
Fall 10-15-1988

C.S. Lewis and the Lion: Primitivism and Archetype in the *Chronicles of Narnia*

Sue Matheson

Follow this and additional works at: <https://dc.swosu.edu/mythlore>



Part of the [Children's and Young Adult Literature Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Matheson, Sue (1988) "C.S. Lewis and the Lion: Primitivism and Archetype in the *Chronicles of Narnia*," *Mythlore: A Journal of J.R.R. Tolkien, C.S. Lewis, Charles Williams, and Mythopoeic Literature*: Vol. 15: No. 1, Article 3.

Available at: <https://dc.swosu.edu/mythlore/vol15/iss1/3>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Mythopoeic Society at SWOSU Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Mythlore: A Journal of J.R.R. Tolkien, C.S. Lewis, Charles Williams, and Mythopoeic Literature by an authorized editor of SWOSU Digital Commons. An ADA compliant document is available upon request. For more information, please contact phillip.fitzsimmons@swosu.edu.

To join the Mythopoeic Society go to:
<http://www.mythsoc.org/join.htm>



Online Summer Seminar 2023

August 5-6, 2023: Fantasy Goes to Hell: Depictions of Hell in Modern Fantasy Texts

<https://mythsoc.org/oms/oms-2023.htm>



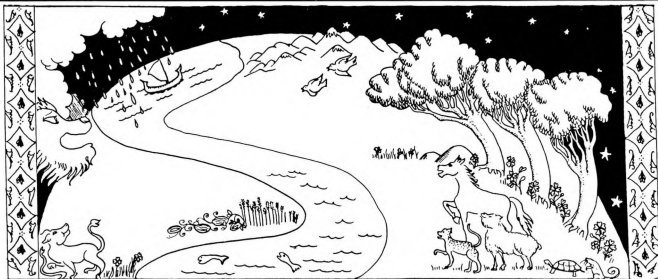
C.S. Lewis and the Lion: Primitivism and Archetype in the *Chronicles of Narnia*

Abstract

A reading of the Narnian chronicles as fantasy, not Christian allegory, and notes “the tension between allegory and symbol” in the Chronicles. Sees the character of Aslan, and his use of magic, as the “primordial image” which gives the fantasy its power.

Additional Keywords

Lewis, C.S.—Characters—Aslan; Lewis, C.S. Chronicles of Narnia—Symbolism



C.S. Lewis and the Lion: *Primitivism and Archetype in the Chronicles of Narnia* *Sue Matheson*

In *The Achievement* of C.S. Lewis, Thomas Howard asserts that we "blunder sadly" if we read the Chronicles of Narnia as anything other than fairy tales, but he finds himself forced to conclude that "sooner or later, it becomes impossible to carry the discussion of Narnia any further without finding ourselves unabashedly head over heels in the language of Christian vision and dogma" (p. 50). Lewis is clearly responsible for this problem. When he died 22 November 1963, he left behind a firmly entrenched reputation as a Christian apologist, secured in a part by his own critical endeavors which encouraged a school of theological criticism to grow up around his writing.

Criticism about Narnia can be classified into two groups: the allegorists, including J.R.R. Tolkien, Charles A. Huttar, and Kathryn Lindskoog, who read the Chronicles as pure allegory, drawing one-to-one correspondences between them and the Christian story; and the allegorists, including Richard Purtill, Walter Hooper, and Elaine Trixer, who amend the allegorists' position somewhat by arguing that Tales should be read "symbolically."¹ Because the pseudo-allegorists invariably base their "symbolic" analyses on a one-to-one correspondence between the symbolism of the Chronicles and Christian symbolism, however, their position is allegorical in effect if not in intent. In short, for them, the Chronicles are symbolic insofar as their symbolism is Christian symbolism. The distinction between these groups is one of degree, not kind.

Whatever their differences, both groups insist that the Chronicles are fantasy.² Reading fantasy as allegory, however, is obviously inappropriate, because fantasy is symbolic narrative. As Ursula K. Le Guin points out, the

language of fantasy is "symbol and Archetype" ("The Child", p. 62). To date, attempts to read the Chronicles as fantasy have not been successful, primarily because, as Howard's study illustrates, they have not examined the issues that are raised by symbolic narrative. Clearly another reading of the Chronicles is necessary—one which is sympathetic to the study of symbol and archetype and will bring us closer to an understanding of the tension between allegory and symbol in the Chronicles as well as the archetype which underpins these stories.

Because the tension between allegory and symbol in the Chronicles can be traced to Lewis, it is important to understand the context in which they were written. According to Alan Bede Griffiths, one of Lewis' principle problems was "how to reconcile his extraordinarily powerful intellect, which made him one of the greatest critics of English literature, with his no-less powerful imagination, which was to flower in the planetary novels and the Narnia stories (p. 15). This gap between Lewis' intellect and his imagination appeared shortly after his conversion to Christianity. Owen Barfield says, "From 1935 onwards, I had the impression of living with not one but two Lewises. There was both a friend and a memory of a friend; sometimes they were close together are nearly coalesced; sometimes they seemed far apart" (*Unklings*, pp. 60-61). This double nature of Lewis' is not surprising, because in the early thirties, he underwent separate emotional and intellectual religious conversions: he became Theist before he became a Christian. The most revealing comment that Lewis makes about himself in *Surprised by Joy* occurs just before he becomes a Theist: "The fox had been dislodged from (sic) Hegelian Wood and was now running in the

open" (p. 179). Theism, the God who was "sheerly non-human" (p. 184), overtook Lewis in an open field, but unable to reconcile his national nature with the irrational, he became a Christian.

Convinced by Hugo Dyson and Tolkien that Christianity is a myth that became historical fact, Lewis' conversion to Christianity was intellectual, not emotional. His description of his conversion in a letter of 18 October 1931, to Arthur Greeves, takes the form of a didactic argument, which concludes: "(a) That this Christian story is to be approached, in a sense, as I approach the other myths. (b) That it is important and full of meaning. I am also nearly certain that it really happened" (*Letters*, p. 428).

The process of this argument is clearly allegorical: when the symbols of myth acquire meaning, they become allegory. Based on his attempts to prove God's existence rationally, Lewis' career as a Christian apologist further illustrates the nature of his conversion. The only proper response to God or myth, however, is non-rational: "the awe of the creature before the *mysterium tremendum* (Otto, p. 85).

The gap between Lewis' rational mind and his irrational nature is not an unusual phenomenon. According to Carl Jung, every creative person is a duality or synthesis of contradictory qualities (p. 101). On one hand, the artist has a personal life, and, on the other, he is an impersonal creative process. Lewis recognized his own duality as a man and an artist when he dispelled the notion that he wrote the Chronicles as deliberate allegory: "this is all pure moonshine. I couldn't write that way at all. Everything began with images: a faun carrying an umbrella, a queen on a sledge, a magnificent lion. At first there wasn't even anything Christian about them ("Sometimes", p. 46).

Belonging to Lewis' impersonal creative process, these images were later edited by Lewis, the Apologist, who "saw how stories of this kind could steal past a certain inhibition in my own religion in childhood... that by casting all these things into an imaginary world, stripping them of their stained glass and their Sunday school organisations, one could make them for the first time appear in their real potency" ("Sometimes", p. 47). The result is an allegorical framework which entangles a symbolic narrative. Thus, *The Magician's Nephew* and *The Last Battle*, the Chronicles' ascribed beginning and end as well as the most 'allegorical,' were written at the conclusion of the process. There was a pause, according to Robert Green, after Lewis finished *The Silver Chair*, during which he wrote *The Magician's Nephew*, and another longer pause during which he wrote *The Last Battle* (Reddy, p. 208). These pauses would have roughly fallen between 1952 and 1956. In 1952, Lewis does not mention meaning in the creative process at all:

I never exactly 'made' a story. With me the process is more like bird watching... I see pictures. Some of these have a common smell, which groups them together... If

you are very lucky (I have never been so lucky as all that) a whole set might join themselves so consistently that there you have a complete story without doing anything yourself. But more often (in my experience always) there are gaps. Then at last you have to do some deliberate inventing, have to contrive reasons why these characters should be in these various places doing these various things. (p. 41)

The "deliberate inventing" that Lewis speaks of in 1952 is part of the creative process: shaping the archetype into recognizable symbols and gives them a purpose within the context. Stealing "past the dragons" in 1956, however, attributes a specific meaning to these symbols and gives them a purpose within the context. As an artist, Lewis had no business doing this. By giving the archetype shape, the artist translates it into the language of the present and has done "his utmost"; he must then "leave the interpretation to others and to the future" (Jung, p. 104): if one ignores Lewis' recommendation that the Chronicles be read chronologically (beginning with *The Magician's Nephew* and ending with *The Last Battle*) and places them instead in the order of the actual writing, the linear, Judeo-Christian framework from *Genesis* to *Apocalypse* disappears.

Lewis' decision late in the writing of the Chronicles to construct an allegorical framework around them after denying Tolkien's earlier charge of allegory makes no sense until one remembers that from his earliest years he was firmly rooted in Victoriana. In fact, Lewis could have been a Victorian. The parallels between his career and Matthew Arnold's are striking. Arnold displays the same gap between imagination and intellect as Lewis; and neither man realized his potential as a poet: Arnold was overshadowed by Browning and Tennyson; Lewis' poetry is technically sound but lacks the inspiration of Yeats or even Walter de la Mare. Eventually, both men turned to writing prose and made their reputations as essayists. Arnold could have been speaking of himself and Lewis in his observation: "nothing is more striking than to observe in how many ways a limited concept of human nature, the notion of one thing needful, a side in us to be made uppermost, the disregard of a full and harmonious development in ourselves, tells injuriously on our thinking and acting" (p. 151).

In *Culture and Anarchy*, this one-sidedness is Philistinism, the Victorian middle class' obsession with "worldly splendour, security, power and pleasure" (p. 102), which Arnold attributes to the influence of the Industrial Revolution. Unable to "look beyond machinery to the end for machinery is valuable" (p. 76), the Philistine exchanges perfecting his internal condition for perfecting his external conditions. The result of abandoning "the idea of self-transformation," Arnold warns, is spiritual malaise (p. 99).

Because the nineteenth century's spiritual malaise became the modern spirit against which Lewis reacted so violently, it is not surprising that at Oxford, he avoided the younger dons, products of the modern public schools which he loathed, and began having breakfast with the

older men, among them, "P.V.M. Bencke, the Ancient History tutor, and J.A. Smith, the moral philosopher, both of them Victorians in ideas as well as appearance" (*Inklings*, p. 17-18). At Oxford in 1926, Lewis wrote: "Some of the older men are delightful: the younger fellows are none of them men of understanding" (*Inklings*, p. 158).

According to Howard W. Fulweiler, Arnold's problems in the nineteenth century is not "simply the loss of religious faith or of an organic principle or order in society, but it is a basic and shattering disillusionment with the creative and formative power of human beings, especially as that power is employed in the poet's use of imaginative language" (p. 29). In 1954, Lewis' dislike of Eliot's image of Evening, "patient etherized upon a table," is predicated precisely on his reaction to this *disillusionment*: "I don't believe one person in a million, under any emotional stress would see evening like that. And even if they did, I believe that anything but the most sparing admission of such images is a very dangerous game. To invite them, to recur willingly to them, to come to regard them as normal surely poisons us" (*Inklings*, p. 158).

Because he felt that Modernism's use of imaginative language destroyed the very creative and formative power which it should nurture, Lewis' imagination turned away from twentieth-century realism to science fiction and fairy tale. In doing so, Lewis participated in the imaginative response which James Baird identifies as appearing in the Western world during the Victorian period (approximately 1850) and continuing to the present day: primitivism.

Neither apologetic nor polemic, primitivism originates in a sense of cultural failure and takes the form of consequent attempts to restore vital symbols. Cultural failure is the loss of the regnant and commanding authority in religious symbolism, which is the ultimately effective symbolic authority in the total culture of a race (Baird, pp. 3-4, 16). In short, the tension between imagination and intellect found in Lewis springs from the cultural failure of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries: the Author attempts to revitalize symbolism, while the Apologist argues that the symbols used in the Chronicles are Christian.

Unfortunately for the Apologist's argument, modern cultural failure arises because "the ancient Christian symbols have lost their power to evoke artistic statements" (Baird, p. 17). Lewis himself observes this phenomenon in a letter to Arthur Greeves: "If I met the idea of sacrifice in a Pagan story I didn't mind it at all: again, that idea of the dying and reviving god (Balder, Adonis, Bacchus) similarly moved me provided I met it anywhere except in the Gospels" (*Letters*, p. 427).

Emotionally unable to respond to Christianity's symbols, Lewis is proof of Lawrence's truism: "When men become unresponsive and half dead, symbols die" (p. 296). Victorian by temperament, Lewis was unable wholly to accept symbolism just as he was unable wholly to accept Theism. In short, he became entangled in the trap of proof:

the Philistine's exchange of an *internal* condition for *external* conditions was also his own. In reply to F.R. Leavis, who belonged to a "tradition of educated infidelity" which can be traced back to Matthew Arnold, Lewis argues against subjectivity, which includes our emotional response to symbols, saying, "Unless we return to the crude and nursery-like belief in objective values, we perish" (*Inklings*, p. 64).

Nonetheless, the framework of allegory, which the Apologist built around the Tales does not obstruct their symbolic impulse. Even Kathryn Lindskoog bases her evaluation of the Chronicles on her emotional response to them: "we progress from a love of Narnia, to a greater love of Aslan himself, to a sharp regret that there is no Aslan in this world - and then, if my own experience is any guide - Narnia and this world interlock and Aslan and Christ are seen as one" (p. 13). Unfortunately, Aslan cannot be Christ, because not even Lewis "can invent symbols. He can invent an emblem, made up of images: or metaphors: or images: but not symbols" (Lawrence, p. 196). Because the nature of reader response to the Lion is emotional the Lion is neither emblem nor allegory. Nevertheless, elements of allegory are woven into the fabric of the Chronicles: in *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*, for example, Eustace and the Pevensies meet a Lamb frying fish at the edge of the Silver Sea. The Lamb's invitation to breakfast is an obvious allegory of Christ feeding the masses, "but as he spoke his snowy white flushed into tawny gold and his size changed and he was Aslan himself, towering above them and scattering light from his mane" (p. 209).

Significantly, the Lamb is transformed into the Lion. The irruption of the Lion out of the dead Christian symbol indicates that a new Signature is replacing the old: archetypal history is repeating itself "under the influence of the breakdown of Christianity" (Fielder, p. 496). Lewis' imagination as well as his intellect captures the myth of the dying and reviving god.

The archetype of the dying god is particularly well-suited to the primitivistic impulse, because primitivism bases its imaginative process on "the genesis of restoration from decay" (Baird, p. 4). The Lion creates Narnia, and, by his own death and rebirth, re-creates the creation. He is "the genesis of restoration from decay." According to Le Guin, fantasy's "original and instinctive movement" is also regenerative, because it is the journey to "self-knowledge, to adulthood, to the light" - its fantasy's primary concern is the regeneration of the psyche ("Cosmology", p. 124). Thus fantasy, like primitivism, also "enables man to 'rediscover the gods as psychic factors'" (Baird, p. 62).

Agreeing with Jung that the fairy tale liberates archetypes which dwell in the collective unconscious, Lewis says, "When we read a good fairy tale we are obeying the old precept 'Know thyself'" ("On Three Ways", p. 36). Archetypal images arise "whenever times are out of joint and a great error deflects society from the right path" (Jung, p. 103).

A response to what Spengler labels as our "reason-doomed culture" (Baird, p. 23), the Tales obviously invite a fantasy reading, but the problem of how to read them as fantasy still remains. The fantasy genre is so resistant to definition that it not only defies realists, but also fantasy theorists.³ Luckily, J.R.R. Tolkien anticipated this problem of definition in "On Fairy Stories": fairy stories cannot be defined in "a net of words," but "Faerie itself may perhaps most nearly be translated by Magic" (pp. 42-43).

Magic's oldest definition is transformation. Magia or Enchantment seeks "shared enrichment," and according to Tolkien, the Enchanter creates a world of which he is a part: subject to his own laws and transformed as a transform his world" (p. 71). Like Arnold's ideal of self-perfection, the Enchanter's goal is self-transformation. Aslan certainly creates Narnia by singing it into existence in *The Magician's Nephew*; he undergoes the transformation of death and rebirth in *The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe*, paralleling Narnia's change from winter to spring; he submits to invisibility on Coriakin's Island in *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*. Above all, however, his role as an Enchanter depends upon his use of power. White Magic, Magia, or Enchantment is sometimes called Good Magic, because it does not seek power over others. At no point in the Chronicles does the Lion bewitch or manipulate. When he asks Lucy on Coriakin's Island, "don't you think I would obey my own rules" (VDT, p. 136), his question is obviously rhetorical. After his sacrifice on the Stone Table, the Lion could not be anything other than a Stone.

According to Erich Neumann, primitive magical rites act upon the subject who practises the magic. It is left for modern man to make the psychological discovery, Neumann states, that the operative factor in magic is the "reality of the soul" and not the reality of the external world. Therefore, because the roots of White Magic lie in primitive man's purely subjective process, the Lion's rules lie in the principle. As Neumann points out, the emphasis in primitive Magic is on the alteration of the subject, and that effect which proceeds from an alternation in the subject is objective and real (p. 209).

Thus, the Lion makes no distinction between himself and the external world, because that which affects the reality of the world also affects him. From the term of invisibility with the Dufflepuds in *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader* to the necessity of providing the Witch with a willing sacrificial victim, Aslan will not "Work against the Emperor's Magic" (LWW, p. 129), because, in essence, he is that Magic himself.

Since, in Enchantment, the alteration in the subject is objective and real, "inner" experiences in the Chronicles manifest themselves physically. A dramatic example of this occurs when Aslan sings Narnia into being: "when a line of dark firs first sprang up on a ridge about a hundred yards away she felt that they were connected with a series of deep, prolonged notes which the Lion had sung a second before: And when he burst out into a rapid series

of lighter notes she was not surprised to see primroses appearing in every direction" (MN, p. 99). Aslan's creation of Narnia explains his significance in the series in spite of the fact that he occupies less than 20% of the total number of pages (there are references to the Lion in 171 of 1,091 pages) which make up the stories. Narnia is a manifestation of the Lion's inner reality, Aslan turned inside out.

As a result the Lion is always present, implicit in the landscape. In Narnia, the Lion is Tolkien's Enchanter in the most literal sense of the definition: he creates a world of which he is part, because that world is, in essence, himself.

This experience of an inner reality manifesting itself also occurs in the children. When Lucy finds Edmund after the battle, he is not only healed of his wounds, but is also "looking better"; "he had become his real old self again and could look you in the face" (LWW, p. 163). Literally presented as a process of self-transformation here, Enchantment occurs in every book of the series. The most spectacular transformation occurs when Lewis leaves the reader with no doubt that Eustace's experience as a dragon is the manifestation of a psychic reality: "he had turned into a dragon while he was asleep. Sleeping on a dragon's hoard with greedy, dragonish thoughts in his heart he had become a dragon himself" (VDT, p. 81).

Because the experience of a Faerian drama is very similar to that of dreaming (p. 70), it is appropriate that Eustace's "dragoning" takes place while he is asleep. Sleep, an activity solely devoted to the dreamer's psyche, and Enchantment, the experience of self-transformation in fantasy, are repeatedly linked in the Chronicles.

Since Enchantment is like dreaming, it is completely appropriate that Aslan bounded into *The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe* at a time when Lewis was having "a good many dreams about lions" ("It All Began", p. 53). Archetypes are often manifested in dreams, and introduced to the world from Lewis' own unconscious, even the Lion's name evokes the response proper to an archetype: "at the name of Aslan each child felt something jump in its inside" (LWW, p. 65). Edmund feels a sensation of mysterious horror similar to the response to the numinous discussed by Rudolf Otto in *The Idea of the Holy*. The fearful awe which Man experiences in the presence of the *mysterium tremendum* is proof of the divine and his alienation from it (pp. 10, 7). Edmund's alliance with the Witch certainly alienates him from Aslan. On the other hand, Lucy's, Susan's, and Peter's experiences of delight correspond closely to what Corbin Scott Carnell identifies as a related response to Otto's sensation of awe: delight evoked by the feeling that the individual "is becoming one with the universe and desires an even closer union" (p. 20).

The experience of Enchantment obviously depends on the condition of one's own psyche. The more subjective one's inner process, the closer one is to the Lion. In the Chronicles, Lucy, the youngest and least objective of the children, responds most fully to the Lion. It Lucy who

recognizes Aslan first in *Prince Caspian*, to whom the albatross comes in *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*, and whom Trian realizes is drinking in "everything more deeply than the others" (LB, p. 129).

According to Jung, archetypal images, which rise to the surface in dreams one-sided or adopts a false attitude, are designed to restore the psychic balance of the individual or epoch (p. 104). The imbalance which the Lion seeks to correct in the Chronicles is explicit. Seeking to escape from the Philistines at Experiment House – even the name of the school reminds the reader of scientific empiricism – Jill and Eustace evoke Magic by asking Aslan's permission to enter Narnia. The Lion, however, rises to the surface of their own psyches in their evocation; as Aslan explains to Jill: "you would not have called to me unless I had been calling to you (SC, p. 28). Enchantment, the children's conscious efforts to escape their world, coincides with the Lion's effort to draw them into this, and a balance is established in Narnia. When the children return to England, Lewis makes it clear that what the characters have experienced belongs to their psychic realities. Like the Pevensies, Eustace and Jill have been transformed but England has not. Having visited Narnia, the children's realities are altered, manifested in their appearances and behavior, but the world around them is unchanged: only "odd things they say – even their looks – will let the secret out (LWW, p. 170).

A collective image when viewed as a symbol rather than an allegorical figure, Aslan re-establishes the balance necessary for a healthy psyche. According to Lawrence, one may explain the myths away, but it seems only that one goes on "suffering blindly, stupidly, 'in the unconscious,' instead of healthily and with imaginative comprehension playing upon the suffering" (p. 296). Lewis may have been suffering from an imbalanced psyche, but the result that we have is his imaginative comprehension playing on that suffering – the function of the Lion is not only to Enchant but also to heal by enchanting.

The Lion heals both spiritually and physically. At several points in the Tales, the children draw strength from the Lion, and in *The Magician's Nephew*, Digory's mother is healed by the Lion's apple; but Aslan's healing of Caspian's old Nurse is the most explicit and moving example of his power: "he spoke, like the flush creeping along the underside of a cloud at sunrise, the colour came back into her face and her eyes grew bright and she sat up and said, 'Why I do declare I feel that better. I think I could take a little breakfast this morning'" (PC, pp. 173-74).

To read the Chronicles of Narnia is to become involved in the process of self-transformation which the Lion represents; this, no doubt, accounts for the series' popularity. Professor Kirke's England and the twentieth century are prime examples of what Jung identifies as man "lost in the isolation of consciousness and its errors and sufferings" (p. 105). When the Lion created Narnia, he filled a gap in our social fabric. The Chronicles play a compensatory role,

providing the reader with the healing experience of encountering what Lawrence calls "another kind of experience... truly imaginative" (p. 195).

A distinction must be made here between the response of an adult to the Chronicles and the response of a child. While reading the Chronicles, adults must respond to the reality of the psyche, a reality which Tolkien identifies as the experience of Faerian drama; he warns that "if you are present at Faerian drama you yourself are, or think that you are, bodily inside its secondary world" (p. 70). The response of a young child to the Chronicles is more literal than that of an adult, because the child has not yet been taught to think objectively. According to Walter Hooper, a family in Oxford finished reading *The Lion, The Witch, and the Wardrobe* to their young son only to discover the child attempting to hack his way through his parents' wardrobe with a hatchet – in search of Narnia. The only way to save the brick wall behind the wardrobe was apparently to read him another of the Tales immediately (Lindskoog, p. 14). For adults, the Tales are a cleansing and a healing process, much like Eustace's "undragoning" bath in *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*. Like Lewis, Jung also uses the metaphor of bathing when he speaks of the encounter with a collective image: "he has plunged into the healing and redeeming depths of the collective psyche" (p. 103). By re-entering the reality of the psyche, the adult reader re-encounters the experience of childhood in terms of its subjective outlook and is reminded of the reality which lies often inexperienced inside the adult. In short, when reading fantasy, intellect and imagination become, for a time, reconciled.

Since the reading process of the Chronicles is a healing process, and the Lion is a healer as well as an Enchanter, the process of enchantment also extends to a function of the fantasist. True to Tolkien's definition, Lewis is a fantasist who creates the Chronicles of Narnia which he and the reader may enter and enjoy at will, but Aslan creates Narnia. He not only literally creates Narnia, but he also takes on the role of the *author* of the events which occur there. Aslan often reminds Lucy that he is telling her story. To Aravis he says, "Child... I am telling you your own story, not hers. No one is told any but their own" (HB, p. 170). Aslan not only functions as selective narrator, he also explains events, providing expository lumps when necessary: to Shasta he says, "I was the lion who forced you to join Aravis, I was the cat who comforted you among the houses of the dead. I was the lion who drove the jackals from you while you slept. I was the lion who gave the Horses the strength of fear for the last mile so that you should reach King Lune in time" (HB, p. 139).

In effect, Aslan is his own fantasist. Through the device of Story, he heals with his Magic, manifesting the reality of the psyche by using the process of the imagination. Story-telling is a part of the Mage's Enchantment. By creating a world of "arresting strangenesses" the Enchanter offers the reader another reality: in the case of Narnia, the subjective vision of childhood. The constructor of his own fantasy world, Aslan is what Eliade defines as the zone of

"absolute reality" (p. 16). In essence, he is the sacred center.

Aslan is that experience somewhere within us that Lawrence says "is the old experience of the Euphrates, Mesopotamia between rivers" (p. 298). Underlying the fantasy impulse, the primitive thirst for being which impelled primitive man to attempt to transform the profane into sacred time accounts for the intensity of response to the Lion. Fantasy is "a natural human activity" (Tolkien, p. 72), and so is constructing according to archetype (Eliade 11). On the profane level, the fantasist re-creates in *illegitimo tempore* as best he can, because it is the point from which the creation of the fantasy world takes place. In the Chronicles of Narnia, the primordial image truly manifests itself, relegating the shamanistic function of the artist to a secondary concern, since the reader may encounter it in as direct a form as possible. The Lion's eruption into our conscious world is itself indicative of the process of Enchantment, because it heralds the replacement of the old, decayed Signature with the new and takes us back to that experience which not even twentieth century objectivism can destroy.

Endnotes

¹ For allegorical interpretations of the Tales see Kathryn Lindskoog's *The Lion of Judah in Never-Never Land* (1973), p. 13; Charles A. Huttar's "C.S. Lewis: Narnia and the Grand Design," pp. 119-135 in *The Longing for a Form: Essays on the Fiction of C.S. Lewis*, ed. Peter J. Schakel; and Stephen Schofield on J.R.R. Tolkien's dislike of Narnia in *In Search of C.S. Lewis*, ed. Stephen Schofield, p. 131. For pseudo-allegorical interpretations of the Tales see Richard Purtill's *Lord of the Elms and Eldils: Fantasy and Philosophy in C.S. Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien*, pp. 92-94; Walter Hooper's "Narnia—The Author, The Critics and The Tale," ed. Peter J. Schakel, pp. 159-70. Also see Chad Walsh's *The Literary Legacy of C.S. Lewis* (1979), pp. 123-58.

² Since Lewis himself uses the terms fantasy and fairy tale interchangeably in his discussion of fantastic literature for children — "within the species 'children's story' the sub-species which happened to suit me is the fantasy and fairy tale elements in the Chronicles and the fantasy and fairy tale worlds are both structured upon the pattern of the *psyche* (Interpretation, p. 17) and revolve around the individuation process. In essence, they belong to the same genre. Whatever differences they have are relatively minor.

³ Representative examples of differing definitions of fantasy are as follows: E.S. Rabin defines fantasy by the fantastic, because the fantastic contradicts our realistic perspectives (p. 4); W.R. Inge believes that fantasy is a narrative genre controlled by the overt violation of what is generally accepted as possible (p. 4); C.N. Manlove says that fantasy evokes wonder and contains an irreducible element of the supernatural (p. 7); T. Todorov bases his definition, like Rabin, on the fantastic, but defines the fantastic as an even which cannot be explained by the laws of the world (p. 3); Ruth Nichols thinks a true fantasy is a natural world alive with numerous values (p. 21); and Ursula K. Le Guin states that fantasy is the natural language of the spiritual journey of the soul and the struggle of good and evil therein ("The Child", p. 68).

Works Cited

- Arnold, Matthew. *Culture and Anarchy*. Ed. J. Dover Wilson. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960.
- Baird, James. *Ismael: A Study of the Symbolic Model in Primitivism*. New York: The John Hopkins Press, 1956.
- Carpenter, Humphrey. *The Inklings: C.S. Lewis, J.R.R. Tolkien, Charles Williams and their friends*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1979. Abbreviated in parenthetical references as *Inklings*.
- Corbin, Scott. *Bright Shadow of Reality: C.S. Lewis and the Feeling Intellect*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1974.
- Eliade, Mircea. *The Myth of the Eternal Return or, Cosmos and History* Prin-

- ceton: Bollingen Foundation Inc., New York, 1954.
- Fiedler, Leslie. "Archetype and Signature." *Art and Psychoanalysis*. Ed. W. Phillips. New York: Meridian Books, 1963. pp. 454-472.
- Griffiths, Alan Bede. "The Adventure of Faith." *C.S. Lewis at the Breakfast Table and Other Reminiscences*. Ed. James T. Combs. New York: MacMillan Co., Inc., 1977.
- Howard, Thomas. *The Achievement of C.S. Lewis: A Reading of His Fiction*. Wharton: Harold Shaw Publishers, 1980.
- Irwin, W.R. *The Game of the Impossible: A Rhetoric of Fantasy*. Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1976.
- Jung, Carl. *The Spirit in Man, Art and Literature*. London: Bollingen Foundation, 1966.
- Lawrence, D.H. "The Dragon of the Apocalypse by Frederick Carter." *Phoenix: The Posthumous Papers of D.H. Lawrence*. Ed. Edward D. McDonald. New York: Viking Press, 1936. 292-303.
- Le Guin, Ursula K. "The Child and The Shadow." *The Languages of the Night*. Ed. Susan Wood. New York: Perigee Books, 1979. 59-71. Abbreviated in parenthetical references as "The Child."
- "Do-It-Yourself Cosmology." *The Language of the Night*. Ed. Susan Wood. New York: Perigee Books, 1979. pp. 121-125. Abbreviated in parenthetical references as "Cosmology."
- Lewis, C.S. *The Horse and His Boy*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1954. Abbreviated in parenthetical references as *HB*.
- *The Last Battle*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1956. Abbreviated in parenthetical references as *LB*.
- *The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1950. Abbreviated in parenthetical references as *LWW*.
- *The Magician's Nephew*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1955. Abbreviated in parenthetical references as *MN*.
- "On Three Ways of Writing for Children." *On Stories*. Ed. Walter Hooper. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich Publishers, 1966. pp. 31-44. Abbreviated in parenthetical references as "On Three Ways."
- *Prince Caspian*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1951. Abbreviated in parenthetical references as *PC*.
- *The Silver Chair*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1953. Abbreviated in parenthetical references as *SC*.
- "Sometimes Fairy Stories May Say Best What's To Be Said." *On Stories*. Ed. Walter Hooper. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich Publishers, 1966. 143-153. Abbreviated in parenthetical references as "Sometimes."
- *Surprised by Joy*. London: Fontana Books, 1959. Abbreviated in parenthetical references as *Joy*.
- *They Stand Together: The Letters of C.S. Lewis to Arthur Greeves* (1914-1963). New York: MacMillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1979.
- *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1952. Abbreviated in parenthetical references as *VDT*.
- Lindskoog, Kathryn. *The Lion of Judah in Never-Never Land*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1973.
- Manlove, C.N. *Modern Fantasy: Five Studies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975.
- Neumann, Erich. *The Origins and History of Consciousness*. Princeton: Bollingen Foundation, 1954.
- Nichols, Ruth. "Fantasy and Escapism." *Canadian Children's Literature* 4 (1976): pp. 20-27.
- Otto, Rudolf. *The Idea of the Holy: An Inquiry into the non-rational factor in the idea of the divine and its relation to the rational*. Trans. John W. Harvey. London: Oxford University Press, 1952.
- Purtill, Richard. *Lord of the Elms and Eldils: Fantasy and Philosophy in C.S. Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Corporation, 1974.
- Rabin, E.S. *The Fantastic in Literature*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976.
- Reddy, Albert Francis S.J. *The Elise Unspeakable: An Introduction to the Fiction of C.S. Lewis*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. Armhurst: University of Massachusetts, 1972.
- Schakel, Peter J. Ed. *The Longing for a Form*. Ohio: The Kent State University Press, 1977. 136-158.
- Todorov, Tzvetan. *The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre*. Trans. Richard Howard. Cleveland: The Press of Case Western Reserve University, 1973.
- Tolkien, J.R.R. "On Fairy Stories." *Essays Presented to Charles Williams*. Ed. C.S. Lewis. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1966. pp. 38-89.
- Walsh, Chad. *The Literary Legacy of C.S. Lewis*. London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1979.