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Abstract: The writings of C. S. Lewis are heavily influenced by the literary tradition that defines the imaginary of Western culture, its mythologies, legends and tales. The aim of this study is to demonstrate how several instances of these types of works are mixed and re-written in *The Chronicles of Narnia*. The analysis will illustrate how Narnia's world, characters and plots are thoroughly constituted by the influences of the Arthurian legend, Greek and Roman mythology and fairy tales like Snow White, opening the discussion of the effect and purpose of these sources under the lens of myth criticism.

Keywords: *The Chronicles of Narnia*, C. S. Lewis, Arthurian legend, Greek mythology, fairy tales, myth criticism.

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0. Introduction

The Chronicles of Narnia, the saga of seven books by C. S. Lewis, has been thoroughly studied by scholars, exploring different levels and aspects of the novels. In this work, *The Chronicles* will be analysed under the framework of myth criticism, exploring the texts to found the traces of multiples classical sources that, apart from the religious ones, exist in the texts. The books have usually been read as texts that transmit Christian themes and teachings (Ross 134), a perspective justified by the well-known religious background of the

author. Instead, this analysis is with the objective to show the ample field of literature that composes Narnia and expand the interpretations that are traditionally assigned to the novels.

The Chronicles of Narnia is not a work that exists on its own, separated from influences. In truth, there are discussion of its influences (Hardy 8), most of them from a Christian approach, understanding the texts as derivative from biblical narratives, but there can be found other mythologies used by Lewis in the creation of this rich and deep world. All of these other sources are equally important and worthy of attention to fully comprehend and explore the texts of Narnia, composed upon many fine details and references entwined to form a complex and wide world.

To reach this objective, the study will commence with a discussion on the field of myth criticism and an examination of how the world of Narnia works as a myth, addressing the features and relevant elements that justify so. This will be followed by an in-depth reading of the series, addressing each mythological source independently to search and explore its influences in the *Chronicles*, and comment on the meaning or use of said elements.

The mythological sources that will be used in order to achieve that will be classified into three aspects, first, the Arthurian Legend, which after the Christian subtext is a major account in the building of the saga. Secondly, the study will focus in Greek and Roman mythology and how Lewis' knowledge of them was transferred to his works. The third and last source will be fairy tales, the very genre in which *The Chronicles* are classified, and how they appear in the world of Narnia, contributing to character construction and evolution.

1. Myth Criticism and the Narnian Myth

The Chronicles of Narnia has been classified by critics as children literature, or as fairy tales, but that does not exclude the work as a myth narrative. In fact, Mircea Eliade reads fairy tales and folklore, together with the saga, as linked with the myth narrative in many aspects: "Ciertamente, los mismos arquetipos –es decir, las mismas figuras y situaciones ejemplares– reaparecen indiferentemente en los mitos, la *saga* y los cuentos." (206)[1]

Concerning the texts at hand, there can be found critics that support this particular view of Narnia. For instance, Frank Riga, who claims that "In the controversy whether the *Chronicles* are allegoric or symbolic, several writers bypass the argument altogether by claiming they are neither: for them, the *Chronicles* are myth. [...] The *Chronicles*, as Lewis tells us, are fairy tales, and fairy tales are a mode of the mythic." (29). Riga also offers the views of another author, Peter Schakel, who similarly contends that "At their very best […] the *Chronicles* are high myth, communicating so directly to the imagination and emotions through powerful images and symbols that they cannot be translated fully into intellectual terms" (qtd. in Riga 29). The reasons behind this view are clear; since many of the sources that influence Lewis' series are mythological, or derived from folklore, the themes, content and form of the books can be approached through this field of literary criticism, which elevates them from ordinary children literature to a relevant mythical narrative that is rooted in the subconscious of any given culture.

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[1] "Certainly, the same archetypes –that is, the same figures and situations exemplary– reappear indistinctly in the myth, the *saga* and the Fairy Tales." (Eliade 206, translation mine)

Having all of this in mind, and before subjecting *The Chronicles of Narnia* to a myth criticism reading, the concept of myth criticism and its objects of study need to be delineated. We should also be aware of the importance and presence of the mythological narrative not only in classical literature, but in all literary expressions, no matter the time or the culture. Myth criticism can be defined as "The study of both myths as literature and literature as myths — in the former case, myths are read for their own specific literary merit and as historical precursors to later literary texts [...]; in the latter case, [...] literary texts are read as creative reworkings of myths." ("Myth Criticism"); or, to state it in a simpler manner "a kind of literary interpretation that regards literary works as expressions or embodiments of recurrent mythic patterns and structures, or of 'timeless' archetypes" ("Terms & Themes"). This means that myth criticism is interested in the mythological archetypes found in the texts, which are reworked and recast from previous sources, and in how mythology implies a transcendence from the natural to the supernatural in its narrative that can help the reader to find an understanding of the self (Losada 114). The present study argues that all of these aspects are to be found in *The Chronicles of Narnia*.

One of the main aspects of a mythology is its cosmology, that is, the narrative of the cosmogony and the eschatology in which the myth is established. This is perceived without a doubt in the series. Two of its seven books refer exclusively to this mythological narrative, *The Magician's Nephew* as the origin or creation myth, and *The Last Battl*e to narrate the end of the world of Narnia. Both of these books possess the major transcendental characteristic: the link of two worlds, the natural and the metaphysical. As Losada explains, "el mito tiende a explicar, mediante una lógica simbólica, la relación entre dos mundos; lo que ocurre en el mundo sobrenatural explica lo que vemos en nuestro mundo natural." (163).[2] He also remarks the necessity of this supernatural world multiple times, normally linking it to the spiritual or inner-self plane. (166)

Lewis was aware of this relationship between worlds; we can find this element discussed and explained in several of his essays: "to construct plausible and moving 'other worlds' you must draw on the only real 'other world' we know, that of the spirit" (Lewis *On Stories* 16). To this he added:

> When we suppose the world of daily life to be invaded by something other, we are subjecting either our conception of daily life or our conception of that other, or both, to a new test.[...] If it succeeds, we shall come to think, and feel, and imagine more accurately, more richly, more attentive. (Lewis *On Stories* 34).

Here Lewis refers to the fact that by taking the experiences provoked from this supernatural, mythological world and translating them into our natural world, the reader can reach a deeper understanding of his/her self.

So, it cannot come as a surprise that this concept explicitly appears in the books. In *The Voyage of the 'Dawn Treader'*, Aslan refers to his existence in the world of the

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[2] "Myth tends to explain, through a symbolic logic, the relationship between two worlds; what happens in the supernatural world explains what we see in our natural world." (163, translation mine)

Pevensies, the 'real' world, and how they need to translate their relation to it (Lewis, *The Chronicles of Narnia* 541); while in the end of *The Last Battle* the comparison between the fake Narnia and the real Narnia will be a recurring topic (Lewis, *The Chronicles of Narnia* 765).

Another element that usually appears in the mythological narrative is the moral message or transcendental idea, the construction in these worlds that are created of a law and order that can explain the essence of the man as individual and social (Losada 136). In the *Chronicles*, this law of the world is seen in the Deep Magic that imposes penance to traitors, for example, and in the character of Aslan, who poses moral dilemmas to the protagonists and, through them, to the reader.

There is also a construction of myth within the fictional world of Narnia, found in *Prince Caspian*, in which the Pevensies learn that one thousand years have passed in Narnia since their first visit, related in *The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe*, and their arrival is seen as a myth come to life (Lewis *The Chronicles* 362). This idea, the turning of events into stories and of the latter into legends and myths, is also studied in myth criticism, to explain the turn of a historic text into fable and its posterior mythification, exploring the spiritual implication of the text. The cinematic adaption of J. R. R. Tolkien's *The Fellowship of the Ring*, offers in its presentation a neatly summarised articulation of this transformative process, "History became legend, legend became myth" (*The Lord of the Rings).* Within the field of canonical literature, a clear example of this concept is the mythification of the Arthurian legends and narratives.

2. Mythological Sources

The influence of mythology can be found in almost every aspect of the books: the narrative style, the world building, the transformation and evolution of characters, plot points and in moral values, acting as foundation and tools for Lewis' own narrative purposes. As Fiona Tolhurst explains, "Lewis tends not to cite particular passages from source texts but rather to blend and modify ideas and images from several sources at once" (2), creating this mix of texts that is *The Chronicles of Narnia.* Among these mythological influences are the Arthurian Myth, Greek and Roman mythology and fairy tales such as "Snow White" or "The Snow Queen", to name a few, which in their combination conformed the universe of the much-cherished series.

Thus, excluding the widely discussed Christian influence, the analysis will search for this sources in the seven books that comprise the *Chronicles* to illustrate how in his work, Lewis manages to synthesise them into a mythology of its own.

2.1 Arthurian Legend

After the Christian influence, this Mythology can be argued to have the most relevance in the creation of Narnia. The Arthurian narrative is considered to be within the wide spectrum of texts that composes the myth classifications, together with the previous mentioned fairy tales and saga (Smith). With a wide cast of characters, each with their own story ark, characteristics and aims, the Arthurian legend is a source of nourishment to the saga, but this narrative is overlooked by most scholars:

Consideration of the influence of the Arthurian legend upon one of the twentieth century's most prolific and popular writers positions Lewis within an interpretative context to which neither general readers nor Arthurian literature specialists have paid sufficient attention. (Tolhurst 1)

In her study, Tolhurst labels Lewis as a Closet Arthurian (1), exploring this influence in all of his works. Though this essay is focused only in *The Chronicles*, Tolhurst's claims highlight the relevance that Lewis gives to the Arthurian narrative:

Lewis' integration of Arthurian characters and themes into his literary works is not surprising, given his study and love of various mythological systems as well as his respect for the non-Christian mythologies that he believed had prepared him for reconversion to Christianity. (Tolhurst 2-3)

In her article, she mentions some of the referents that appear in the books, in a general manner, presenting the comparison between *The Voyage of the 'Dawn Treader'* and the Grail Quest, or the Deplorable Word in *The Magician's Nephew* and the Dolorous Stroke (19).

A starting point in this analysis of the Arthurian influence is the reading of the Oxford World's Classics introduction to *Le Morte Darthur*, in which Helen Cooper describes the form and content of the text, two dimensions in which there can be found the first similarities. First, concerning form,

"[…] about Malory's narrative: he presents speeches and actions, not thoughts or motives, and the inner life of his characters has to be deduced from those [...] His style has been compared to that of a chronicle, and indeed he repeatedly insists on the fact that the Arthurian adventures were a matter of record" (Cooper xvii).

Though not with the exact same style, this paradigm characterises many moments of the series, especially the battle scenes, that are usually, as happens in *Le Morte Darthur*, presented as a record of them, narrated through a character, like the case of the dwarf Trumpkin in *Prince Caspian* (Lewis *The Chronicles* 358) or the hermit in *The Horse and his Boy* (Lewis *The* Chronicles 293). These scenes usually follow the main character's actions, without much explanation of the surroundings or specific details. The style of narration can also be seen when referring to the court behaviour, though in a different way. Arthur and his knights speak with an insistence in protocol, attending to character titles (Cooper xvii) and with a specific range of language, which is also used when the Penvensies are Kings and Queens in *The Horse and his Boy.*

The use of 'chronicles' in the title, also, cannot be passed over as mere coincidence. Lewis in not merely telling the adventures of children appearing in strange places, he is presenting us a whole world, with its culture, traditions and history, of which he only tells the reader some of its events, but making references to many others that gives solidity and

richness to the whole narration, providing Narnia with a strong foundation upon which the moral and spiritual messages can rest:

> And he went on to talk of old Queens and heroes whom she had never heard of. He spoke of Swanwhite the Queen who had lived before the days of the White Witch and the Great Winter, who was so beautiful that when she looked into any forest pool the reflection of her face shone out of the water like a star by night for a year and a day afterwards. He spoke of Moonwood the Hare, who had such ears that he could sit by Caldron Pool under the thunder of the great waterfall and hear what men spoke in whispers at Cair Paravel. He told how King Gale, who was ninth in descent from Frank the first of all Kings, had sailed far away into the Eastern seas and delivered the Lone Islanders from a dragon and how, in return, they had given him the Lone Islands to be part of the royal lands of Narnia for ever. He talked of whole centuries in which all Narnia was so happy that notable dances and feasts, or at most tournaments, were the only things that could be remembered, and every day and week had been better than the last." (Lewis *The Chronicles* 716).

Secondly, concerning the similitude in content, there can be found in the actions of certain characters, like Merlin and Aslan or the behaviour of some characters. In Cooper's introduction appear mentions of the characterization of our protagonists and antagonists: "Good knighthood in Malory is presented in terms of models and counter models [...] his women have to make their mark in other ways. Their separation from the military world makes them, for instance, much more fully social beings than the male characters" (xvi, xviii).

While in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, the two male Pevensies, Peter and Edmund, are battling, the two Pevensie sisters, Susan and Lucy, do not take part in battle, or at least, a battle recognized as such, even though they collaborate in their brothers' efforts (Lewis *The Chronicles* 187). However, it is undeniable the significance of Lucy in the novels, being the most accomplished character, and having, arguably, the strongest connexion to Narnia. She is, after all, the one that founds Narnia at the beginning of the novel and the one that, through her conversations with Aslan and her actions throughout the entire series, readers can understand better by having a more complete picture of her character and point of view. Susan, meanwhile, suffers a decreased development from being initially presented in an equal status to Lucy—not a warrior, but an active agent in the world—to being a court lady, without any relevance in the battle. This is seen in *The Horse and His Boy*, where she is the only Pevensie that does not fight against the Calormenes in Archenland (Lewis *The Chronicles* 290), a lack of participation that defines her usual conduct in the real world, as mentioned in *The Last Battle* (Lewis *The Chronicles* 741).

Regarding knighthood models, which are inherently linked with the moral code to follow, one clear example of them can be found in *Prince Caspian*, in which Caspian and Peter are contrasted with Caspian's uncle Miraz and his lords, and opposed in battle not only for a kingdom, but about morals. Another knighthood standard that can be observed is the treatment of the court. In the "Explanatory Notes" of *Le Morte Darthur*, Cooper states this

about a passage: "Arthur's other counsellors advise him similarly. That he consults his knights before taking action marks his rule as good kingship rather than tyranny" (538). This idea of tyranny versus good kingship is also reflected in the contrast between Caspian and Miraz, and how they treat their allies.

The next thing to discuss is the similarities between Aslan and Merlin. Both of magical or mystical origins, they are two of the main characters in their respective narratives, though they are not the main warriors in the battle or centre of the plot. Their area is more focused in acting for the good of the kingdom, in helping the king. Both Merlin and Aslan give legitimacy to kings, Merlin announcing the real lineage of Arthur, making him lawful King (Malory 13), and Aslan presenting Caspian as 'son of Adam', and thus, with legitimacy to be king of Narnia (Lewis *The Chronicles* 416). They are also portrayed as characters that in some occasions will appear hidden and disguised, giving advice, comfort and help to the characters, advancing the plot, and there can be found many examples for this function in both narratives. In *The Horse and His Boy*, Aslan helps in many occasions, revealing only his actions at the end:

> "I was the lion who forced you to join with 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 new strength of fear for the last mile so that you should reach King Lune in time. And I was the lion you do not remember who pushed the boat in which you lay, a child near death, so that it came to shore where a man sat, wakeful at midnight, to receive you" (Lewis *The Chronicles* 281)

Meanwhile, due to the narrative style of *Le Morte Darthur*, the reader will know Merlin's interventions, forms and words at the same time he acts. In fact, both of them are what Joseph Campbell describes as 'Supernatural Aid':

> In fairy lore it may be some little fellow of the wood, some wizard, hermit, shepherd or smith, who appears, to supply the amulets and advise that the hero will require. The higher mythologies develop the role in the great figure of the guide, the teacher, the ferryman, the conductor of the souls to the afterworld. (72)

Following the idea of announcing legitimate heirs to the throne, Lewis includes another reference from Arthurian legend that, although can be viewed as an archetype, shows many specific details so as not to be a direct influence. This is the reveal that Shasta, the main protagonist of *The Horse and His Boy*, is in reality the lost prince of Archeland, Cor (Lewis *The Chronicles* 301). This is an element that also appears in the narration of King Arthur's wedding, where a cowherd's son is announced to be the real son of King Pellinore. This boy, named Tor, is described as always wishing to be a knight, not caring for the family trade (Malory 52). Shasta shows this characteristic as well, longing for the North, his place of origin (Lewis *The Chronicles* 210). There are in both cases the remark of no similarities between the adopting father and the son, and both are sons of a close-ally of King Arthur, King Pellinore and his equivalent in the Narnian narrative, King Peter, with King Lune. These

details link the character of Shasta — or Cor— with Tor in almost the same way, making the influence of one over the other irrefutable.

In the search for more transferred elements from Arthurian legend to the world of Narnia, Lewis himself reveals one of them: "Nature has that in her which compels us to invent giants: and only giants will do. (Notice that Gawain was in the north-west corner of England when 'etins aneleden him', giants came *blowing* after him on the high fells)" (Lewis *On Stories* 10). This passage does have a strong similitude to the way the giants of the Wild Wastelands of the North appear in *The Silver Chair* (Lewis *The Chronicles* 586), using nature as a base to create the giants.

It can be very easy to identify characteristics of Arthur Pendragon in Peter Pevensie. Both are High Kings in their reign, and, thanks to narrative, they are transformed into icons of a Golden Age that has its transcendence in the history of the world they belong to. "Consequently, when he Pevensie children had returned to Narnia last time for their second visit, it was (for the Narnians) as if King Arthur came back to Britain" (Lewis *The Chronicles* 429). Both of noble disposition, they are warrior kings with gifted swords of magical power that make them recognizable to their subjects. Both are kings promised by a prophecy: Arthur's was to pull out the Sword in the Stone, which marked his royal lineage, and Peter's prophecy revolves around the end of the White Witch's reign. In addition, as Arthur has his Knights of the Round Table to give counsel, so does have Peter his brother and sisters to reign with.

Even with these few examples the effect and influence of Arthurian legend is visible in the creation of the Myth of Narnia, giving it not only a very rich and stable base that can be expanded and worked on, but helps it, thanks to archetypes and the use of the source text, to approach the transcendental side of the myth.

2.2 Greek and Roman Mythology

Lewis was also a well-versed reader of the classics, and that implies that he had a considerable knowledge of the Greek myths, which is reflected in the world of Narnia. Be it a small detail or the influence for an entire book, Greek mythology is present in all parts of the saga.

Starting from the most prominent influence, there is no doubt of the impact that caused the Greek classic epics, *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey,* on the outline and structure of the whole series. In one specific book, *The Voyage of the 'Dawn Treader'*, the similitude with *The Odyssey* is obvious both at a plot level and in the construction and development of characters. The basic premise of both could be summarised in the idea of a seafaring king that navigates through the ocean, arriving to islands and encountering their inhabitants. But Lewis not only used the basic plot to shape the story; it also created the context and the continuity that exists between Homer's epics. *The Odyssey* is the sequel to *The Iliad*, narrating the story of king Odysseus after he departs from Troy once the war is over. Likewise, *The Voyage of the 'Dawn Treader'* is a direct sequel of *Prince Caspian*, as the king that leads the Dawn Treader's expedition is none other than Caspian, and the book presents the outcomes of the Pevensies' previous adventure.

Prince Caspian is one of the most war oriented books of the saga, and, like *The Iliad*, is based upon a conflict between two people, the Telmarines and Old Narnians in the case of the former and the Greeks and the Troyans in the latter's case, caused by a theft, be it the rightful throne or a spouse.

Although Odysseus can be arguably the main protagonist in the epic—it has his name, after all—the work is co-protagonised by his son, Telemachus. While Odysseus is navigating to go back home, Telemachus is the one that embarks in a journey to find his father's whereabouts and if he is alive or dead. This storyline resonates with the character and actions of Caspian, who after the war and being crowned king searches for a connection with his deceased father and his reign, which traced back to the Old Narnians Kings and Queens', to assert himself as a rightful king, or hero, in the point of view of the Greek epic: "he makes the growing up of Telemachus an *issue* of the epic. Is this young man fit to be the son of a hero? If so, how will he prove it?" (Jones xxi).

While the main plot of the story and the actions and scenes do resemble Odysseus' narrative, the essential issue of the book is formed around this topic, the evolution and the realization of Caspian from being a young prince to establish himself as the King of Narnia, with the aim to seek his place in the world. Caspian, unlike Telemachus, does not have a father to search for, but seven lords, friends of his father and the only left connection to him, the same as the war companions of Odysseus. In both cases, these lords or kings recognize the son and establish a connection with the father figure, providing a base of qualities for them, upon which Caspian and Telemachus grown to become their own man.

This recognition scene is approached in a very similar manner in the two narratives, being both at the beginnings of their adventures, and the characteristics remarked are not only the looks, but also the posture or the way their father spoke. In the case of Telemachus, this is presented in his audience with Nestor "Indeed, I cannot help looking at you in awe: you talk exactly as he did, and I should have sworn no young man could resemble so in speech." (Homer 30) and with Menelaus:

> For never in man or woman have I seen such a likeness before - I am lost in admiration. Surely this must be great-hearted Odysseus' son Telemachus [...] You point out a resemblance I can see too. Odysseus' feet were just the same, and so were his hands, the movement of his eyes, the shape of his head and the way his hair grew. (44)

Caspian will have this confirmation of his legacy with Lord Bern in the first stop of their journey: "'I bought you for your face. You remind me of someone.'[...] 'it is his father's very voice and trick of speech. My liege – your majesty...'" (Lewis *The Chronicles* 444). Other similarities between Caspian and Odysseus concerning their behaviour or certain episodes are the bad decision of exploring the island of Felimath, which results in the enslavement of Caspian's crew, just like Odysseus when he endangers his shipmates on the island of the Cyclops (Homer 114), or the similitude that is made explicit in the book by Edmund, related to the episode of the Sirens (Lewis *The Chronicles* 537). In fact, in that regard, the Pevensies can also be linked with Odysseus.

The Odyssey is the end of Odysseus' journey after leaving Ithaca 20 years ago; and is also the case with Edmund and Lucy, that will travel to Narnia for the last time. For them, is the end of a period of adventures and the return to home, Ithaca or the real world. They will act also as a link between the past and the new generations, providing example and support to them, being Eustace in Narnia of Telemachus in Ithaca.

But Lewis not only took inspiration from Homer's works. He also introduces in the world of Narnia scenes and characters from various myths, which live without question between the fantastic figures like Talking Beasts or Giants. Examples of this case appear in all books, and the references are varied and broad in topic. In *Prince Caspian* there can be found some of them very clearly, more direct than others. In it, when the Pevensies separate, the boys helping Caspian forces and the girls accompanying Aslan (fulfilling the roles dictated by medieval standards, as previously stated), Susan and Lucy will meet Bacchus, Silenus and his Maenads (Lewis *The Chronicles* 388). The scene shows the idea of the Bacchanal, a wild party where creatures as dryads or naiads—of Greek origin and prominently featured in the books—will appear and join the festivity, which later will infect with merriment all the places they visit.

The appearance of these characters and their actions, and the meaning behind them, is hinted in the book itself. Lucy and Susan remember that Tumnus the faun, the first Narnian that Lucy met during the events of *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, talked about Bacchus and his celebrations, a memory that alongside the return of the Pevensies is viewed as a sign of the end of Miraz' new order and the coming back of the old traditions and, consequently, of the moral values of Old Narnia, which follow the code of honour of medieval knights.

It can also be found a reference to the myth of King Midas and his capacity to transform into gold anything that touches him in *The Voyage of the 'Dawn Treader'*, when they found an island with a lake that share the same curse as Midas did, offering to the travellers the same lesson that the myth gives (Lewis *The Chronicles of Narnia* 483). In that regard, one more aspect of the Greek Myths that is reflected in Narnia is moral instruction, primarily linked with the concept of Hubris. Hubris is defined as arrogance or overconfident pride and the character defined by this attitude usually displays defiance towards the authority figures or the gods, being usually punished by them in the end for his or her actions. Examples of this paradigm can be the myths of Icarus, Narcissus or Arachne, and is the influence of this last two that will be seen in *The Voyage of the 'Dawn Treader'*. A usual punishment for the display of Hubris was a metamorphosis caused by the gods, serving as a lesson of humility against this prideful attitude, and it will be so to the new protagonist introduced in this book, Eustace Scrubb. He is a character that will show detestable traits and behaviour throughout the book, until his actions get him transformed into a dragon, without a way of communication and isolated from the rest of the crew. With the help of the mouse Reepicheep, he will see the wrong way of his actions and views of life, learning this humility and leaving his pride behind. This is a crucial lesson for the character of Eustace, treated in such a way that the readers can sympathise and learn with him, and afterwards, to forgive his past actions, as they did in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* with Edmund and his own show of pride and arrogance.

Thus, Greek myths are a great influence, treated and implemented with care in the books, while giving them an interpretative twist to fit in the narrative. Lewis focuses on the take on the formative lessons that the classics can provide for the younger audience, instead on focusing on more adult themes because, after all, Narnia is still a children's book.

2.3 Fairy-tales

This essay has alluded already to fairy tales and why, together with folklore, they can be related to the myth narrative, be it in terms of natural and transcendental connection, sharing the structure of myth narration or the characters following certain stereotypes or guidelines. Moreover, it is also significant to have in mind the deep love that C. S. Lewis had for this particular type of literature and its form (Lewis *On Stories* 70). Hence, it is with little surprise that while he was creating the folklore and tales of his own world, Lewis went back to already existing ones to draw inspiration from them, taking elements to build his *Chronicles*, be it to shape the world itself, the characters and their roles or to generate certain plot points.

In addition to this, creatures as werewolves, giants, wizards, centaurs and talking beasts are as normal in the world of Narnia as humans are in the mundane world, and it will be the children who will appear strange to the Narnian natives. It will be these magical and mythical creatures, like the Badger Trufflehunter, the Mouse Reepicheep, The Horse Bree or the Marsh-wiggle Puddleglum, that will give lessons to the children, sharing their wisdom and help them in their journeys, imparting important morals and values to the protagonists, but also to the readers, as it is usual in fables and fairy tales.

> According to Tolkien the appeal of the fairy story lies in the fact that man there most fully exercises his function as a 'subcreator'[...] For Jung, fairy tale liberates Archetypes which dwell in the collective unconscious, and when we read a good fairy tale we are obeying the old precept 'Know thyself'.[...]the presence of beings other than humans which yet behave, in varying degrees, humanly: the giants, dwarfs and talking beasts. I believe these to be at least (for they may have many other sources of power and beauty) an admirable hieroglyphic which conveys psychology, types of character, more briefly than novelistic presentation (Lewis *On Stories* 53).

This means that to readers these characters will represent a moral attitude or a way of behaviour to imitate or value, showed in a way that can made them be appreciated and that would inspire a desire to be like them. Reepicheep will be the face of courage, Trufflehunter represents the concept of loyalty, and Puddleglum, in an interesting twist, will be a cynical and pessimistic point of view over life, but far from being disheartening, it can be appreciated in its own way, because it does not lose faith in the best outcome or diminishes the efforts for a good end.

When referring to direct influences of specific fairy tales over characters in the saga, the White Witch— also known as Jadis of Charn— in particular is a clear example of this aspect. The development that she goes through, from being the Last Queen of her natal world, Charn, in *The Magician's Nephew* to being a conqueror and Queen of Narnia in the

second book of the saga, mixes various characters of recognizable fairy tales. First, in *The Magician's Nephew,* we can find in her great similitudes with the Evil Queen in "Snow White". This Queen, though beautiful, is fierce, heartless and with a deep envy of her rival's beauty, which is what she equals to power, same as the relationship between Jadis and her sister in Lewis' text. Both queens go to great lengths to eliminate any threat to their plans, and without remorse. But not only in character does this two queens resemble each other.

The first time Jadis is described, the main aspect of her that is highlighted is her beauty. In fact, it will be, alongside her height, the main element that many characters through the book will remark upon (Lewis *The Chronicles* 34). And this idea of beauty will follow her through her physical transformation into another character, Snow White herself. This connection is made very evident, due to her acts and description: "She was just throwing away the core of the apple which she had eaten [...] For the Witch looked stronger and prouder than ever, and even, in a way, triumphant; but her face was deadly white, white as salt" (Lewis *The Chronicles* 93).

Jadis eats the apple from the garden, and, as is explained later by Aslan, it becomes poison to her, although it will bestow favours as well. This apple will transform her, and her image will remind the reader of the tale of "Snow White" without any doubt possible. In the original tale, Snow White is described as having: "her skin a white as snow, her cheeks as rosy as the blood and her hair as black as ebony" (Clapman 418). This description does not differ much from the previously one, but the similarities become even more blatant in The White Witch's description in *The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe*: "Her face was white—not merely pale, but white like snow or paper or icing-sugar, except for her very red mouth. It was a beautiful face" (Lewis *The Chronicles* 123).

In addition to the reference to "Snow White", The White Witch gets another source in her creation: the Snow Queen from Hans Christian Andersen's Fairy tales. The most evident influence can be seen in the presentation of both of them and in their immediate actions concerning the young boys that they find:

> The great sled topped, and the person who had driven it rose up. The fur and the cap, which were made entirely of snow, fell off, and he saw a lady, tall and white – it was the Snow Queen.
>
> 'We have driven well' said she, 'but why do you tremble? Here, creep into my warm fur.' Then she seated him beside her in the sled, and as she wrapped the fur around him he felt as if he were sinking into a snowdrift.
>
> 'Are you still cold?' she asked, as she kissed him on the forehead (Andersen 44)

The Snow Queen arrives and first enthrals Kay with her beauty and, then, with her kisses, using her magic on him and making the boy forget the cold, the world around him and his family, leaving him with the only wish to follow her. This same thing happens as well with Edmund when he first arrives to Narnia:

> But behind him, on a much higher seat in the middle of the sledge sat a very different person — a great lady, taller than any woman that Edmund had ever seen. She also

was covered in white fur up to her throat and held a long straight golden wand in her right hand and wore a golden crown on her head [...] "My poor child," she said in quite a different voice, "how cold you look! Come and sit with me here on the sledge and I will put my mantle round you and we will talk." Edmund did not like this arrangement at all but he dared not disobey; he stepped on to the sledge and sat at her feet, and she put a fold of her fur mantle round him and tucked it well in. "Perhaps something hot to drink?" said the Queen. "Should you like that? (Lewis *The Chronicles* 123-125)

The White Witch uses the same actions to deceive Edmund to be on her side, using her magic and her words to get his favour, serving as the plot device to separate Edmund from his siblings, as the boy becomes bewitched by the magic that she used. Within these events, we can find a warning against blindly following the Greek ideal that equals beauty with goodness and virtuous acts (Pappas), and how the acts of the person have a greater significance than the appearances projected in words or looks. This, in addition, is translated to the witch of *The Silver Chair*, whose beauty is described and linked with the idea of poison (Lewis *The Chronicles* 576).

Moreover, the influence of the Snow Queen not only can be found in the White Witch, although it will remain deeply connected to her. In the first book of the saga, *The Magician's Nephew*, the relationship of Polly and Diggory is littered with similitudes to the relationship between Kay and Gerda. Both pair of children play together, living in buildings next to each other and share a small space in the upper roof of their houses; this space will constitute, for Polly and Diggory, founding the room of Uncle Andrew, and will be the place where Kay gets the small fragment of mirror in his eye, both scenarios being the starting point of their adventure, Also, Diggory resembles Kay in that both have a bad temper, as the former's despicable actions in some moments of the book hurt Polly, patronizing her and disregarding her advice.

As in the study of Greek mythology, the influence and the mixing of folklore and fairy tales is visible in the saga and used as not only base for the explanation of the magical elements of the books, but also to support a more mystical discourse that the intended readers can assimilate with ease.

3. Conclusion

As mentioned previously, *The Chronicles of Narnia*, by C. S. Lewis, is a rich, well- developed and full of detail narrative, composed not only by the most discussed Christian narrative, but influenced by a vast collection of texts and myths, of all types, that help create a new mythical text.

It uses Arthurian texts to create the base moral codes, the knighthood standards of conduct, like the distinction between the tyranny of Miraz and the kingship of Caspian, the way of narration and the roles that the characters adopt, with many direct influences. This point illustrated with the parallelisms of Merlin and Aslan or Arthur and Peter, and many others that are hidden until they are searched for, like the case of Shasta and Tor.

The influence of the Greek mythology is more direct in form, because is used mainly to create plot structures, seen in the argument frame of *The Voyage of the 'Dawn Treader'*, akin to *The Odyssey*, and visible also in the treatment of characters. The text brings with it the lessons that these myths contains, using among others the tale of King Midas or the concept of Arachne metamorphosis to teach against Hubris translated in different form but the same in what matters.

Finally, the element of the fairy tales, so overlooked, is not only present, but key sometimes to create a character or to provide depth to a one already existing, clearly shown with the White Witch and his creation using elements of "Snow White" and "The Snow Queen". This way of presenting characters also helps to reach the intended audience of the books, children, with ease and clarity, and so transmitting the intended message without much difficulty.

Lewis' books are a rework of all these narratives, a mix that, although it contains archetypes and plot devices used by all kinds of myths, create a fresh and new myth on itself. That is why the discussion of this new mythical narrative is so important, by staying away from the most normally discussed Christian explanation, this work ought to create a new appreciation for what has been poorly discussed before, but has the same relevance as the main source of discussion and interpretation, creating new angles to approach and understand the text.

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