" (Webster's New Colloquial Dictionary, Springfields, Mass.: G. and C. Merriam Co., 1956). The definition of "South" is much more succinct: it is "the cardinal point directly opposite the north." It will be noted that North and South are here referred to their place on the compass. Something of the complexity and richness of meaning implied by this basic significance of directions is discussed by C. E. Clepet in A Dictionary of Symbols (tr. Jack Sage, New York Philosophical Library, 1962):

The notion of orientation, taken in conjunction with the concept of space as a three-dimensional whole, plays a powerful part in the symbolic organization of space. The human anatomy itself, with its quasi-rectangular, symmetrical and bilateral pattern, in distinguishing between the front and back thereby designates two corresponding points of orientation. The natural position of the arms and shoulders completes this quadrangular scheme—a symbolic pattern which, interpreted according to strictly anthropological and empirical criteria, would perhaps provide us with the key to the original conception of orientation as quaternity on the surface and septenary three-dimensionally (encircling north, south, east and west, together with the zenith, the nadir and the centre). (p. 233)

North is then the first or principal direction, the one to which all others are related. It is in the position of the head, perhaps, that I might suggest, actually of the superbrain or spiritual mind which in images of the Buddha protrudes from the top of his head. Thus, Cirilo tells us, "The Etruscans located the abode of gods in the north, and hence their soothsayers, when about to speak, would turn to face the south—that is, they would take up a position which identified them, ideologically, with the gods. To face the north is to pose a question" (p. 233). Aslan in the form of a cat sits with his back toward Calormen, for he does not speak to them. Nevertheless, Shasta finds his back comfortingly warm.

The relationship of prophecy with the North is seen as a motif in Shamansim, according to Mircea Eliade in Shamanism: Archetypal Techniques of Ecstasy (bollingen Foundation, Princeton University Press, 1951). Eliade cites a Yakut legend which "relates that shamans are born in the north. There a giant fir grows, with nests in its branches" (p. 37). A great female eagle lays eggs there, and shaman souls are hatched, cut up, and reborn. Eliade explains:

In all these examples we find the central theme of an initiation ceremony: disembodiment of the neophyte, past his own body, into the "grass." (p. 141). He drinks, and rises refreshed, descending into the heart of Narnia where he meets a group of native Narnians, talking animals who live in the forest far from the doings of the court. There he eats his first real Narnian meal, bacon and eggs and mushrooms fried together by Duffle the Dwarf. Soon after, he is reunited with the Narrian court. He finds himself to be Prince Cor, brother of Prince Corin, and son of King Lune. He is soon after this to find that he is the future occupant of the throne of Archenland.
The shaman rises up the house pole to the roof hole—from the underworld to the overworld—which is associated with the North Star, so it is not for nothing that the Earth has "poles"! One is reminded that Lewis wrote in The Last Battle, "All the great northern stars were burning above the treetops. The North-Star of that world is called the Spear-Head: it is brighter than our Pole Star."  

In Finno-Ugarian mythology (which has elements of Shamanism) "there is said to be a monster who has devoured the sun or moon and these stars of light must be won back from him. This monster is often conceived as a giant, an incarnation of the North, land of darkness and cold." We have already seen that Shasta fears to meet a giant in the North, and that the Calormenes of Tashbaan repeated rumours of a Narnian demon. In The Silver Chair, "when Jill encounters Aslan in his own country, he tells her, "I have swallowed up girls and boys, women and men, kings and emperors, cities and realms" (p. 17). In The Last Battle, when Narnia comes to an end:

They saw another patch where there were no stars: and the patch rose up higher and higher and became the shape of a man, the ugliest of all giants.... He must be on the high moorlands that stretch away to the North beyond the River Shribble....one long ago, in the deep caves beneath these moors, they had seen a great giant asleep and been told that his name was Father Time...." (pp. 141-42)

The giant winds a great horn, causing all the Stars to leap down from the sky.

Then Aslan said, "Now make an end." The giant threw his horn into the sea. Then he stretched out one arm—very black it looked—and thousands of miles long—across the sky till his hand reached the Sun. He took the Sun and squeezed it in his hand as you would squeeze an orange. And instantly there was total darkness. (p. 149)

The giant, who has lain beneath "The Wild Waste Lands of the North" until the last hour of Narnia, thus does Aslan's bidding.

In another myth-cycle, this Northern deity of "the land of dark and cold" possesses the campo, a "talisman," which is "the column of the universe" by which the sky is supported. These objects among the Samoyeds and Lapps, "are generally situated on heights, even on mountains. Otherwise the cult took place in sacred woods containing the Tree of Life, which may have been a symbol for the column supporting the firmament." I would suggest, in line with my Yogic notion of the North as located at the top of the head, that this column is not only a house pole, a universe-column, and a world tree, but the human backbone.

Readers who are familiar with Norse mythology will have begun to see a suggestion of shamanic origin for some of the elements in the great Eddaic stories. H. R. E. Davidson in Gods and Myths of Northern Europe (Harmondsworth, England: Penguin, 1964), p. 27, describes the universe as the Eddas conceived it: "In the beginning there were two regions: Muspell in the south, full of brightness and fire; and a world of snow and ice in the north." From this "realm of fire, the heat from which helped in the creation of the world, the sons of Muspell ride out against the gods at Ragnarok" (p. 235). "Ragnarok is the word usually translated as "Twilight of the Gods," to which Lewis refers. The "sons of Muspell" were followers of Surt, whose name is associated in Iceland with "the gloomy and impressive caverns of the volcanic region" (p. 208), and Davidson makes it her suggestion that Ragnarok, with its battle of ice and fire which destroys the earth, may be related to Icelandic volcanic eruptions in an icy sea. Surt is then the Southern giant.

This dichotomy of hot and cold is found in the Bible—the poets who actually wrote down the poems of the Elder 13


Edda were Christians—in Job 37:9: "Out of the south cometh the whirlwind; and cold out of the north." And in Isaiah 32:1 (perhaps as a source of Lewis’s desert in ‘The Horse and His Boy’): "As whirlwinds in the south pass through; so it cometh from the desert, from a terrible land." It is interesting to note that in the great Stave Churches of Norway, the place usually taken by the Old Testament in Christian art is taken by images from the Dragon Myth and the Sigurd Saga.14 "Christianity brought not only a new faith but also the challenge: change your way of thinking! Transform revenge into forgiving love!" (p. 64). Lindholm concludes, "Thus the fact the intuitions of "Northernness" led C. S. Lewis to Christianity is not an irony.

To continue with our discussion of the meaning of the South, which must be understood in order to gain a complete grasp upon the meaning of its opposite, the North, we may turn to the writings of Aldous Huxley. Huxley has made use of the other major association of the south, that of its role as the Antipodes (and not necessarily hot). He uses the word "antipodes" to stand for the visionary mode: in discussing Chinese painting and its ability to produce what Laski calls desolation ecstasy, he writes:

...all the rest of the vast landscape is emptiness and silence. This revelation of the wilderness, living its own life according to the laws of its own being, transports the mind towards its antipodes: for primal Nature bears a strange resemblance to that inner world where no account is taken of our personal wishes.... (The Doors of Perception and Heaven and Hell, p. 104)15

He explains his use of this term: "A man consists of what I may call an Old World of personal subconscious and the vegetative soul, the far west of Lewis’s collective unconscious, and its flora of symbols, its tribes of aboriginal archetypes; and, across another, vaster ocean, at the antipodes of everyday consciousness, the world of Visionary Experience." (p. 72, my italics). It will be noted that East, West, and South are accounted for in this system: perhaps the North represents the analogical function, the direct intuition of the divine, which comes from the very center of the human consciousness, or from above it or outside it entirely, depending upon whether one wishes to use immanence or transcendence as the mode of divine operation.

As promised to Charles Williams and J. R. R. Tolkien also made use of North/South in their symbolic structure. In the interest of succinctness I will turn to Robert Foster’s A Guide to Middle Earth16 for part of my proof. Readers who have examined Tolkien’s maps will notice that while the action of The Hobbit moves from West to East (and back again), that of The Lord of the Rings moves from North to South. The ring-bearer comes from the Shire, in the Northwest of his world, and moves as steadily South as he can, toward the land which Sauron has darkened, to throw the Ring, appropriately into the chasm of a volcano. The map of Middle-earth (Nidgard is the part of the world tree midway between the roots in the underworld and the branches above) shows at its top a region called the "Northern Waste."17 Foster defines this area as "the land north of the Misty Mountains and the Ered Nînthin." He also locates "Norland" as "a northern land of Middle-earth in the First Age." Elsewhere he tells us that "FORDAWITH (S.: 'north-') [is an] Area north of Carn Dûm, perhaps equivalent to the Northern Waste or Norland."18 I must admit that none of this takes us very far, but when we turn to the south, we find that "HARADWAITH (S.: 'south-') Harad (q.v.). Haradwaith and Sutherland were equivalent geographically, and perhaps also linguistically," and this leads us to my point: Foster tells us that the "mortv people?" that they are "the primitive and savage men of Harad." Here we come to the crux of the matter:

The Haradrim were tall and dark-skinned, with black hair and eyes. They loved bright clothing and ornaments, and some tribes of Haradrim painted their bodies. In battle they used all weapons, and were noted for their use of Oliphaunts.

He continues: "Called in Westron Southern and Southrons. Also called the Swarth Men (by Hobbits) and the Swertings.19

These dark southerners may be compared, then, with the "NORTMEN Men related to the Rohirrim and the Edain." We find that the "ROHIRRIM (S.: 'Rohirrim people') ... were tall and blond, with fair faces; they lived to be about eighty.... The Rohirrim loved their horses above all else...[and] were culturally conservative, keeping even into the

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17 When a Branch of the Mythopoetic Society, now called Esperanto, was formed in Toronto, I suggested that it ought to be called "Northern Waste," because Canada is referred to in our national anthem as "the True North strong and free," but nobody liked the idea.
18 Interestingly, "southern" is a Scottish term for "Englishman."
Fourth Age their ancient customs and language." Needless to say, these blond and conservative (as opposed to dark and savage) horsemen play a large role in The Lord of the Rings. With this in mind, we return for a moment to the Narnian Chronicles, where we find the same color and costume symbolism associated with the North and South. The natives of the southern nation of Calormen are exemplified by the description of the Tarkaan who attempts to buy Shasta from his foster-father Arsheesh and thus precipitates his flight to the North (Bree is the Tarkaan's horse):

His face was dark, but this did not surprise Shasta because all the people of Calormen are like that; what did surprise him was the man's beard which was dyed a crimson color and was gleaming with scented oil. (The Horse and His Boy, p. 4)

One may compare him with the darkskinned Haradrim who 'loved bright clothing and ornaments.' In marked contrast to this is Shasta's first sight of the Narnians in a delegation to Tashbaan:

...they were all as fair-skinned as himself, and most of them had fair hair. And they were not dressed like men of Calormen. Most of them had legs bare to the knee. Their tunics were of fine, bright, hardy colours—woodland green, or gay yellow, or fresh blue. Instead of turbans they wore steel or silver caps, some of them set with jewels, and one with little wings on each side of it. A few were bare-headed. The swords at their sides were long and straight, not curved like Calormene scimitars. And instead of being grave and mysterious like most Calormenes, they walked with a swing and let their arms and shoulders go free, and chatted and laughed. (pp. 40-41)

In view of the charges of racism levelled at Lewis from time to time, we should remind ourselves that Aravis is a Calormene, and she becomes the wife of Shasta, while Emeth (whose name means "truth" in Hebrew) is a lover of Tash who learns in Aslan's country that it is Aslan who had actually accepted his devotion. The scimitars and florid language, the turbans and dark skins, are derived from the Saracens, the noble adversaries of Medieval literature, and stock character of the British summer's play performed at Christmas. We can wish Lewis had not used this motif, but it is a venerable one in European literature. Anyway, a European going in a southerly direction encounters North Africa with its Islamic culture, seeing that it is not surprising that the blond Norsmen in the actual North of Europe and with the dark North Africans to the South, the color associations seem to British writers to be so obvious as to be unquestionable.

An even more southerly trek will bring the traveller south of the Sahara into black Africa, which is also Islamic in its Sudanic regions (becoming Christian, and/or traditional as one travels into the forested regions, Africa having now become one of the strongest areas of indigenized Christianity in the world). This observation brings us to the writings of Charles Williams, who uses some of these same symbols of "southerness" in his poems and novels. The first essay is to be found in his poem "Fantasy," which was his first novel, written in the thirties but not published until his later books had won him acceptance.

In Chapter I, "Encountering Darkness," we meet Mr. Nigel Considine, "a rich man...[who] gave a collection of African images to the anthropological school" (p. 6). Nigel Considine gives a lecture, in which he declares, "you may not yet sit at the feet of the natives of the Amazon or the Zambezi; but...the fakirs, the herders, and the witch doctors may...enter the kingdom of man before you" (p. 8). There is talk of "simultaneous native risings in the interior of Africa" (p. 16), and "pressure on Egypt" (pp. 16, 20), and the next chapter reveals that "something very unusual was happening in Africa" (p. 22). The book turns upon this rising, which ultimately threatens Europe, and upon Nigel Considine, a man who has enjoyed a prettier-natural length of years. The gentle Zulu Prince, Inkamasi, figures in the story as Considine's adversary.

"...I do not want to help Considine, though I long for Africa to be free" (p. 129). In the end, he dies, but Considine dies with him. The novel concludes with a visionary passage in which the book's hero, Roger Ingram, imagines Considine's body returning to life beneath the sea (into which it had been carried by submarine) while "the creatures of the deep, octopus and shark, greedy and ferocity, fed before it" (p. 259).

This last motif, the octopus of greed, suggests the later development of Williams' antipodean Empire, P'o-1'u, of which he wrote in his poem, "The Prayers of the Pope":

...even those wizards hid their eyes where some few, their chief, the beastliest and chilliest in blasphemy, called farther on the powers of P'o-1'u, on the antipodean octopods, on the slime that had been before the time of Merlin and below the trees and seas of Broccoliand.21

The fullest expression of the idea of P'o-1'u is found in the play, The House of the Octopod:22 Williams writes in its Preface, "The name of P'o-1'u and the title of its Emperor were taken from certain earlier poems published before the outbreak of war" (p. 5). Thus P'o-1'u is not Japan, for "It is rather a spiritual threat than a martial dominion." The story tells of Christianized indigenes of a Pacific island threatened with invasion by the malignant Empire of P'o-1'u:

of P'o-1'u—P'o-1'u, the thick-tentacled octopus, the empire of mastery within the waters. (p. 15)

It is a watery, voracious Hell, where some, whom the Infinite Mercy after a week bade the monsters release, wander mindless. (p. 50)

The play concludes with the triumphant martyrdom of the Christians, in care of the Flame, the "Lingua Coeli," who is "that energy which went into the creation and was at Pentecost (as it were) re-delivered in the manner of its own august covenant to the Christian Church" (p. 5). This figure, of course, represents the Holy Spirit, who appears in a number of Williams' plays in various guises.

The region of P'o-1'u lies beneath the sea into which the roots of the forest of Broccoliand extend. As C.S. Lewis explains, "Broccoliand means, 'Broccoli is what most romantics are enamoured of; into it good mystics and bad mystics go: it is what you find when you stop out of our ordinary mode of consciousness'" (pp. 100-01). Lewis, one notes, already knew what Carlos Castaneda had to learn from his Yaqi shaman, about "non-ordinary reality." P'o-1'u is an aspect of it: the antipodean aspect.

20 By a bit of synchronicity at just this point in completing this paper, my husband brought the following quotation to my attention: "The Quarterly Pulpit's Christmas number in 1849 contained, among other things, a small and sketchy map of the world which was intended to show the development of missionary forces and the division of the globe into different religions and religious sects. This was illustrated by the use of varying shades and combinations of cross-hatching. The totally heathen world was demonstrated in black; Protestant Christianity came pure white. Islam was picked out in a dark shade and both the Roman Catholic and Orthodox worlds were depicted in a light shade. This deepening and densification of Gladstone's sensational attitude toward sectarian distinctions. The Orthodox, he believed, should have been demonstrated in a lighter shade than that applied to the Roman Catholics." Geoffrey Moorhouse, The Missionaries (London: Eyre Methuen, 1973). There is suggested here something of the same and, I think not for the worse, an incongruous attitude toward some of the subjects touched upon in this paper which is found in the writings of many fantasists who were born and received their educations in the late Victorian and Edwardian era.


It is, in a polar sense, at the southernmost part of the earth, in those very antipodes to which Aldous Huxley refers, and which belongs to the same globe that bears a North to too and south to south—the primitively turbulent, the northern, of the southern, and the southern, of the northern—like the primitively primitivist of Tolkien, the noble but ferocious Calormen of Lewis, the turbulent Africans and menacing P't'luans of Williams—represent specific aspects of groups of people, but aspects of the mind of everybody. The northern and the southern regions, and also the part of the mind: region of Aslan's Country. We are all familiar with the destructive reverberations of European racism, but we must avoid projecting it backwards into an imagined past, and finding it in every piece of writing constructed on antique models. The use of color as a racist symbol is described feelingly by Frantz Fanon:

In Europe, whether concretely or symbolically, the black man stands for the bad side of the character.... A magnificent blond child—how much peace there is in that phrase, how much joy, and above all how much hope! There is no comparison with a magnificent black child: literally, such a child is unwarped:

But in contrast with this, the medieval world did not use color symbolism with a racial intention. Eulalia Baltazar writes, "In terms of the Aristotelian categories of substance and accident, the color and shape and form of the body were not essential to being a man but rather were accidental, that is, nonessential. It was for this philosophic reason, it would seem, that the medieval white Christian did not make much of skin color" (The Dark Center, p. 28).

An example of this is found in the Mummer's plays, to which I referred above. The term "Saracen" means firstly a nomad of the desert between Syria and Arabia, but by extension, a Muslim, especially as hostile to the crusaders. I have used it as a generic term. According to E.O. James, "The central feature in the Mummer's play is the fight between Saint (or King) George and his adversary who is killed or wounded and then restored by the Doctor." This adversary, "Bold Slasher in the guise of Turkish Religion" is thus not finally defeated, but rather goes through death and resurrection. He is dressed in a costume resembling that which used for his Carolers. According to the interpretations of folklorists, he is the Old Year, the King (or King's Son), and, some think, originally Dionysus himself, the dying and resurrected god. These exceedingly primitive motifs are found in the play performed yearly at Christmastime in rural England, and surviving separate from and beyond the Medieval religious plays showing the Creation-Incararnation-Resurrection cycle and the morality plays which have their origin within the Christian liturgy. Baltazar can throw some light on the mystical significance of these motifs:

Thus in mystical theology, darkness is a symbol not only of the negative but also and above all of the supremely positive—God. It is toward the Divine Darkness that man must tend and away from the sub-darkness or near darkness of ignorance, sin, evil. The great religions as we have noted earlier always symbolized God as Darkness....

The mystical theology of Dionysus [that is, Dionysian as opposed to Apollonian] is known in the Christian tradition as negative theology. (Dark Center, p. 164)

In a final extension of my Yogic model, the south lies in the region of the lower chakras—those of the bodily organs, where the passions and heats of the flesh are located, and likewise those Dionysian intuitions which represent a significant part of psychic life; but the spinal column and the Kundalini path extend from those southern regions to the northermost, the sphere of intellect, mind, the rule of Apollo; and they are all part of the whole person: body and mind, unconscious and conscious. At their

26 James, Seasonal Feasts and Fasts, p. 275.