The capacity to wonder: An approach to C S Lewis' "Chronicles of Narnia"

Deborah Cynthia Taylor

College of William & Mary - Arts & Sciences

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THE CAPACITY TO WONDER: "AN APPROACH TO C. S. LEWIS' CHRONICLES OF NARNIA"

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Author

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Carl P. Daw, Jr.

Terry L. Meyers

Michael K. Donegan
ABSTRACT

Much of C. S. Lewis' literary criticism is directly applicable to his *Chronicles of Narnia*. In both criticism and fairy tales, he emphasizes the childlike capacity to wonder, a quality which many of us relinquish upon arriving at the threshold of adulthood. According to Lewis, we should never be so concerned about acting grown-up that we unwittingly lose the capacity to wonder and shut ourselves out of fairyland.

In his literary criticism, Lewis suggests that the adult who views with contempt the "childish" taste for fairy tales is guilty of illogical reasoning. In the first place, he neglects the history of the genre; the fairy tale has in the past been an adult medium of entertainment. Secondly, he embraces a false conception of growth; growth consists not of forsaking old interests but of acquiring new ones. And finally, he commits an inductive fallacy. That some childhood characteristics are undesirable does not imply that all of them are, and one very desirable childhood characteristic is the capacity to wonder.

Theory becomes concrete in Lewis' *Chronicles*. In those fairy tales he demonstrates through a menagerie of self-implicating grown-ups that adult is not necessarily a term of approval, while he inversely emphasizes the childlike capacity to wonder. Those in the *Chronicles* who feign adult airs (be they grown-ups or children) generally treat childhood and fairy tales with scorn; they neither demonstrate faith in Faërie nor recognize the desirability of the childlike potential for wonder.

One possible reason for Lewis' preoccupation with that potential may stem from his own liberation from the bonds of feigned sophistication. A comparison of Boxen, a land which Lewis created in his youth, and Narnia reveals Lewis' ultimate liberation from the boring realm of adulthood: the grown-up concerns of Boxen—the Clique, politics, and money—are either neglected entirely or treated with disdain in Narnia, and the grown-up animals in Boxen shed their adult airs in favor of truer and more bestial natures in Narnia. Lewis' release from the bonds of contrived adulthood was coupled with a renewed capacity to wonder and an unabashed delight in fairy tales.

Furthermore, Lewis may emphasize the capacity to wonder because that capacity responds to Sehnsucht and Eucatastrophe, both concepts which awaken in the reader the bittersweet yearning for something outside oneself, for Paradise perhaps. For Lewis, the religious implications of Sehnsucht and Eucatastrophe are manifestations of the reality that lies behind the world of the fairy tale. Thus, he weaves instances of Sehnsucht and Eucatastrophe in and out of the *Chronicles*, purposely rearousing wonder and intentionally suggesting a reality beyond the fantasies.

It is that "beyond," that "something outside oneself," which links the childlike nature, the pangs of Sehnsucht, and the fairy tale. Childlike humility implies a disregard of self, a disregard which predisposes one to concentration on the Something Other. Similarly, the pangs of Sehnsucht direct a longing outside oneself. And in a fairy tale, the object of one's admiration, the Other-world of Faërie, is outside oneself. In fact, by demanding the recognition of Something Other, aesthetics (in general that quality of literature and art which distinguishes both from exclusively practical disciplines, and in this case the quality of Faërie) enriches our potential for wonder with regard to religion.
The Capacity to Wonder:

An Approach to C. S. Lewis' Chronicles of Narnia

All too often, grown-ups have treated fairy tales with disdain, labelling the taste for Faërie "childish" or "infantile." Rarely have they bothered to stoop down and delve into the volumes which line their children's bookshelves. As a result of the sophisticated refusal to explore a valid genre of literary tradition, many have overlooked the valuable implications of the fairy tale. But C. S. Lewis, realizing those implications, has demonstrated in his Chronicles of Narnia that fairy tales need not be confined to the cradle. By illustrating that adult is not necessarily a term of approval, he emphasizes the childlike capacity to wonder. That capacity responds to a basic function of the fairy tale--the ability to awaken in the reader the bittersweet pangs of Sehnsucht, the longing for something outside oneself. According to Lewis, we should never be so concerned about acting grown-up that we unwittingly shut ourselves out of the kingdom of Faërie.

To view with contempt the "juvenile" taste for fairy tales is to neglect the history of the genre, to embrace a false conception of growth, and to commit an inductive fallacy. The banishment of the fairy tale to the realm of childhood is in fact an erroneous modern edict. Tolkien, in his essay "On Fairy-Stories," suggests that
the association of children and fairy-stories is an accident of our domestic history. Fairy-stories have in the modern lettered world been relegated to the 'nursery', as shabby or old fashioned furniture is relegated to the play-room, primarily because the adults do not want it, and do not mind if it is misused. . . . Children as a class. . . neither like fairy-stories more, nor understand them better than adults do. . . . in fact only some children, and some adults, have a special taste for them; and when they have it, it is not exclusive, nor even necessarily dominant. . . . it is certainly [a taste] that does not decrease but increases with age, if it is innate. ¹

The taste for the marvelous or the supernatural, which we regard as "childish," has often been that of the human race in general: it was shared by Anglo-Saxon warriors who listened in the vast mead-hall to a scop chanting Beowulf and by members of the French court who revelled in the Breton lais of Marie de France. In fact, the "fairy tale proprement dit" was not originally directed to children, but to the court of Louis XIV. ² And Lewis’ advice as to how a reader should enter the "great palace" of The Faerie Queen suggests the general appeal of Faërie to the Renaissance audience:

Unfortunately, The Faerie Queen suffers even more than most great works from being approached through the medium of commentaries and 'literary history.' These all demand from us a sophisticated, self-conscious frame of mind. . . . the poem itself demands exactly the opposite response. Its primary appeal is to the most naïve and innocent tastes: to that level of our consciousness which is divided only by the thinnest veil from the immemorial lights and glooms of the collective Unconscious itself. It demands of us a child's love of marvels and dread of bogies, a boy's thirst for adventures, a young man's passion for physical beauty. If you have lost or cannot rearouse these attitudes, all the commentaries, all your scholarship about "the Renaissance" or "Platonism" or Elizabeth's Irish Policy will not avail. The poem is a great palace, but the door into it is so low that you must stoop to go in. No prig can be a Spenserian. It is of course much more than a fairy tale, but unless we can enjoy it as a fairy tale first of all, we shall not really care for it. ³
To confine the taste for fairy tales to the cradle is to reshape literary history and to impose upon the past a quirk of modernity.

But one who resists such confinement, who admits, as Lewis does, "that dwarfs and giants and talking beasts and witches are still dear to him in his fifty-third year" is now less likely to be praised for his perennial youth than scorned and pitied for arrested development.

However, the accusation of arrested development is as erroneous as the dictate which banishes the fairy tale to the nursery. As Lewis suggests:

> The modern view seems... to involve a false conception of growth. They accuse us of arrested development because we have not lost a taste we had in childhood. But surely arrested development consists not in refusing to lose old things but in failing to add new things... A tree grows because it adds rings: a train doesn't grow by leaving one station behind and puffing on to the next... if to drop parcels and to leave stations behind were the essence and virtue of growth, why should we stop at the adult? Why should not senile be equally a term of approval?

Refusal to relinquish a childlike taste for fairy tales, far from suggesting "arrested development," may indicate growth or maturity. To purposely neglect a "juvenile" taste in favor of more "adult" pursuits implies not development but stagnation.

In fact, those grown-ups who treat the words childish and infantile as terms of disapproval, are committing a fallacy basic to inductive reasoning--the fallacy of the inductive leap. Some can never guarantee all. All of us would gladly outgrow certain characteristics of childhood; but to admit that some childhood characteristics are distasteful is not to admit that all of them are. Lewis points up this distinction in An Experiment in Criticism:

> We are glad to have outgrown the muscular weakness of childhood; but we envy those who retain its energy, its well-thatched
scalp, its easily won sleeps, and its power of rapid recupera-
tion. But surely the same is true on another level? The sooner we cease to be as fickle, as boastful, as jealous, as
cruel, as ignorant, and as easily frightened as most children
are, the better for us and for our neighbours. But who in
his senses would not keep, if he could, that tireless curiosity
that intensity of imagination, that facility of suspending
disbelief, that unspoiled appetite, that readiness to wonder,
to pity and to admire?... to have lost the taste for
marvels and adventures is no more a matter for congratula-
tion than losing our teeth, our hair, our palate, and finally,
our hopes.6

There are some very desirable qualities in children, not the least of
which is "that readiness to wonder." For that quality enables us to
enjoy the element of Faërie which plays so predominant a role in literary
tradition. If we treat juvenility as a term of disapproval, and on
those grounds relinquish the capacity to wonder, we are victims of loss,
not examples of maturity. Thus, to offer our love of Faërie upon the
altar of adulthood is to make an unnecessary sacrifice. Such observations
by Lewis in his role as a critic are of great value in approaching his
Chronicles of Narnia, which in turn support the validity of his criticism.
In those stories, Lewis effectively demonstrates that adult is by no
means a term of approval, while he inversely emphasizes the childlike
capacity to wonder.

One secret of the immediate rapport which Lewis establishes with
children in his Chronicles derives from the fact that he addresses the
child as an equal, or (we might be tempted to say) as an adult. Para-
doxically, however, Lewis manages to set most adults apart, confining
them to a rather distasteful, boring class of their own. For instance,
to Digory's suggestion that an adjacent house is haunted, Polly responds,
"Daddy thought it must be the drains."7 "Pooh!" counters Digory. "Grown-
ups are always thinking of uninteresting explanations" (MN, pp. 7-8). The general dullness of the adult world is reiterated through such characters as Aunt Letty who "talks without meaning anything the way grown-ups do" (MN, p. 85) and King Miraz who "talks in the tiresome way that some grown-ups have, which makes it clear that they are not really interested in what they are saying" (PC, p. 38). Also typical of the adult is his attempt to impose his boring existence on children. Shasta, wary of that perverse tendency, "had a fixed habit of never telling grown-ups anything if he could help it: he thought they would always spoil or stop whatever you were trying to do" (HHB, p. 70). Lewis, in his role as narrator, is also aware that adults often prescribe boredom; listing the animals which surround the Stone Table prior to Aslan's death, Lewis speaks of "other creatures whom I won't describe because if I did the grown-ups would probably not let you read this book" (LLW, p. 148). The adult capacity for dullness extends even to include eating habits. Uncle Andrew, for example, does not hesitate to gulp down "a glass-ful of some nasty, grown-up drink" (MN, p. 75). But of the meal which two very hungry children (Digory and Polly) make of the contents of a "little paper bag" which is "very squasy and sticky," Lewis comments: "Some grown-ups (you know how fussy they can be about that sort of thing) would rather have gone without supper altogether than eaten those toffees" (MN, p. 151).

Occasionally, however, one meets a pleasant grown-up in the otherwise dull realm of adulthood. One such exception to the rule of boredom is Edmund, in his reign as a King of Narnia. Shasta describes the courteous, chivalrous ruler as "the very nicest kind of grown-up" (HHB, p. 57).
In fact, Narnian air tends to cultivate an admirable maturity in children from our world. With reference to Edmund's second visit to Narnia, Lewis explains, "The air of Narnia had been working upon him ever since the Pevensies arrived... and all his old battles came back to him, and his arms and fingers remembered their old skill. He was King Edmund once more" (PC, p. 100). In like manner, Eustace finds upon his second visit that "the Narnian air was bringing back to him a strength he had won when he sailed the Eastern Seas with King Caspian" (SC, p. 55). And during their final visit to Narnia, Jill and Eustace "both seemed to be already much stronger and bigger and more grown-up than they had been... a few hours ago. It is one of the effects which Narnian air has on visitors from our world" (LB, p. 57). From the atmosphere of Narnia a child absorbs the noble qualities of adulthood—strength, courage, chivalry, and courtesy.

The apparently conflicting notions of adulthood—a realm of overwhelming boredom on the one hand and of unswerving nobility on the other—are reconciled in Susan's observations of old Professor Kirk (Digory grown-up), perhaps the most memorable adult in the books. Professor Kirk, whom we are told is "one very wise grown-up" (PC, p. 2), insinuates to Susan that Lucy's claims of a country inside the wardrobe are not at all far-fetched. Susan "never dreamed that a grown-up would talk like the Professor, and didn't know what to think" (LWW, p. 45). The key to the mystery lies in Susan's confusion. The Professor is, of course, correct: there is indeed a country within the wardrobe. He knows because he has been there, and he accepts with a childlike trust the fact that a country which can be entered through a pool of water can be entered as easily
through a wardrobe. But Susan has expected him to act like an adult, to respond with an "uninteresting explanation" about drains or about Lucy's mental condition (LWW, pp. 44-45). She expected him to dismiss the entire incident as a childish fantasy (LWW, p. 44), and thereby demonstrate the contempt for juvenility which is typical of those who act grown-up, a contempt which she will adopt herself. Professor Kirk, however, is much too wise to play the role of an adult.

It is this refusal to adopt adult airs that distinguishes Professor Kirk and the noble friends of Narnia from the other more distasteful and more prevalent grown-ups in the Chronicles. Only those who consciously "act grown-up" are insidious. In fact, they are more truly childish than the juveniles whom they detest. Lewis elaborates on the paradox inherent in such feigned adult superiority in his essay "On Three Ways of Writing for Children":

"Those who treat adult as a term of approval, instead of as a merely descriptive term, cannot be adult themselves. To be concerned about being grown up, to blush at the suspicion of being childish; these things are the marks of childhood and adolescence. And in childhood or adolescence they are, in moderation, healthy symptoms. Young things ought to want to grow. But to carry on into middle life or even into early manhood this concern about being adult is a mark of really arrested development."

In An Experiment in Criticism, Lewis reiterates this point with further illustration: "Nothing is more characteristically juvenile than contempt for juvenility. The eight-year-old despises the six-year-old and rejoices to be getting such a big boy; the school boy is very determined not to be a child, and the freshman not to be a school boy." In other words, there is a distinction between simply "acting grown-up" and actually "being grown-up." The would-be adult, anxious to prove his
superiority, treats "childish" as a term of disapproval. The true adult, secure in his maturity, does not demonstrate a similar disdain.

But certain of the more villainous grown-ups in the Chronicles display just such a contempt. In answer to Digory's assertion that he will be paid back for his evil dabblings in black magic, Uncle Andrew replies, "Well, well, I suppose that is a natural thing for a child to think" (MNN, p. 25). In like manner, Nikabrik, in the course of advising Caspian and Trufflehunter to call on the White Witch for help, chides, "Don't all take fright at a name as if you were children" (PC, p. 162). And the terrifying White Witch expresses a similar contempt when Digory admits that he has broken the spell and awakened her:

'You!' said the Queen, laying her hand on his shoulder--a white, beautiful hand, but Digory could feel that it was strong as steel pincers. 'You? But you are only a child, a common child.' (MNN, p. 55)

And this desire to be grown-up, accompanied with a "contempt for juvenility," is not limited to the realm of adulthood. Children are just as capable of feigning an adult superiority. Here again appears the distinction between being grown-up and acting grown-up. The latter is a disease; some adults are immune to it, and some children are not. Eustace Clarence Scrubb is among the afflicted. After an adult fashion he calls his parents not "Father" and "Mother," but "Harold" and "Alberta" (VDT, p. 1). And he keeps a very grown-up diary, in which he displays an appropriate disapproval of childishness: "I suppose a kid like Lucy doesn't realize..." (VDT, p. 24). Eustace even reads adult books, "books of information" with "pictures of grain elevators or of fat foreign children doing exercises in model schools" (VDT, pp. 1-2). In fact, Lewis
claims that Eustace "had read none of the right books" (VDT, p. 69), a mistake which resulted in his failure to recognize a dragon and a dragon's lair:

Most of us know what we should expect to find in a dragon's lair, but as I said before, Eustace had read only the wrong books. They had a lot to say about exports and imports and governments and drains, but they were weak on dragons. (VDT, p. 71)

In other words, Eustace did not read fairy tales. Only after he is transformed into a dragon does he relinquish his adult superiority and adopt a childlike humility, and only then does Aslan peel off the dragon's skin, restoring to Eustace his youthful form.

Susan is another matter: her adult ways cling to her, to her ultimate disadvantage. Susan's desire to be grown-up is evident from the very beginning of the Chronicles. For instance, early in The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe, Edmund tells Susan to stop "trying to talk like Mother" (LWW, p. 2). Lucy, claiming to have seen Aslan, reproves Susan for the same offense: "Where did you think you saw him?" asks Susan. "'Don't talk like a grown-up,' /says/ Lucy, stamping her foot. 'I didn't think I saw him. I saw him'" (PC, p. 121). In The Voyage of the Dawn Treader we learn that other grown-ups tend to accept Susan as a member of their realm. They think her the pretty one in the family and although she is "no good at school work," she is "otherwise very old for her age" (VDT, p. 2). Even as Queen of Narnia (despite the ennobling atmosphere), Susan retains her adult bearing, a stance which results in the waste of certain of her talents. Prince Cori comments to Shasta:

/Susan's/ not like Lucy, you know, who's as good as a man, or at any rate as good as a boy. Queen Susan is more like an ordinary grown-up lady. She doesn't ride to the wars,
though she is an excellent archer. (HHB, p. 176)

And a concomitant aspect of Susan's feigned adulthood is a disrespect for childhood. For example, in *Prince Caspian*, Lucy wakes Susan, explaining that Aslan (at this point invisible) wants the children to follow him. Dismissing Lucy's admonishments as a childish fantasy (in contrast to Professor Kirk's refusal to demonstrate a similar disdain), Susan answers "in her most annoying grown-up voice, 'You've been dreaming, Lucy. Go to sleep again'" (PC, p. 139). Her contempt for juvenility coupled with her adult airs proves to be Susan's undoing; she alone of the Pevensie children denies herself the opportunity to live in Narnia eternally. After passing through the stable door from the Shadowland Narnia into the Real Narnia, Tirian inquires as to her where-abouts:

'My sister Susan,' answered Peter shortly and gravely, 'is no longer a friend of Narnia.'
'Yes,' said Eustace, 'and whenever you've tried to get her to come and talk about Narnia, she says "What wonderful memories you have! Fancy your still thinking about all those funny games we used to play when we were children."'
'Oh Susan!' said Jill, 'she's interested in nothing now-a-days except nylons and lipstick and invitations. She always was a jolly sight too keen on being grown-up.'
'Grown-up, indeed,' said the Lady Polly. 'I wish she would grow up.' (LB, pp. 134-135)

Once again Lewis has made the distinction between a person who merely acts grown-up and one who actually is grown-up. The former views juvenility with scorn; the latter does not. Were Susan truly grown-up, she would have cultivated the noble qualities of a childlike nature including the child's appreciation of fantasy. And her faith in Faërie would have enabled her to enter the New Narnia.

As often as not this contempt for juvenility is coupled with a
disdain for the "childish" taste for Faërie. Grown-ups, totally devoid of the childlike capacity for wonder, simply do not believe in fairy tales, when they bother to read them at all. Generally they prefer "a long, dull story of a grown-up kind" (MN, p. 77) to the excitement of fairyland. Eustace, for example, immersed himself in the wrong kind of books; he read grown-up books instead of the fairy tales which would have informed him of dragons. But when confrontation with the world of Faërie is unavoidable, grown-ups demonstrate a remarkable incredulity, offering "uninteresting explanations" for marvelous events and dragging helpless children after them as they tread ever more deeply into the mire of boredom. Perhaps Susan's lack of faith is most striking; she refuses to acknowledge the existence of Narnia (a land glistening with Faërie) in spite of her sojourn in that country, and attributes to childish games the belief which her brothers and sister have in the land. Other grown-ups also demonstrate a disbelief which leads them to relegate fairy tales to the realm of childhood (there to contemplate both with contempt). When Caspian mentions his belief in the Old Narnia of Talking Animals and Fauns and Dryads, Miraz rebukes him:

'That's all nonsense, for babies,' said the King sternly. 'Only fit for babies do you hear? You're getting too old for that sort of stuff. At your age you ought to be thinking of battles and adventures, not fairy tales.' (PC, p. 39)

And the Emerald Witch reveals a similar disdain for what she labels "make-believe":

Well, 'tis a pretty make-believe, though, to say truth, it would suit you all better if you were younger. . . . But even you children are too old for such play. As for you, my lord Prince [Rilian], that art a man full grown, fie upon you! Are you not ashamed of such toys? Come, all of you. Put away these childish tricks. (SC, p. 157)
Thus, typical adults often confine the fairy tale to the cradle of childhood, treating both tale and child with an irreverence appropriate to a grown-up stance of assumed superiority. They fail to recognize the desirability of the childlike potential for wonder.

And Lewis himself was long in coming to this realization. In his youth, Lewis was plagued with the same adult airs that cling to Eustace, Susan, and the despicable grown-ups in the Chronicles. And the land of Boxen, a world which Lewis created in his youth, is perhaps the most striking illustration of a young poet striving for the boring realm of adulthood. Lewis himself admits, "When I began writing stories in exercise books, I tried to put off all the things I really wanted to write about till at least the second page—I thought it wouldn't be like a grown-up book if it became interesting at once." In Surprised by Joy, he acknowledges that Boxen is empty of poetry and romance, lacking "the least hint of wonder." Walter Hooper suggests that the prosaic nature of Boxen is primarily due to Lewis' desire to be very grown-up. Throughout the Boxoniana, the animal characters behave like model adults and occupy themselves with grown-up affairs. According to Hooper:

The dominant theme is politics: to get into the "Clique" is the ambition of almost every character. Yet none of the characters, to say nothing of the author, seems to have any clear idea of what the "Clique" is. Ambitions run high and are almost solely concerned with money. The daily newspaper is of major interest.

That Lewis should include politics and money in the world of the grown-up was quite natural, for he frequently overheard his elders discussing both topics. In fact, Warren H. Lewis, C. S. Lewis' brother, suggests
that in their Belfast childhood, "politics and money were the chief, almost the only subjects of grown-up conversation" and that, in his younger brother's case, "the immediate result... was to convince him that grown-up conversation and politics were one and the same thing."\textsuperscript{15}

The grown-up nature of Boxen is sufficiently illustrated in the following passage from a novel entitled \textit{The Locked Door}.\textsuperscript{16} Two of the very adult animals are on their way to a ball:

Great was the preparation of Bar and Macgoullah when the eventful evening arrived. Bar had hired a handsome to be ready for them both outside the 'Schooner' where they had arranged to meet.

As they drew near the palace, Regency Street became a mass of moving lights dancing to the music of horses' hoofs and the powerful purr of motors: and it was not without difficulty that the hireling Jehu navigated them to the portals of Regency St. Palace. Stepping out they were conducted by suave domestics to the cloak room, which as is usually the case on these occasions, was crowded with knots of whispering guests fiddling with their gloves. There of course is Puddiphat immaculately clad; there is Reginald Pig the Shipowner dressed in solid and plain evening dress; there is Quicksteppe looking finer than ever as the electric light catches his glossy curling locks; there is Colonel Chutney, formerly head of the war office, but now removed to give place to Fortescue who is also present. After some time of nervous fumbling and hushing, Pig, the most courageous person present, led a sort of forlorn hope to the salon where their Majesties [Benjamin VII and Hawkì V] were receiving their guests and where stout domestics dispensed tea etc. The two kings were throwing all their histrionic powers into an imitation of enjoyment, and behind them stood the Little-Master, looking rather worried. The boys kept up a continual flow of conversation:

'Good evening, My dear Pig! How are the ships? Ah, Viscount Puddiphat, very glad you came.'

'Good evening, Your Majesties. Ah my dear Little Master I see you've been having busy times in the Clique'

'Yes' said Big drily

The Duchess of Penzly came up, a heavy woman whom they all abominated.

'Good evening Duchess. Hasn't Miss Penzly--oh! Influenza? I am very sorrey to hear that' The Duchess passed on to Big,

'Ah, Lord Big, this is a pleasure. How delighted I was to hear you had had some excitement in politics, it does
liven things up so, doesn't it?'

'It certainly does', responded the frog brusquely, and
engaged a dance.17

Through the prosaic overlay of adult conversation and grown-up affairs, we do catch glimmers of the fluency and imagination which are so typical of the later Chronicles. But the attention to adult affairs in this childhood creation marks a very obvious difference in the two lands. That difference is perhaps due to Lewis' eventual "liberation" from the dungeon of feigned adulthood. Walter Hooper submits that a comparison of Narnia and Boxen reveals that "Boxen was invented by a boy who wanted to be 'grown-up'; the 'noble and joyous' tales of Narnia were created by one liberated from this desire."18

The grown-up concerns of Boxen—the Clique, politics, forced conversation—are either neglected entirely or treated with disdain in Narnia. Caspian, for instance, makes short work of the web of political bureaucracy and economic technicality spun by Gumpas, governor of the Isle of Doorn. When Caspian demands that Gumpas pay the tribute due Narnia and halt the illegal slave trade of the island, Gumpas replies: "But that would be putting the clock back. . . . Have you no idea of progress, of development?" And Caspian counters, "I have seen them both in an egg. . . . We call it Going bad in Narnia" (VDT, pp. 47-48).

Another striking effect which Lewis' "liberation" had on the two lands involves the nature of animals in Boxen and Narnia. Apparently, Lewis, as a child, was fairly oblivious to the true nature of beasts. The "dressed animals" of Boxen are little more than disguised adults. As the quoted passage illustrates, we are given very few hints as to the
bestial natures of the characters. In fact, they are thoroughly
invested with adult qualities. Because their animal natures are of
secondary importance, it is easy to forget that James Bar is a bear,
Macgoullah a horse, Viscount Puddiphat an owl, Lord Big a frog, and their
Majesties rabbits.19

The Narnian animals, on the other hand, are liberated (with Lewis)
from this necessity of acting grown-up. They are free to be themselves
and thus retain their animal natures. When Prince Caspian arrives at
the hollow oak tree which houses the Three Bulgy Bears, "a woolly sort
of voice" answers from inside and the bears greet him with "very wet,
snuffy kisses" before offering him some honey (PC, pp. 68-69). Jewel,
the noble unicorn, polishes his "blue horn against the whiteness of
his flank" (LB, p. 13) when we first meet him. Even the dignified
Reepicheep, whom Eustace describes as "a kind of Mouse thing" (VDT,
p. 25), "twirls his whiskers" before speaking in his "shrill, piping
voice" (VDT, p. 11). Bree, the Narnian horse, rises from what he
believes to be his last roll in the grass "blowing hard and covered with
bits of bracken" (HBB, p. 202). Talking Dogs refresh themselves after
a romp with "a very noisy drink out of the stream" and then sit down
"bolt upright, panting, with their tongues hanging out of their heads
a little on one side" (LB, p. 160). We are even constantly reminded of
Aslan's leonine nature. After his "Resurrection" "stood for a
second, his eyes very bright, his limbs quivering, lashing himself with
his tail" (LWW, p. 160). The Narnian animals, then, are liberated with
Lewis from the chains of Boxonian sophistication.

Lewis' release from the bonds of sophistication was coupled with
a renewed capacity to wonder and an unabashed delight in fairy tales. He claims:

When I was ten, I read fairy tales in secret and would have been ashamed if I had been found doing so. Now that I am fifty, I read them openly. When I became a man I put away childish things, including fear of childishness and the desire to be very grown up.

His personal liberation may have played a part in Lewis' suggestion in his Chronicles that the taste for fairy tales which may have been "a taste we had in childhood" is a desire which should be cultivated, not neglected. We should never let our desire to be grown-up shut us out of fairyland lest we find ourselves in Susan's sad predicament: rather, we should attend to Andrew Lang's suggestion to "enter into the Kingdom of Faërie" with "the heart of a little child." Unless we read the Chronicles of Narnia with a childlike capacity for wonder, unless we allow ourselves to sink utterly into the glistening pool of Faërie, we cannot refresh ourselves in the "Joy" of the water.

But the Joy which a good fairy tale evokes from us is Joy in a unique sense, a sense implicit in Lewis' use of the term in Surprised by Joy and in Tolkien's use of it in "On Fairy-Stories." Originally, Lewis believed the stabs of Joy to be an aesthetic experience, but ultimately he came to realize the religious implications of his desire. According to Lewis, Joy is

an unsatisfied desire, which is itself more desirable than any other satisfaction. I call it Joy, which is here a technical term and must be sharply distinguished both from Happiness or Pleasure. Joy (in my sense) has indeed one characteristic, and one only, in common with them; the fact that anyone who has experienced it will want it again. Apart from that, and considered only in its quality, it might almost equally well be called a particular kind of unhappiness or grief. But then it is a kind we want.
Such intense desire is perhaps more aptly termed Sehnsucht, a longing for our own distant country. In The Pilgrim’s Regress, Lewis defines Joy in terms of the objects which elicit such a desire; Sehnsucht is that unnameable something, desire for which pierces us like a rapier at the smell of a bonfire, the sound of wild ducks flying overhead, the title of The Well at the World’s End, the opening lines of Kubla Khan, the morning cobwebs in late summer, or the noise of falling waves.

And we could add to that list, "the entrance into the kingdom of Faërie," for both Lewis and Tolkien admit that the capacity to arouse such longing is a primary aspect of a good fairy tale. Tolkien writes: "if [fairy-stories] awakened desire, satisfying it while often whetting it unbearably, they succeeded." And, referring to the reader of a fairy tale, Lewis concurs:

fairy land arouses a longing for he knows not what. It stirs and troubles him (to his life-long enrichment) with the dim sense of something beyond his reach and, far from dulling or emptying the actual world, gives it a new dimension of depth. He does not despise real woods because he has read of enchanted woods: the reading makes all real woods a little enchanted. This is a special type of longing.

Of course, the temptation is to equate the object of desire with the object that evoked the desire—to say that fairyland which awakened Joy is the object of desire. But such reasoning is fallacious. Tolkien admits that although he "desired dragons with a profound desire," he did not want them invading his neighborhood. And Lewis questions, "Does anyone suppose that [a reader of fairy tales] really and prosaically longs for all the dangers of a fairy tale--really wants dragons in contemporary England? It is not so." And so one must look elsewhere for the object of desire.

A hint as to where to look is contained within the nature of the
longing. As Tolkien claims, the Joy which a fairy tale awakens is "greater than the event described;" that "piercing glimpse of joy, and hearts' desire, . . . for a moment passes outside the frame, rends indeed the very web of story, and lets a gleam come through." And so the object of desire must be greater and more glorious than anything found in the fairy tale, the vehicle which originally evoked the longing. Lewis contemplates the same distinction:

The books or the music in which we thought the beauty was located will betray us if we trust to them; it was not in them, it only came through them, and what came through them was longing. These things . . . are good images of what we really desire; but if they are mistaken for the thing itself they turn into dumb idols, breaking the hearts of their worshippers. For they are not the thing itself; they are only the scent of a flower we have not found, the echo of a tune we have not heard, news from a country we have never visited.

Thus, the "desire for one's own far-off country" may be too ethereal to be satisfied in this existence. And, as Lewis suggests, if one discovers in himself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that he was made for another world, another country. The object of his longing must be Paradise or Heaven. And by awakening this longing, the fairy tale "sets before the reader an image of what reality may well be like at some more central region." In other words, a longing for Paradise is reflected in the apparent longing for fairyland. Tolkien echoes the same sentiment when he claims: "The peculiar quality of the 'joy' in successful Fantasy can thus be explained as a sudden glimpse of the underlying reality or truth." Thus, according to Lewis and Tolkien, the religious implications of Joy impart a reality to the fairy story which is at its best "a real though unfocused gleam of divine truth falling on human imagination." But
its reality is "unfocused;" it is like the reflection of the Sun which Plato's released prisoner views in the water rather than like the Sun itself.

Lewis and Tolkien are not alone in recognizing the religious implications of fairy tales. Bruno Bettelheim, for instance, in his recent psychological study of this genre notes the prevalence of religious motifs in fairy tales:

Most fairy tales originated in periods when religion was a most important part of life; thus, they deal, directly or by inference, with religious themes. The stories of *The Thousand and One Nights* are full of references to Islamic religion. A great many western fairy tales have religious content. . . .

And G. K. Chesterton, whom Lewis acknowledges as an important influence in his religious conversion, illustrates certain of these religious implications in a chapter entitled "The Ethics of Elfland":

There is the lesson of 'Cinderella,' which is the same as that of the Magnificat— *exaltavit humiles*. There is the great lesson of 'Beauty and the Beast'; that a thing must be loved before it is loveable. There is the terrible allegory of 'Sleeping Beauty,' which tells how the human creature was blessed with all birthday gifts, yet cursed with death; and how death also may perhaps be softened to a sleep.

Perhaps the most pervasive religious aspect of the fairy tale, however, is that which Tolkien chooses to call Eucatastrophe, a term which implies "the Consolation of the Happy Ending," and which is "the true form of fairy-tale, and its highest function." Basic to eucatastrophe is, of course, the concept of ultimate redemption. As Tolkien explains:

"Eucatastrophe" does not deny the existence of *dyscatastrophe*, of sorrow and failure; the possibility of these is necessary to the joy of deliverance; it denies (in the face of much
Applying the notion of eucatastrophe to the Gospels, Tolkien suggests that "the Gospels contain a fairy-story, or a story of a larger kind which embraces the essence of all fairy-stories." Lewis also notes the essence of fairy tale in the Gospels when he claims, "the story of Christ demands from us, and repays, not only a religious and historical but also an imaginative response. It is directed to the child, the poet, and the savage in us as well as to the conscience and to the intellect." In the Gospels, the "essence of all fairy-stories," we rightly find the most glorious of eucatastrophes: "The Birth of Christ is the eucatastrophe of Man's history. The Resurrection is the eucatastrophe of the story of the Incarnation." And all those tales that end with "then they were married and lived happily ever after" fore-shadow the ultimate Eucatastrophe, the marriage of Christ and his Bride, the Church.

We must conclude with Tolkien that "the Evangelium has not abrogated legends; it has hallowed them, especially the 'happy ending.'" The religious implications of Eucatastrophe, like the authenticating theme of Joy, are manifestations of the reality that lies behind the world of the fairy tale.

The children in the Chronicles of Narnia also affirm the "unfocused gleam of divine truth" in the fairy tale. In one instance, the reality of the Narnia fairy tale is taken for granted; it is the existence of our everyday world that is called into question. When Eustace, Edmund, and Lucy reveal to Caspian that they come from a spherical
world, Caspian, whose Narnian world resembles "a great round table"

(VDT, p. 200) exclaims:

Do you mean to say... that you three come from a round
world (round like a ball) and you've never told me! It's
really too bad for you. Because we have fairy tales in
which there are round worlds and I always loved them. I
never believed there were any real ones. But I've always
wished there were and I've always longed to live in one.

(VDT, p. 201)

The implication is that if those in Narnia doubt the existence of the
real earth, the reader may be doubting the existence of a real Narnia,
a real fairyland--a fairyland which may be foreshadowed in the fairy-
lands of which he reads, as the real Narnia is foreshadowed by the
old Narnia. Lewis clearly wants the reader to acknowledge the under-
lying reality of fairy-stories and to agree with Digory who says, "I
didn't believe in Magic till to-day. I see now it's real. Well, if
it is, I suppose all the old fairy tales are more or less true" (MN,
p. 24). Unlike Susan, Old Professor Kirk is wise enough to accept the
"fairy tale" which the Pevensies relate to him upon their return from
Narnia: "And the Professor, who was a very remarkable man, didn't
tell them not to be silly or not to tell lies, but believed the whole
story" (LWW, p. 185). And Lewis in his narrator-persona encourages the
reader to acknowledge the "more or less true" nature of Narnia when he
says: "Most of us, I suppose, have a secret country, but for us it is
only an imaginary country. Edmund and Lucy were luckier than other
people in that respect. Their secret country was real" (VDT, p. 3).

The Chronicles abound in images which convey Sehnsucht and in instances
of eucatastrophe, both prerequisites which impart reality to the Mythical
or the Fantastic.45
In fact, Lewis intended to instill his fairy-stories with the potential to elicit the desire for one's secret country. But he realized that as often as not, people do not recognize where Sehnsucht is leading them and thus mistake the object of their desire, especially when the ultimate Object of desire is God himself. Perhaps Lewis' purpose is most frankly stated in The Voyage of the Dawn Treader when the children learn that they must leave Narnia and return to their own world. Lucy's comment suggests that she recognizes that fairyland is not the actual Object of her desire:

'It isn't Narnia, you know,' sobbed Lucy. 'It's you. We shan't meet you there. And how can we live, never meeting you?'

'But you shall meet me, dear one,' said Aslan.

'Are—are you there too, Sir?' said Edmund.

'I am,' said Aslan. 'But there I have another name. You must learn to know me by that name. This was the very reason why you were brought to Narnia, that by knowing me here for a little, you may know better there.'

(VDT, p. 216)

Lewis believed that awakening the capacity to wonder in Narnia with regard to Aslan, might awaken the same capacity in our world, with regard to Christ:

I thought I saw how stories of this kind [fairy tales] could steal past a certain inhibition which had paralyzed much of my own religion in childhood. Why did one find it so hard to feel as one was told one ought to feel about God or about the sufferings of Christ? I thought the chief reason was that one was told one ought to. An obligation to feel can freeze feelings. And reverence itself did harm. The whole subject was associated with lowered voices; almost as if it were something medical. But supposing that by casting all these things into an imaginary world, stripping them of their stained-glass and Sunday school associations, one could make them for the first time appear in their real potency? Could one not thus steal past those watchful dragons? I thought one could.46
In the *Chronicles of Narnia*, Lewis intended to rearouse the "readiness to wonder" which is so necessary to an understanding of the "essence of all fairy-stories." He reiterates his purpose in a letter to Thomas Howard, who wondered why he had been so very moved by the symbolism of Aslan: "The reason why the Passion of Aslan sometimes moves people more than the real story in the Gospels is, I think, that it takes them off their guard. In reading the real story the fatal knowledge that one ought to feel in a certain way often inhibits the feeling." In Narnia the reader is under no obligation to wonder; therefore he is free to do so.

And because the reader is not expecting a religious experience, he shares with the children their desire upon first hearing Aslan's name:

And now a very curious thing happened. None of the children knew who Aslan was any more than you do; but the moment the Beaver had spoken these words everyone felt quite different... At the name of Aslan each one of the children felt something jump in his inside. Edmund [who was soon to betray the children to the White Witch] felt a sensation of mysterious horror. Peter felt suddenly brave and adventurous. Susan felt as if some delightful strain of music had just floated by her. And Lucy got the feeling you have when you wake up in the morning and realize that it is the beginning of the holidays or the beginning of summer. (*LWW*, p. 64-65)

And that delicious longing motivates them to find out more about Aslan when they next hear his name: "'Oh, yes! Tell us about Aslan!' said several voices at once, for once again that strange feeling--like the first signs of spring, like good news, had come over them" (*LWW*, p. 74).

In *The Magician's Nephew*, Digory and his companions experience the same stabs of sweet desire when they hear the awesome strains of Aslan's song, the song of creation:
It was, beyond comparison, the most beautiful noise Digory had ever heard. It was so beautiful he could hardly bear it. The horse seemed to like it too: he gave the sort of whinny a horse would give if, after years of being a cab-horse, it found itself back in the old field where it had played as a foal, and saw someone whom it remembered and loved coming across the field to bring it a lump of sugar.

The pangs of Sehnsucht also elicit something of a recollection in the Cabby and the two children who stand listening to Aslan's song with "open mouths and shining eyes; they were drinking in the sound, and they looked as if it reminded them of something" (MN, p. 100). But recollection is fundamental to Joy. As Lewis says, "All Joy reminds. It is never a possession, always a desire for something longer ago or further away or still 'about to be.'" It is a longing to return to the "far-off country" from whence Joy flows.

And once the children have left Narnia and find themselves back in this world, they long to return to their "secret country." That land often occupies their thoughts, and their desire is illustrated by the fact that "they talked about Narnia a good deal, when they got the chance" (VDT, p. 3). We learn of an afternoon when Edmund and Lucy were "stealing a few precious minutes alone together. And of course they were talking about Narnia, which was the name of their own private and secret country" (VDT, p. 3). And Professor Kirk and Aunt Polly invite the friends of Narnia together so that they can "all have a good jaw about Narnia (for of course there's no one else they can ever talk to about things like that)" (LB, p. 49).

But, as Lucy acknowledges at the end of The Voyage of the Dawn Treader, it is not Narnia, but Aslan, which is the Object of their desire. Thus, even when they return to Narnia, the children experience piercing
Sehnsucht, whether at the sound of Aslan's name or at the strains of his song. And Clyde S. Kilby suggests the sense of imminent Joy which runs throughout the series:

> Always there is incipiently the far look toward Aslan's land and at times that land comes into view, as in the end of *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader* when Reepicheep quivers with happiness before his final departure for its celestial mountains.  

During the end of that voyage, when the children approach Aslan's country, they are met with a "breeze from the east" (*VDT*, p. 212) which carries a musical sound, the "sweet air blowing from the 'land of righteousness.'"  

> Floating on the back of the breeze is Joy, "Joy beyond the walls of the world, poignant as grief:"

> It lasted only a second or so but what it brought them in that second none of those three children will ever forget. . . . Edmund and Eustace would never talk about it afterwards. Lucy could only say, 'It would break your heart.' 'Why, said I, 'was it so sad?' 'Sad! No,' said Lucy. (*VDT*, p. 212)

But Lewis was not only concerned with demonstrating the children's instances of Joy. He also wished to knock down the wall of required reverence which separated the reader from his "secret country," to allow him to walk in a land of "cool, morning innocence" where drifts the breeze that "reveals that elusive Form which if once seen must inevitably be desired."  

Although the reader remains outside the tale as such, he can vicariously enter Narnia, and can participate in the same Joy which the children experience. Like the children, after the reader first meets the Lion in *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, he earnestly desires to meet him again throughout the remainder of the *Chronicles*. And when he closes *The Last Battle*, he yearns to be with Aslan.
Of course, the children are ultimately united with the Joy of their desiring and thus occurs the most marvelous eucatastrophe within the books. As befits a proper fairy tale, eucatastrophe is basic to the Chronicles. Evil is always defeated; Aslan triumphs over the White Witch, King Miraz, the Emerald Witch, Rabadash, Uncle Andrew, Shift the Ape and the wicked Calormenes, Tash, and Death. Each of the books imparts "the Consolation of the Happy Ending." And, as often as not, an anticipation precedes that consolation. In each of the Chronicles the reader's sense of expectancy grows; he expects evil to be defeated. And the eucatastrophe implicit in each book satisfies his anticipation.

The coupling of eucatastrophe and expectation recurs on a larger scale in the Chronicles as a whole. At the end of The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe, Lewis tells us: "And that is the very end of the adventures in the wardrobe. But if the Professor was right it was only the beginning of the adventures of Narnia" (LWW, p. 186). In other words, the book ends with a sense of expectancy which is satisfied in the remainder of the series. Like the first book, the last book of the series concludes with a suggestion of incipience. In a momentous eucatastrophe--the rending of the veil of time, matter, and multiplicity--the children join Aslan; and once again the end of the book suggests "the beginning of the adventures" in a new land. With that Eucatastrophe, of which every eucatastrophe is but a foreshadowing, the reader's anticipation cannot be satisfied within the Chronicles of Narnia at all but in a book of which Narnia had only been the cover and the title page: now at last they were beginning Chapter One of the Great Story, which no one on earth has read: which goes on forever: in which
every chapter is better than the one before. (LB, p. 184)

Thus, with regard to both the eucatastrophe and the Joy in the Chronicles, ultimate satisfaction of desire (or expectancy) occurs not within fairyland (Narnia), but beyond it. And as Lewis weaves instances of Sehnsucht and eucatastrophe in and out of the Chronicles, purposely arousing wonder, he intentionally suggests a reality beyond the fantasies, a Something Other.

As Scott Oury has aptly observed, a unifying strand of Lewis' writing is his attention to "the object itself,"\textsuperscript{53} to something outside of himself. Lewis invariably assumes the Something Other. In Letters to Malcolm, Lewis suggests that if God is not the Wholly Other, He is at least the "Unimaginably and Insupportably Other."\textsuperscript{54} In fact, Lewis believes that this emphasis on "Otherness" is basic to Christian thought.

Writing of The Faerie Queen, he proposes:

Spenser wrote primarily as a (Protestant) Christian and secondarily as a Platonist. Both systems are united with one another and cut off from some—not all—modern thought by their conviction that Nature, the totality of phenomena in space and time, is not the only thing that exists: is, indeed, the least important thing. Christians and Platonists both believe in an "other" world. They differ, at least in emphasis, when they describe the relations between that other world and Nature. For a Platonist, the contrast is usually that between an original and a copy. . . for a Christian, between the eternal and the temporary, or the perfect and the partially spoiled.\textsuperscript{55}

The realization of the Something Other implicit in Christianity, is implicit as well in a childlike nature, the bittersweet pangs of Joy, and the fairy tale.

Childlike humility implies a disregard of self, a disregard which predisposes one to concentration on the Something Other. According to
Lewis, the true mark of humility is an utter delight in delighting the Something Other. As he explains:

... no one can enter heaven except as a child, and nothing is so obvious in a child—not in a conceited child, but in a good child—as its great and undisguised pleasure in being praised. Not only in a child either, but even in a dog or a horse. Apparently what I had mistaken for humility had, all these years, prevented me from understanding what is in fact the humblest, the most childlike, the most creaturely of all pleasures—nay, the specific pleasure of the inferior: the pleasure of a beast before men, a child before its father, a pupil before his teacher, a creature before its Creator. ... To please God... to be a real ingredient in the divine happiness... to be loved by God, not merely pitied, but delighted in as an artist delights in his work or a father in a son. ... .

And in Mere Christianity, Lewis defines "Humility" as "the virtue opposite to Pride or Self-Conceit." A humble man does not have his eyes turned inward; his thoughts are directed outside of himself. As Lewis writes:

Do not imagine that if you meet a really humble man he will be what most people call 'humble' nowadays: he will not be a sort of greasy, smarmy person, who is always telling you that, of course, he is nobody... He will not be thinking about humility: he will not be thinking about himself at all.

Thus, to have the heart of a child, to be invested with a childlike humility, is to desire above all to please something outside oneself, to delight in delighting the ineffable Something Other.

Of course, the most personal expressions of something outside of oneself are the pangs of Sehnsucht, the piercing darts of bitter-sweet longing issuing from an "'other' world" and intended to direct us to that far-off country. Joy is our longing for "otherness" in its most basic form. As Lewis writes:
Inexorably Joy proclaimed, 'You want— I myself am your want of— something other, outside, not you nor any state of you.' I did not yet ask, Who is the desired? only What is it? But this brought me already into the region of awe, for I thus understood that in deepest solitude there is a road right out of the self, a commerce with something which, by refusing to identify itself with any object of the senses, or anything whereof we have biological or social need, or anything imagined, or any state of our own minds, proclaims itself sheerly objective. Far more objective than bodies, for it is not, like them, clothed in our senses; the naked Other, imageless (though our imagination salutes it with a hundred images), unknown, undefined, desired.\(^5\)

Similarly, in a fairy tale, the object of one's admiration is outside of oneself. Hence, says Lewis, "the boy reading the fairy tale desires and is happy in the very fact of desiring, for his mind has not been concentrated on himself, as it often is in the more realistic story."\(^6\) Indeed, his mind is instead occupied with "the dim sense of something beyond his reach,"\(^6\) the Something Other. Tolkien, admitting his "profound desire" for dragons, also links the concepts of Faërie and "otherness":

The dragon has the trademark of Faërie written plain upon him. In whatever world he had his being it was an Other-world. Fantasy, the making or glimpsing of Other-worlds, was the heart of the desire of Faërie.\(^6\)

In fact, the "otherness" of fairyland is so profound that the reader catches occasional glimpses of his transtemporal destiny. Fairy-stories, suggests Tolkien, "open a door on Other Time, and if we pass through, though only for a moment, we stand outside our own time, outside Time itself, maybe."\(^6\) And it is natural that we should experience such "otherness" within the kingdom of Faërie, for as Lewis claims, "To construct plausible and moving 'other worlds' you must draw on the only real 'other world' we know, that of the spirit."\(^6\) Hence, the fairy
tale expresses an awareness of something outside oneself. Through the mist of fairyland occasionally sparkles the outline of a kingdom "further away" and "still 'about to be,'" ruled by the Something Other. Except we "become as little children," and adopt a childlike capacity to wonder, we shall not enter that kingdom.
Notes


9. Lewis, An Experiment in Criticism, p. 73.


16. Lewis MS.6. In the collection of W. H. Lewis. C. S. Lewis' original spelling and punctuation have been retained.

17. fols. 31-34. As quoted by Hooper, "Past Watchful Dragons," p. 280.


19. Hooper, Preface, Of Other Worlds, p. viii. He states that occasionally in Boxen we do find "that winsome commingling of beast and man" characteristic of Lewis' fairy tales and cites as an example the waking moments of Viscount Puddiphat, a music-hall artist (the italics are Hooper's):

On a certain spring morning, the viscount's valet had entered his master's bedchamber with a cup of chocolate, and the ironed morning paper. No sooner had his step resounded on the floor than a mass of feathers stirred in the large bed, and the owl raised himself on his elbow, with blinking eyes.

20. Lewis, "On Three Ways of Writing for Children," p. 25. Lewis is obviously echoing I Corinthians 13:11: "When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things."


27. Tolkien, p. 63.


29. Tolkien, p. 82.


32. C. S. Lewis, Mere Christianity (New York: Macmillan, 1960), p. 120.

33. C. S. Lewis, "On Stories," in Of Other Worlds, p. 15.

34. Tolkien, p. 83.


39. Tolkien, p. 81.

40. Tolkien, p. 81.

41. Tolkien, p. 83.
Lewis links these two terms in the conclusion of his essay "Sometimes Fairy Stories May Say Best What's to Be Said," in Of Other Worlds, p. 38. And the connection is a logical one. The same elements are present in both (among those elements the capacity to evoke Sehnsucht). Chesterton's description of "Sleeping Beauty," for example, has a lot in common with Pandora and her magic box. And often what we call the fairy tale element is simply some derivation of a Celtic myth. In An Experiment in Criticism, p. 44, Lewis again links the terms: "Myth is always, in one sense of the word 'fantastic.' It deals with impossibles and preternaturals." And in his Preface to George MacDonald: An Anthology (New York: Macmillan, 1947), pp. 14-17, Lewis describes MacDonald's fantasy as myth.


Lewis, Surprised by Joy, p. 78.

Kilby, p. 144.

Lewis, Preface, George MacDonald: An Anthology, pp. 21-22. Lewis has said that George MacDonald's Phantastes "baptised... his imagination" and Lewis' Chronicles perform the same sacrament. In fact, much of what Lewis claimed of George MacDonald's fantasy can be applied to his own fairy tales. Both writers awaken Sehnsucht in the reader with an unusual intensity. Lewis, for instance, suggests of MacDonald's work:

It goes beyond the expression of things we have already felt. It arouses in us sensations we have never had before, never anticipated having, as though we had broken out of our normal mode of consciousness and 'possessed joys not promised to our birth.' It gets under our skin, hits us at a deeper level than our thought or even our passions, troubles oldest certainties till all questions are re-opened, and in general shocks us more fully awake than we are for most of our lives.
What Lewis felt in MacDonald's works, and what we feel wafting through Narnia, is "The sweet air blowing from 'the land of righteousness,' . . . [revealing] that elusive Form which if once seen must inevitably be desired. . . the thing (in Sappho's phrase) 'more gold than gold.'"

51 Lewis, Preface, George MacDonald: An Anthology, p. 21.

52 Lewis, Preface, George MacDonald: An Anthology, p. 22.


56 Lewis, "The Weight of Glory," pp. 9-10. Lewis has in mind the passage from Matthew 18:3-4 in which Jesus suggests that a childlike nature is a prerequisite to spiritual maturity.

Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as a little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.


57 Lewis, Mere Christianity, p. 109.

58 Lewis, Mere Christianity, p. 114.

59 Lewis, Surprised by Joy, p. 221


62 Tolkien, p. 63.

63 Tolkien, p. 57.


VITA

Deborah Cynthia Taylor


In September 1977, the author entered the College of William and Mary as a graduate assistant in the Department of English.