Writing Under the Spiritual Influence

World views in George MacDonald's *Phantastes* and C.S. Lewis's *The Chronicles of Narnia*

By Narve Kragset Nystøyl

Acknowledgements

Einar Bjorvand, my supervisor and guide into the new world of thesis writing.

My dear mom and dad, whose constant support allows me to make mistakes and grow. Mom, my vitamin and my top secret Dancing Queen. Dad, my personal mr. Taxi. You have given me more than a son could hope for in his most visual dreams. Way to go!

Alise. My sister, my best friend, my genie, sunflower, flower power and lazy girl. Born to be a lady, you never break a promise. You talk to me, tell me to wake up and remind me to be happy. Telepathy, no doubt. It's always 'let's talk about love', 'I'm lovesick', 'I got a boy', 'I want a boyfriend' or 'you *need* a girlfriend'. And then talk talk talk. You're forever lost in love, and I love it. You're a hoot, bad girl, and you make a big brother proud.

My friends, all my boys & girls. I go Oh! you go Gee. I bring the boys out, you bring the girls. I always trick you to say yes, and to look at me – my crew of personal paparazzi.

The teachers who have helped me from my first baby steps, and taught me my abc's and my xyz's. Because of you, I know the great escape of language and literature.

The University of Oslo Library staff. I have yet to checkmate you beautiful strangers.

Finally, God, who says 'my child.' The great lion, the meek lamb, and the wise woman with a twinkle in her eye, all in one. You bring the sun, and you let it rain. The epitome of complete love, I can only hope to be an echo and reflection of that love day by day.

I know I am not alone, and I proudly say with Edmund: *Well, he knows me*.

Thank you.

Narve Kragset Nystøyl

Oslo, May 2013

Table of Contents

Chapter 1: **Introduction**

'In physical things a man may invent; in moral things he must obey – and take their laws with him into his invented world as well.'

George MacDonald ('The Fantastic Imagination' 277)

'I have never exactly "made" a story. With me the process is much more like bird-watching than like either talking or building. I see pictures.'

C.S. Lewis (*Of This and Other Worlds* 68)

This thesis will study what is arguably the most famous works by two of the pillars of the Fantasy genre, *Phantastes: A Faerie Romance for Men and Women* by George MacDonald, published in 1858[1], and *The Chronicles of Narnia* by C.S. Lewis, the first book of which was published in 1950, and the final book, thus completing the series, in 1956[2]. But in a way, this will be just as much a study of the authors – of both the implied and actual variety. The thesis will look at some of the religious beliefs and perceptions of reality expressed by the authorial voices in the novels, and explore how these compare and correlate to the views and beliefs held by the historical authors – or, more precisely, to the views and beliefs expressed by Lewis and MacDonald in their non-fiction books.

Both MacDonald and Lewis were Christian writers, who wrote extensively on Christian subjects in (more or less) non-fiction form, in addition to writing fiction. They had much in common in terms of their beliefs, and were also similarly influenced by other philosophical ideas in regard to how they viewed reality and the world. Yet, while MacDonald was seen as somewhat unorthodox in his beliefs, Lewis was – and was perceived as – a fairly orthodox Anglican.

The aim of this thesis is twofold. Firstly, it is to explore how the implied authors in the novels in question echo the two authors' Christian beliefs. Due to the limited length of the thesis, the focus will be restricted to four themes: the nature of God, the nature of evil, philosophical (especially Platonic/Augustinian) influences, and the view of

---

[1] All future references will be to Paternoster's annotated edition, edited by Nick Page. The subtitle will be omitted unless especially relevant.

[2] All quotations from the seven novels will be from the HarperCollins collected edition. The series as a whole will also be referred to as *The Chronicles*, or simply *Narnia*.

heaven/the afterlife. Of course, many critics have already to some extent explored these novels in light of world views. However, surprisingly few have actually drawn the links between MacDonald and Lewis's novels in this respect. I therefore secondly want to further explore such a connection. How do the views expressed by the implied authors in the books correspond and diverge? How do their views correspond to the views expressed by the physical authors – and to the similarities and differences between *their* views? As an extension of this, I will also trace some of the likely spiritual inspiration and influence of MacDonald on Lewis, as it can be perceived in *The Chronicles*. Lewis once famously said that reading *Phantastes* 'baptised' his imagination (*Surprised By Joy* 209). He held MacDonald as a great influence, both literary (although he saw great faults in his literary accomplishments), and especially spiritually (Preface xxxi-xxxiii). In *The Great Divorce*, he writes of his fictional self upon meeting the spirit of MacDonald, that he was 'trembling to tell this man all that his writings had done' for him (66).

Some potential problems must be addressed at the outset. Naturally, works of fiction can and should be interpreted in various ways, and this is by no means an attempt to lay down any definitive guide to how the books should be interpreted. It is also important to remember, in light of how this thesis will be comparing and drawing parallels between works of fiction and non-fiction, that the two types of literature are vastly different in nature. While non-fiction can express opinions quite clearly, fiction must reveal them through actions. Non-fiction can *say*, but fiction must *show*, which complicates the analysis of the world views underlying the novels. Furthermore, neither MacDonald nor Lewis were especially fond of a focus upon the writer when reading a work of fiction, and in that respect, they are in very good company within the field of literary studies. It could also be argued that a study of inter-authorial influence and inspiration within a genre such as Fantasy should not, as this thesis does, quite so easily skip several other prominent authors within the genre who lived and worked between the two, and who would otherwise have been relevant in a study of either, such as William Morris and Lewis Carroll. However, there is an uncommonly clear connection between MacDonald and Lewis's works, as well as their lives – or, perhaps more relevant to a literary thesis, between the themes of these novels and the two physical authors' Christian non-fiction writing. There is also a loudly proclaimed connection between the works of MacDonald and C.S. Lewis's entire adult life and literary production; hence, I find such an exclusive focus to be justified. As Lewis himself said of

MacDonald, 'I have never concealed the fact that I regarded him as my master; indeed I fancy I have never written a book in which I did not quote from him' (Preface xxxvii). I confess that I find it to be a topic well worth exploring. And so explore it I will.

THE AUTHORS: BACKGROUND AND BELIEFS

George MacDonald (1824-1905) was born in Huntly, a small town in Aberdeenshire, Scotland, on 10 December 1824, and grew up on a small farm called 'The Farm', just outside of town. The Scottish people, landscape and culture, as well as his childhood spent in the Scottish countryside, clearly inspired him and can be found in various manifestations throughout his books. More importantly, however, his many and early experiences with death and illness shaped him both as a person and as a writer. He lost several brothers and sisters early on, and lost his mother to tuberculosis at the young age of eight (Page 7-8). 'The family attendant', as he called the illness, became a lifelong companion. MacDonald himself suffered from several bouts of it, and it claimed the lives of two brothers, a stepsister, and four of his own children. No wonder, then, that J.R.R. Tolkien said in his essay 'On Fairy-stories' that 'death is the theme that most inspired George MacDonald' (85). But despite being preoccupied with death, and also struggling with depression, he did not surrender to death. Rather, he embraced it, and embraced the connection between life and death – or life *in* death. As he said in one of his sermons, '"In the midst of life we are in death," said one; it is more true that in the midst of death we are in life. Life is the only reality; what men call death is but a shadow' (*Unspoken Sermons* 166). In a letter to his father, after the death of his brother Alec, he wrote: 'of him [Alec] we need never say he was; for what he was he is now – only expanded, enlarged and glorified. . . . He died in his earthly home and went to his heavenly' (Page 22). As Page comments, 'MacDonald viewed death as the high point of existence. . . . His theology of death was forged in the crucible of loss and bereavement' (23).

Like MacDonald, Lewis experienced the reality and tragedy of death early on. But for him, it was less of a constant companion throughout his life and more like a cruel visitor on a few key, pivotal occasions. Clive Staples Lewis (1898-1963) – or Jack, as he preferred to be called – was born in an inner suburb of Belfast on 29 November 1898. But similar to MacDonald, the family later moved to the outskirts of the city. In the words of Lewis's secretary and biographer Walter Hooper, 'The combination of good

Christian parents and a loving elder brother ensured Clive a very happy childhood' (Hooper 4). However, his happiness took a serious blow, and his entire existence changed dramatically on 23 August 1908, when his mother died, following a few months of illness after being diagnosed with cancer (Hooper 6). His father never fully recovered from the tragedy and became very moody and unpredictable. Mrs Lewis's death thus drew Jack and his brother Warren ('Warnie') closer together and laid the foundation for a remarkably strong lifelong bond between the two, but it also alienated them from their father (Lewis, *Surprised by Joy* 20). While for MacDonald, the frequent deaths, illnesses and depression seem to have represented pangs of grief and pain in a mostly happy childhood and adolescence permeated by hope and faith, for Lewis it was the other way around. As he summed it up in his autobiography *Surprised by Joy*[3]: 'With my mother's death all settled happiness, all that was tranquil and reliable, disappeared from my life. There was to be much fun, many pleasures, many stabs of Joy; but no more of the old security. It was sea and islands now; the great continent had sunk like Atlantis' (22).

The two authors also went through very different journeys of faith in their adolescent years. Although in one key way they were also very similar: they both ended up with Christian faiths that were not only in many ways related or parallel, but that were also, in different ways, quite far from the Christianity they grew up with – the faith of their fathers, so to speak. The farthest journey, in terms of end station, was arguably George MacDonald's. He grew up in a climate of Scottish piety, and his family attended the Missionar Kirk in Huntly, a strict Calvinist church characterised by fierce Sabbatarianism. As Nick Page notes, MacDonald showed signs of being uncomfortable with the teaching of the church early on, and later rejected 'the joyless, grim-faced doctrines of the Kirk' (Page 8). Still, the Calvinist focus on man's sinfulness, undeserved salvation, and the salvation of the elect hugely influenced him. It taught him independence of spirit and a view of religion as 'something that determined your whole life' (Page 8). Instead of seeking God in church, MacDonald found God in nature and the world around him. This focus on, and love for, nature is also clearly visible in *Phantastes*. As he grew older, his distaste of doctrine and distrust of 'official' religion became more

---

[3] Lewis himself did not call it an autobiography. On the contrary, in the preface he explicitly says that it is 'not a general autobiography', but rather the story of his conversion. However, he admits that the first chapters, dealing with his childhood, are quite like an autobiography, and that it 'gets less like a general autobiography as it goes on' (*Surprised by Joy* ix).

pronounced, and he moved towards universalism (Page 13). As he repeatedly proclaimed in his sermons, God is 'All in all' (*Unspoken Sermons* 82, 88). 'Surely he will somehow save and keep them!,' he says of the relationship of the loving God Father to his children (276), a far cry from the theology of the elect of his Calvinist upbringing.

Lewis, on the other hand, did not end up as far away from his spiritual upbringing as his predecessor. Although his father's approach to religion (and literature), in Lewis's own words, was 'at the opposite pole from what later became my own' (*Surprised by Joy* 6), the difference seems to have been more a question of *height* than of *distance*. His parents were not especially puritanical or zealous. They taught him what was decent and expected, to say his prayers and to attend church. His father, prone to being *high church*, delighted in reading the Bible, but this does not appear to have influenced the day-to-day of Lewis's childhood years to any special degree (*Surprised by Joy* 6-7). It was merely a happy, Christian, but not especially spiritually oriented childhood. However, while MacDonald ended up the furthest from the Christianity of his parents, Lewis undoubtedly made the longest detour. Through a succession of boarding schools, private tutoring and later studies, he gradually removed himself from Christianity, going from Spiritualism to Agnosticism to full-on Atheism under the influence of various teachers, tutors and friends (Hooper 6-9). But then, as a young man in 1915 or 1916[4], he read *Phantastes*. Whether that was in itself a spiritual turning point or not (it certainly was a turning point in other regards), it sowed a seed that was later to be reaped in abundance. In MacDonald's novel, the young atheist Lewis got his first glimpse of *Holiness* (Lewis, *Surprised by Joy* 207). It was a long journey back, but through studies in Philosophy, guidance from Christian friends such as J.R.R. Tolkien, Owen Barfield, and Hugo Dyson, and possibly also ushered on by the fact of his father falling ill with cancer, he first converted to Theism in 1929. In September 1931 he finally again called himself a Christian (Hooper 14), having returned to the same basic Anglicanism as the one he was taught in his upbringing, although undoubtedly one of deeper personal understanding.

Although MacDonald, unlike Lewis, never actually left his Christian faith, this did not keep him from questioning God (McInnis 8). He was also exceptionally open to other influences in terms of his religious world view. As G. K. Chesterton describes it in his

---

[4] Whether it was in March 1916, as a letter of his to his friend Arthur Greeves on 17 March seems to suggest (referenced in McInnis 1), or in October the year before, as suggested by Lewis himself in *Surprised by Joy* (207), I have not been able to determine. Regardless, he was in his mid-teens.

introduction to MacDonald's son Greville's biography of his parents, *George MacDonald and his Wife*:

> MacDonald had made for himself a sort of spiritual environment, a space and transparency of mystical light, which was quite exceptional in his national and denominational environment. He said things that were like the Cavalier mystics, like the Catholic saints, sometimes perhaps like the Platonists or the Swedenborgians, but not in the least like the Calvinists. (Chesterton 12)

Lewis, on the other hand, after his return to faith, remained (more or less) in the centre of his denomination – and promoted traditional, biblical Christianity. Although he certainly read much and was both well versed in, and to some extent influenced by, various philosophers and thinkers, he remained a devout and, in most areas, a fairly orthodox Anglican all his life. 'There is no mystery about my own position,' he said in the preface to his famous book of Christian apologetics, *Mere Christianity*. 'I am a very ordinary layman of the Church of England, not especially "high", nor especially "low", nor especially anything else' (vi). In fact, it might be more precise to say that he was, in various areas, both. Being a layman who wrote and spoke extensively on Christian topics without any formal theological education certainly would qualify as *low church*, as would his pronounced goal in *Mere Christianity* to focus on that which unites all Christians, regardless of denominations. On the other hand, he also held certain beliefs that coincided more with the views of Anglo-Catholicism, which has traditionally been closely associated with the *high church* within the Anglican tradition. However, compared to his father, he appears to have been decidedly more 'low'.

METHODOLOGY AND THEORY

This thesis will to some extent rely on, or be in tune with, the New Historicist approach of seeing a work in relation to the conditions under which it was written, as well as its relation to other works. As M. A. R. Habib sums up this diverse theoretical movement, 'it saw the literary text not as somehow unique but as a kind of discourse situated within a complex of cultural discourses – religious, political, economic, aesthetic – which both shaped it and, in their turn, were shaped by it' (149). Although more of a group of approaches with far-reaching areas of study connected by certain shared characteristics,

than a distinct school of thought, New Historicism is generally preoccupied with how texts are produced, including social structures and practices, power, and 'social energy'. In his essay 'Towards a Poetics of Culture', Stephen Greenblatt, the de facto founder of the movement, describes a work of art as 'the product of a negotiation between a creator or class of creators, equipped with a complex, communally shared repertoire of conventions, and the institutions and practices of society' (*The Greenblatt Reader* 28).

It is an interesting approach, and one that coincides with the approach of this thesis in terms of seeing texts in relation to the physical authors who wrote in specific social and personal situations, heavily influenced by other texts and various impulses, and who lived and worked in a constant negotiation with the predominant social, philosophical and religious currents in their contemporary society. Furthermore, according to Andrew Bennett and Nicholas Royle in their *An Introduction to Literature, Criticism and Theory*, New Historicism may be briefly defined as 'a recognition of the extent to which history is textual, as a rejection of the autonomy of the literary text and as an attempted displacement of the objectivity of interpretation in general' (115). This thesis certainly presupposes some level of rejection of the premise of textual autonomy – the New Historicist approach of a parallel reading of fiction and non-fiction. Much like Greenblatt believed it was necessary to understand Shakespeare's time to understand his plays, this thesis utilises the Christian non-fiction of MacDonald and Lewis to shed light on the world of thought in which their novels were written, in order to fully understand the ideas they express. However, it should also be noted that New Historicism is frequently concerned with politics, power struggles and 'the circulation of social energy' (Greenblatt, *Shakespearean* 1) – and this thesis is concerned with neither of those things.

In addition to New Historicism, this thesis also relies on the ideas of narrative theory, or 'narratology', regarding the distinction between *narrator*, *implied author* and *actual*, *historical author*. The two latter terms have already come up in this introduction, and are the most central terms to the following discussion. In other words, this thesis will mainly focus on the first half of the model of narrative communication presented by Jakob Lothe in his book *Narrative in Fiction and Film* (16). Briefly explained, these theoretical terms denote three specific 'persons', two of which are fictional.

The *historical authors*, in this thesis MacDonald and Lewis, are the real human beings who wrote the books and thus acted as 'writer of a text' (Lothe 17). They are, in principle, outside of the texts they have created. However, unlike the common focus in

narrative theory on the physical author as the *author*, outside of the text but still seated at his desk doing the act of writing, this thesis broadens the scope. The focus is on the authors 'at large', their beliefs and preoccupations not just as authors, but as humans.

The *implied authors*, a term first introduced by Wayne Booth in 1961, are more complex. According to Lothe, Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan describes this entity as 'a construct which the reader assembles on the basis of all the textual components,' and as '"a set of implicit norms rather than as a speaker or a voice"' (quoted in Lothe 19). The question of how the implied author comes into being will not be dealt with in this thesis, but more central to the discussion is Seymour Chatman's description of the implied author as one that '"instructs us silently, through the design of the whole, with all the voices, by all the means it has chosen to let us learn"' (quoted in Lothe 19). This points directly to one of the intentions of this thesis, namely to gather the underlying world views of the implied authors by analysing the various voices in the novels. However, Lothe, although he agrees with the above views, further defines the implied author as '"an image of the author in the text"', and 'an expression of "textual intention"' (19). It is my aim to distinguish slightly more strongly between historical and implied author in this thesis than what Lothe suggests. Rather than seeing the implied authors as 'images' of the authors, my goal is to reveal a connection – or, more accurately, to show to what extent the implied authors, as fictional entities *in* the text, *mirror* or *echo* the views of the historical authors. This approach, I find, reduces some of the notion of reliance or authorial power that is often seen as a pitfall within the field of literary theory.

Finally, there is the *narrator*, which in this thesis is a less central term than the previous two. Lothe emphasises that the narrator 'must be clearly distinguished from the author of the text' (20), and, one could add, it is naturally also distinguished from the author *in* the text – that is, the implied author. As Lothe continues, 'the narrator is an integral part of the fictional text written by the author. . . . a narrative instrument that the author uses.' Importantly, the narrator should be seen purely as a part of the text and the linguistic structure, and not given a personal identity, which would in effect merely result in the creation of another 'concept of author' (Lothe 21). It is partly to avoid such confusion that this thesis, due to its explicit focus on the implied and physical authors, keeps the use and discussion of this term to a relative minimum. However, some use of the term is unavoidable, especially because of the way the narrator's voice is used (as an instrument) in both *Phantastes* and *The Chronicles of Narnia*. Despite being

different types of narrator (first- and third-person respectively), both narrative voices more or less sporadically address the readers directly (or, in the case of Anodos in *Phantastes*, at least speaks outside of the immediate narrative). Additionally, the narrator of *The Chronicles* frequently comments on the action, and even requests the reader's opinions, and thus the borders between the narrative voice and the 'silent' voice of the implied author often appear blurry in these novels. Nevertheless, the narrator is, as Lothe says, a 'narrative instrument', and this thesis is more interested in what lies one step further back, namely what that instrument is used to convey.

CHRISTIANITY AND PHILOSOPHY

MacDonald and Lewis were influenced by many sources, most prominently, perhaps, their respective upbringings and later links to two different Christian denominations. In order to form a basis for the discussion in the following chapters, this section will give a brief outline of some of the key ideas and denominations that informed their beliefs.

George MacDonald was brought up, as already mentioned, in a strict Calvinist faith. *Calvinism* is the protestant movement associated with, and to a large extent based on, the teachings and writings of John Calvin (1509-64), a Protestant Reformer, theologian, pastor and teacher from Noyon in Northern France (McKee). He taught a strict lifestyle, and as the 'unopposed dictator of Geneva' during the last decade of his life, his regime prohibited pleasures such as games and dancing ('Calvin, John'). Calvinist theology in many areas corresponds with Lutheran teachings, such as the belief in the supremacy of Scripture as the basis of faith, and the belief in justification by faith alone, without works. But it also upholds certain beliefs more specific to the denomination, such as the certitude of salvation and absolute predestination ('Calvinism'). Calvinism gained an especially strong foothold in Scotland. The extreme Sabbatarianism practiced by the church MacDonald's family attended in his youth was a development of Calvinist practice peculiar to England and Scotland ('Sabbatarianism'). It emphasised an excessively strict observance of the Sabbath, or day of rest, including a disallowance of all recreation, including music and books that were not strictly religious.

C.S. Lewis grew up in the Church of Ireland, a part of the *Anglican* Communion ('Anglican Communion, The'). When he returned to Christianity, he also returned to the Anglican faith, and remained an Anglican for the rest of his life. The Anglican Church is,

arguably, as much a result of historical and political events as it is a result of theological developments. Nevertheless, Anglicanism maintains Scriptural authority (as opposed to the emphasis on tradition in Catholicism). When this was formalised in the Church of England in the sixteenth century, it placed the CoE, as well as the Anglican Communion as a whole, 'firmly on the Protestant side of the divide throughout Western Europe' (Buchanan). Anglicanism has later proven to be a rather broad term. In England there is the already mentioned division between the *high* and *low* church, as well as theological preferences towards Protestantism or Catholicism respectively. The nineteenth century saw the rise of the so-called 'Anglo-Catholicism', an Anglican movement that stressed the doctrines of episcopacy and the sacraments, and emphasised the teachings of the early fathers and the traditions of the church (Buchanan).

Two philosophers or philosophical sources must also be briefly mentioned: *Plato* and *Augustine*. Both MacDonald and Lewis were familiar with the schools of thought associated with these two philosophers, and in various ways adopted and adapted their ideas into their own Christian world views. In both the theological and the fictional writings of both authors, one will recognise the Platonic concept of the 'ideas', or more precisely the division or contrast between our present physical world of senses, and a higher, more *real* world of ideas, of which our world is merely a shadow ('Plato'). To Plato, matter is evil, as opposed to the goodness found in the perfected, purely spiritual world of ideas – his version of 'heaven'. As will become evident later in the thesis, this distinction between matter and spirit, of evil as having a 'purely negative existence' (Chilcott 28), and of a purely non-physical existence as the optimal existence, is both adopted and at times challenged by MacDonald, Lewis and their novels.

Platonism has also exercised a great influence on Christian thought and theology throughout the history of Christianity, especially after Augustine, who was heavily influenced by Platonic doctrines ('Platonism'). However, Augustine implemented and adapted his Platonic world view into his Christian faith after his conversion, and the Platonic – or Neoplatonic – influences found in the theology of MacDonald and Lewis are often filtered through the writings of Augustine. In addition to the view of this world as less real than the next, the most important influence of Augustine on MacDonald and Lewis is probably, again, found in their view of good and evil. Augustine, unlike Plato, maintained that evil was not an independent or physical entity at all, but rather a corruption of what is originally good (TeSelle), a concept which is especially prominent

in *Phantastes*. Augustine famously said in his *Confessions* that 'whatever things exist are good, and the evil into whose origins I was inquiring is not a substance, for if it were a substance, it would be good' (124-125). This radical view of all substance as good and of evil as insubstantial, unlike Plato's matter, is a key point in the discussions to come.

Throughout this thesis, there will sometimes be references to the authors' *world views* – indeed, the term has already come up several times. As this term can easily lead to confusion or misunderstanding, it is necessary to explain and define it at the outset. The term is often used in a rather general, broad manner in daily speech, but on a scholarly level, it is today used in several academic disciplines. Its origin is in philosophy, with the English word derived from the German term *Weltanschauung* (Naugle note on page 4), which is widely recognised to have been coined by the Prussian philosopher Immanuel Kant (Naugle 58). However, the concept has migrated 'to take up residence in a wide variety of enterprises, especially in the natural and social sciences' (Naugle 187).

In these scholarly traditions, the term has taken on a number of characteristics, and is today inclusive, comprehensive and far-reaching, but at the same time highly specific. The editors of the article collection *Worldview and Cultures*, in the field of intercultural philosophy, define the term as reflecting 'what generations of people have experienced, prior to any conceptual notions. These pre-conscious "experiences" have been and continue to be translated into comprehensible orderings which subconsciously explain how the world ontologically is, becomes, or is experienced' (Note et al. 1). Gary B. Palmer, Professor of Anthropology at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas describes it as 'the fundamental cognitive orientation of a society, a subgroup, or even an individual' (113-114), and lists a wide variety of concepts included in the term by other scholars in the social sciences, including 'natural philosophy', 'fundamental existential and normative postulates or themes', and 'conventional cognitive models'. In short, the term is today, when used in an academic setting, both highly indicative and extensive.

In the context of this thesis, however, the term is not meant to be understood in its specialised and far-reaching capacity, as described above. That would require a more thorough exploration of the authors' life and context than is possible in a study of this size. Rather, the intended meaning is the one described by David K. Naugle, professor of

philosophy at Dallas Baptist University: 'In fact,' he says, 'the meaning of the term – what it actually *denotes* – is reasonably straightforward and relatively noncontroversial for *all* concerned. Roughly speaking, it refers to a person's interpretation of reality and a basic view of life' (Naugle 259-260, his italics). More specifically, in the context of the following discussion on MacDonald, Lewis, and their novels, it denotes a philosophically influenced Christian understanding of how the world operates, especially in terms of its more fundamental existence, including a belief in 'the objective existence of the Trinitarian God whose essential character establishes the moral order of the universe and whose word, wisdom, and law define and govern all aspects of created existence' (Naugle 260). This includes a broader scope with a view of history as infinite and partially outside of time, but also limits the term to these aspects of the world and human existence – and excludes the authors' views on politics and general public life.

Finally, it should be noted that in more specialised uses of the term, there seems to be if not a consensus then at least a clear preference in recent years for using the contracted form 'worldview' (Naugle and Note et al. both use this form, Palmer does not). To distinguish the use in this thesis from such technical usage, the two-word form 'world view', which most dictionaries still seem to prefer, will be used throughout.

DESIGN

This thesis consists of four chapters in addition to a conclusion, the first one being this introductory chapter. Chapter Two will look at *Phantastes*, and compare what can be understood and inferred about the implied author's world views, to the views expressed by George MacDonald in his non-fiction writing. Chapter Three repeats the process with *The Chronicles of Narnia* and C.S. Lewis, before Chapter Four tackles both authors and novels at once, comparing their views and tracing their similarities, differences and some of the potential influence of MacDonald on Lewis.

All three main chapters follow the same basic structure: after a brief introduction, the four main topics – the nature of God, the nature of evil, philosophical influences and the nature of heaven – will be treated in turn. The slight exception is the fourth chapter, where the discussion of philosophical influences is incorporated into the sections on evil and heaven. The main findings of these three chapters will then be summed up in the conclusion, which will also include suggestions for further studies.

Chapter 2: **George MacDonald and *Phantastes***

'But oh, how beautiful beyond the old form!'

George MacDonald (*Phantastes* 166)

'O Father, thou art All-in-all, perfect beyond the longing of thy children, and we are all and altogether thine.'

George MacDonald (*Unspoken Sermons* 88)

George MacDonald wrote *Phantastes: A Faerie Romance for Men and Women* in only two months, in December 1857 and January 1858 (Page 14). The book was subsequently published in October that same year. He wrote the book soon after a tumultuous period of his life: within the last seven years, he had both been given and been forced to resign from the only full-time pastorate he ever held, the position as pastor of the Trinity Congregational Church in Arundel, Sussex (1850-53), gotten married and published his first books. But he also suffered heavy losses, as his brother Alec and his stepsister Bella died, and he came close to death himself in two bouts of serious lung haemorrhage (11-14). It appears to have been a period of personal development and a deeper understanding of his faith and calling in life. Such a development is also found in his first novel: *Phantastes* is a *Bildungsroman*, a story of a young man's personal growth (15). But it is also more than that, because the implied author of the novel, much like the man who held the pen, comes across as a man of great spiritual and academic capacity, a man familiar with death, a theologian, and a preacher in need of a pulpit. That similarity between actual and implied author is precisely what lies at the core of this thesis.

  Phantastes recounts the journey of Anodos, a young man, who awakes the morning after his twenty-first birthday, now legal and the man of the house in place of his late father. He has been given the keys to his father's old desk, in which he discovers a hidden compartment. Upon opening it he is soon faced with a tiny woman, who speaks to him. She informs him that he 'shall find the way into Fairy Land to-morrow' (45), and the next morning he finds his room in the process of transforming into a strange landscape. Throughout the course of the novel, Anodos must journey through Fairy Land, face and conquer difficulties, quests, and challenges, and, most importantly, face his own 'Shadow' and selfishness, before finally dying. He is then returned to his former

life as a new, transformed man. The book is obviously fiction, but it nevertheless appears to convey a strong and specific world view. The narrator, Anodos, at times supplements his narrative with afterthoughts and observations of an almost lecturing nature, several of which bear a striking resemblance to MacDonald's own professed views.

The aim of this chapter is to argue that the world view expressed by the narrator in *Phantastes*, as well as by the *implied* author of the novel through the world and events he has created, to a large extent corresponds with the *physical* author MacDonald's beliefs and views regarding several different aspects of Christianity, as they are expressed in his non-fiction – chiefly his sermon collection *Unspoken Sermons.* The authorial voice in *Phantastes* appears to be closely in tune with MacDonald's own beliefs, although there are some contrasting views to be found. In the following, I will show that *Phantastes* is permeated by a view of both God and nature as inherently good, and of evil as the corruption of goodness – and that the novel reveals an implied author who to a large extent parallels MacDonald's thoughts on the state and quality of this world and the next, including some Platonic and Augustinian impulses.

THE NATURE OF GOD

When reading *Phantastes* and *The Chronicles of Narnia* with an eye for tracing the Christian faith and world view of the authors in the books, it quickly becomes obvious that *The Chronicles* supply a much vaster array of Christian symbols – often far more readily available and easily noticeable for any remotely observant reader – than is the case with *Phantastes.* Certainly *Phantastes* does not contain any God-figure as obvious as Aslan or the Emperor-beyond-the-Sea, or a cosmology as developed as that of the Narnian universe (or, to be more precise, of *our* universe in the version imagined by Lewis, in which the world of Narnia and our world are just parts). But this does not mean that the image of a God is not present, however veiled, in the novel. As the nature of God was one of the great and recurring themes in MacDonald's teachings, it is a natural starting point for the following discussion. His preoccupation with describing God flows throughout the pages of his collections of sermons. Ever from his very first sermon, in which he states that 'Nothing is required of man that is not first in God. It is because God is perfect that we are required to be perfect' (*Unspoken Sermons* 8), he gradually develops and explicates his view of God as the all-loving, immensely faithful

and good Father of all. 'Whosoever gives a cup of cold water to a little one, refreshes the heart of the Father. To do as God does, is to receive God; to do a service to one of his children is to receive the Father,' he says a few lines earlier in the same sermon (7) – a telling image in light of Anodos's experiences in *Phantastes*.

The first image or illustration of God in the novel appears in the very first chapter. Throughout MacDonald's fiction writing, one of the distinct and recurring images is that of the feminine representations of God. This is especially apparent in some of his stories for children and his so-called 'Scottish novels', but it is also readily available to a discerning reader in *Phantastes*. So it should come as no surprise that the novel's first godlike character is the tiny woman in the desk (43). However, this God-figure is hardly more than a vague hint of the far more potent representation of God's feminine qualities in the book's central 'grandmother' figure later in the novel (202 ff), as well as in the image of the 'rusty knight'. These will be discussed below.

The view of God as feminine echoes MacDonald's teachings in his non-fiction. In his sermons, he underlines that we are all, as humans, created in the likeness of God, that God is constantly developing us into an ever closer likeness to him, and that he wants his sons and daughters to 'be sharers of the divine nature' (*Unspoken Sermons* 165). MacDonald's view of God is, as he states in the first of his published sermons, 'God like the child', not merely 'the monstrosity of a monarch' as misrepresented by numerous theologians (12). According to MacDonald, God 'is simply and altogether our friend, our father – our more than friend, father, and mother – our infinite love – perfect God'. He is more delicate than all human tenderness can conceive of a husband or wife, and more homely than we can imagine a father or mother. In other words, MacDonald's view of God's nature is that it is very complex, but thoroughly marked by tenderness. The implied author of *Phantastes* portrays a similarly complex God. However, as in most of MacDonald's fiction, the *feminine* aspect is perhaps especially prevalent.

The tiny woman in the first chapter is the first of many idealised 'grandmother' figures MacDonald would make use of throughout his literary career (MacDonald, *Phantastes* 45 note). But as mentioned, she is merely a hint of what is to come, and hardly a very potent or nuanced illustration of God. However, that is not to say that she cannot give a hint of the view of God the novel presents. She is immensely beautiful (45) in a thoroughly natural way (43), and adapts her size to help Anodos believe in her (44). Her voice is sweet and she creates a longing in Anodos for Fairy Land, but she is also

strict, not immediately approachable and reprimands Anodos for his foolish words and behaviour (45). Of course, as is the case throughout this thesis, it is important to keep in mind that she is first and foremost a literary character, created as an instrument to tell a fictional story. Nevertheless, and especially in light of the mentioned recurring nature of this 'grandmother' character with distinctly divine qualities, it is not unnatural to assume that the implied author means for the tiny woman to be a first glimpse into the nature of God. And as such, this first 'grandmother' can be read as an illustration of a God who is, like Lewis's lion, not tame, and who is not always endlessly and fruitlessly patient with a human's foolish ignorance when confronted with the divine. According to Jeffrey Bilbro, this illustrates how Anodos, who is possessive and instinctively wishes to selfishly control his surroundings, must learn 'the proper way of relating to "incomprehensible" beauty' (23). In other words, God is holy, and his holiness deserves and demands respect. However, the tiny woman also illustrates how God is nevertheless gentle, loving and eager to meet and challenge a person's doubts. But more importantly, she foreshadows the tender love and guidance found in the main grandmother figure in the cottage of Anodos's 'own' island (MacDonald, *Phantastes* 202 note).

When Anodos throws himself from the cliff into the water, it appears to be a suicide attempt. '"I will not be tortured to death,"' he cries before plunging himself into the waves, '"I will meet it half-way. The life within me is yet enough to bear me up to the face of Death, and then I die unconquered"' (*Phantastes* 198). But in fact, without his fully realising it, Anodos does not after all seek death, but life. The key is his full resignation from his own life and pursuit. 'A blessing, like the kiss of a mother, seemed to alight on my soul,' he describes the sensation upon hitting the water. This echoes the words of MacDonald in one of his sermons, fittingly titled 'Life': 'Weary with feebleness, he ['the old man . . . whose limbs are weak'] calls upon death, but in reality it is life he wants. It is but the encroaching death in him that desires death. He longs for rest, but death cannot rest; death would be as much an end to rest as to weariness' (*Unspoken Sermons* 163). Likewise, it is not death Anodos finds (although the passage can also be seen as a sort of death and rebirth), but rather the rest he truly longs for. He discovers a cottage, and after having been invited in by a sweet voice, he finally meets the old woman, 'the first real embodiment of MacDonald's grandmother-God figures' (*Phantastes* 203 note). She is, arguably, the main image of God in the novel, and parallels several key features of MacDonald's view of God's nature as found in his sermons. According to Bonnie

Gaarden, she represents 'God-in-Christ', and is identified as 'Divine Wisdom' (139-140). Tellingly, the first effect of this meeting upon Anodos is rest: 'She held out her hand to me, and the voice of sweetness again greeted me, with the single word, "Welcome." . . . A wondrous sense of refuge and repose came upon me' (*Phantastes* 203). The old woman then proceeds to feed and comfort him as he rests his head on her bosom.

Returning to the sermon 'Life', MacDonald there appears to describe precisely the same God as the one vividly portrayed by the implied author through the old woman: 'God is life, and the will-source of life. . . . I know nothing deeper in him than love, nor believe there is in him anything deeper than love – nay, that there can be anything deeper than love. The being of God is love' (*Unspoken Sermons* 164). Again returning to the very first of his sermons, the same statement is found, only perhaps even stronger, as he says of God that 'The deepest, purest love of a woman has its well-spring in him' (13). However, MacDonald here also points to a key aspect of the 'femininity' of his God image, because, as he continues, 'Our longing desires can no more exhaust the fullness of the treasures of the Godhead, than our imagination can touch their measure.'

The 'feminine God' of MacDonald's theology is not the same as an effeminate God. As this last quote shows, God, in MacDonald's view, is much greater than what the human mind can ever comprehend. Thus, it can be assumed that the strong focus on this aspect of God in MacDonald's fiction is merely a counter-reaction to the 'terrible' misrepresentations of God by theologians, as 'a great King on a grand throne, . . . making it the business of his being and the end of his universe to keep up his glory' (*Unspoken Sermons* 12). Notably, as William Raeper points out, MacDonald's depictions of God, those of a man who has distanced himself from his childhood faith, are 'all softer, gentler and humbler than the Scotch Calvinist idea of God he was taught as a boy' (paraphrased in McInnis 215). And as Jeff McInnis subsequently sums up MacDonald's feminine God image in his study on MacDonald and Lewis, *Shadows and Chivalry*: 'Since women and femininity itself could have no other source but the heart of God, it must follow that God himself is not simply a *him*self as some understand the term. He is the heart of all womanly tenderness and therefore infinitely more tender than any woman whom he creates with a capacity for tenderness' (215-216, my italics).

At the same time, God in MacDonald's sermons is not merely a kind and comforting old woman. As McInnis continues, MacDonald 'never forgot about God as Father. He never believed God was less fatherly simply because he was also the source of all good

motherhood' (216). As he says in a sermon: 'power and goodness are one' (*Unspoken Sermons* 193). This dichotomy is also found in *Phantastes*, where the authorial voice illustrates the same juxtaposition in the figure of the wise, old woman herself. As Raeper notes, she is not simply a woman, but a Grand Woman – or, rather, a 'Grand Mother' (quoted in McInnis 216). The old woman is infinitely loving and the embodiment of compassion, but she also discreetly pushes Anodos to face his fears and his issues by going through the various doors of the cottage when he is ready (207 ff). Granted, it is Anodos who resolves to enter through them, but he does this only after having been restored by the old woman, and after she, through her actions, has drawn his attention to the doors. And again, after he has gone through the final door against the old woman's wishes, presumably because he was not yet ready for what lay behind it, she is no longer merely quietly and patiently loving, although she is tender and compassionate still.

Mixed with this compassion is a firm guidance, and even a kind of order as she pushes Anodos back into the world – or Fairy Land, as the case may be. There is first the reassurance that she '"knows something, though she must not always tell it, that would quite satisfy you about it, even in the worst moments of your distress. Now you must go,"' in other words she urges Anodos to trust her (218). Then comes the task, the call to do her bidding: 'At length she gently pushed me away, and with the words, "Go, my son, and do something worth doing," turned back, and entering the cottage, closed the door behind her' (219). Similarly, MacDonald in a sermon has God urge the believer to 'Trust in me, for I took care of your fathers once upon a time. . . . Worship and obey me, for I will be good to you' (*Unspoken Sermons* 89). Thus, as the quotes above show, some of the diversity and vastness of the God presented by the implied author of the novel is revealed by the ancient woman in the cottage, and this God-image corresponds to the representation of God's nature in MacDonald's sermons. As McInnis notes, 'a God who is not aloof or proud does not denote a God who is a milksop' (240).

Although the old woman in the cottage is tenably the main God-figure in *Phantastes*, it is through another figure the novel most fully explores and expounds the nature of God, combining both feminine and masculine attributes: the rusty knight, or as Anodos calls him, the 'knight of the soiled armour' (*Phantastes* 250). The interpretation of the knight as an illustration of God has been thoroughly explored by McInnis, who compares the character both to God (247), to Lewis's Aslan (249), and to Christ (277). This reading has in turn been challenged by Jeffrey Bilbro, who, in his essay 'Phantastical Regress',

says that McInnis's claims that the knight is a Christ figure in the Aslan vein is problematic and can only be a secondary interpretation of the character (27). I agree with Bilbro regarding the link between the rusty knight and Aslan, which he says has 'little support', and it is important to maintain that the knight has several different functions in the novel (he also, importantly, functions as an idealised version of Anodos). However, I mainly follow and agree with McInnis's interpretation, especially in regard to the view of the knight as a general illustration of aspects of the nature of God – even though he is, arguably, less of a God-figure and symbol of God than the old woman, through also being a more human and flawed character. Nevertheless, he can be said to illustrate God's multi-faceted nature, and this is especially apparent when Anodos meets him again towards the end of his stay in Fairy Land. Anodos requests to become the knight's squire – after the knight has regained his pride and glory and lost the rust of his armour. As McInnis describes it, the knight here displays a 'chivalrous combination of strength and tenderness, and [a] readiness to serve and save the weak' (248).

The knight appears dragging behind his horse a dragon he has fought and slain, thus showing his strength and courage – in other words, his immense power (MacDonald, *Phantastes* 248). But at the same time he is singing, and after Anodos's request to be a squire, he not only accepts, but also extends his hand and declares that despite the obvious difference in power and importance, 'Squire and knight should be friends' (251). If one compares this to MacDonald's theology as presented in his sermons, it is not difficult to see the knight as echoing the image he presents of a God who despite his all-encompassing power remains friendly, gentle and tender. Both MacDonald and the novel's implied author portray a God who willingly bridges the gap between his own glorious self and the lowly humans – in the knight's case by literally extending a hand. Furthermore, upon observing the knight in pleasant and familiar conversation with the father of the girl he has saved from the dragon, Anodos exclaims: 'A nobler countenance I never saw. Loving-kindness beamed from every line of his face. It seemed as if he would repay himself for the late arduous combat, by indulging in all the gentleness of a womanly heart' (252). Again this presents the same idea of a feminine God-aspect, illustrated by the gentleness of a woman, which is also found in MacDonald's sermons, and that he, as mentioned, sees as having its source in even stronger attributes of the same kind in God. But even in the very next sentence the implied author flips the image as the knight's expression changes, and his face reveals the more traditionally masculine

characteristics of determination, sternness and inner, restrained turmoil, no doubt due to worry for the little girl's wellbeing and anger at the evil that caused her harm. As soon as the mother returns to the cottage with the hurt child, the knight then combines these masculine traits of determination and force with a simultaneous display of feminine passion and tenderness, as well as the nurturing and healing properties of motherly love (252). Similarly, MacDonald in his sermons wastes no time in going from God 'the well-spring' of womanly love to God the 'consuming fire' (*Unspoken Sermons* 13).

It is, perhaps, especially interesting to note that the authorial voice in *Phantastes*, both in the image of the knight and in the image of the old woman in the cottage, so clearly illustrates the (typically feminine) quality of God as healer and nurturer. It is a fascinating contrast to all the painful experiences of illness and death that MacDonald experienced in his life, not least in the time immediately preceding his writing of *Phantastes*. In fact, the focus on divine healing, although it does not necessarily imply a difference in beliefs or views of God between MacDonald and the implied author, certainly reveals a difference in focus. A look at MacDonald's sermon titled 'The Voice of Job', on the story of Job, he who more than anyone struggled with the question of why God allowed pain and suffering to hurt his loving and devoted servants, might shed some light on this. In the sermon, in which MacDonald talks surprisingly little of physical suffering and Job's eventual healing considering his own experiences, he says:

> The true child, the righteous man, will trust absolutely, against all appearances, the God who has created in him the love of righteousness. God does not, I say, tell Job why he had afflicted him: he rouses his child-heart to trust. . . . The awful thing would be, that anything should be in its nature unintelligible: that would be the same as *no God*. That God knows is enough for me; I shall know, if I can know. . . . How much more than Job are we bound, who know him in his Son as Love, to trust God in all the troubling questions that force themselves upon us concerning the motions and results of things. (*Unspoken Sermons* 192, his italics)

It is as if MacDonald has resigned, and merely accepts that he cannot understand God's mysterious ways, but must trust him in spite of his troubles. Instead, throughout his sermons, he focuses not on the potential for healing in this world, but the eventual healing in the next: 'a body to show the being truly – without defects' (161). It seems as if the implied author of the novel, free from the disappointments of a hard life, can more

freely express hopes of, and longing for, a God who willingly and frequently uses his healing powers whenever faced with people's afflictions. At the same time, it must be remembered that in both *Phantastes* and other of MacDonald's novels, the notion of 'Good Death', and of death merely as the beginning of something better, is still prevalent. That good death is the same as the one MacDonald looks forward to in his sermons.

Arguably, the old woman in the cottage and the knight are the two most important and clear representations of God in *Phantastes*. But there are a couple of other instances in the novel that reveal something about the nature of God, and that should not be overlooked. A telling passage is the scene in the hut of the ogress, the 'church of darkness'. As soon as Anodos enters, the woman (or ogress) begins to read from a book, and the text she reads sounds in terms of language and style like something out of the Bible (109). But in fact, it is an inversion of the message of the Bible, and so the novel is drawing attention to divine attributes by having an evil person state as truths the opposite of truth. 'Darkness had no beginning, neither will it ever have an end,' the ogress reads (109), and continues by describing darkness as eternal and as having power over the light, and humans as 'a passing flame'. This is also an inverted mirror image of words of MacDonald's, for it is the exact opposite of what he believed and preached. In his sermon titled 'Light', he refers to the words of the apostle John, who says that 'God is light, and in him is no darkness at all' (*The Holy Bible*, 1 John 1.5) and 'this is the judgement, that the light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light; for their works were evil' (John 3.19). In reaction to these words, MacDonald in his sermon exclaims: 'Ah, my heart, this is indeed the good news for thee! This is a gospel! If God be light, what more, what else can I seek than God, than God himself! Away with your doctrines! Away with your salvation from the "justice" of a God whom it is a horror to imagine! . . . I am saved – for God is light!' (*Unspoken Sermons* 291). And later in the same sermon he dispels an objection: '"But there is another side to the matter: God is light indeed, but there *is* darkness; darkness is death, and men are in it." Yes; darkness is death, but not death to him that comes out of it' (294). In other words, the implied author of *Phantastes*, through the inverted gospel read by the ogress, emphasises the goodness of God, in unison with the novel's physical author. Notably, also, when read in light of the quotes from his sermon above, this emphasis is placed directly in stark opposition to the Calvinist God he was taught to know in his childhood. This is not to say that the Calvinist God was a God of darkness. Rather, it shows how

MacDonald in the words of the apostle John finds a far more hopeful view of God than the stern and judgmental almighty ruler of Calvinist theology. 'Away with your doctrines,' as he says. It is as if he wishes to purify God from the notion of him as stern and aloof, and though it is not especially prominent in this specific passage in *Phantastes*, this wish to purify and 'de-sternify' God is echoed in the general image of God portrayed throughout the novel. It is also interesting to explore the next few paragraphs of the scene in the hut of the ogress: the ogress urges Anodos not to open the door where he will subsequently find his shadow, but as the author has Anodos say, 'The prohibition . . . only increased my desire to see' (110). And upon gazing into the dark tunnel, he sees 'two or three stars glimmering faintly in the distant blue'. It is hardly an obvious symbol, but this distant vision of Anodos's could be read as the implied author's discreet criticism of a Christianity littered with prohibitions and a thwarted image of God – quite in MacDonald's spirit, in other words. The result is a God (the Trinity as symbolised by the stars) that can only just be seen in the far distance, whereas the temptations grow ever stronger and cause too strong a focus on the self (the Shadow).

Finally, God is reflected in the general landscape of Fairy Land. Although Fairy Land is, as is our world, haunted by the presence of evil and the reality of death, the landscape Anodos journeys through is beautiful and largely peaceful. It is a world that is inherently good, and this parallels the emphasis on the goodness of God that MacDonald so vehemently put front and centre in his theology. As Courtney Salvey points out in her essay 'Riddled with Evil': 'For MacDonald, both this world and the next are good, but this world is good because it points to God' (16). This also directs us towards what will be the focus of the next section, namely the nature of evil.

THE NATURE OF EVIL

In *Phantastes*, as in all of MacDonald's novels, the battle against evil is central. But equally central, or, rather, *essential* to the battle, is the question of what evil is and does – and what it is not and cannot do. MacDonald said much on the subject, and the implied author in *Phantastes* also more or less explicitly expresses some of the same thoughts and ideas.

The readers of *Phantastes*, as well as Anodos, first meet evil in Fairy Land in the shape of the Ash-tree. The girl Anodos first encounters in Fairy Land, the daughter of the

woman in the cottage near the Ash, describes the Ash as 'an ogre' (51), and as greedy (57). But the most telling description of the Ash comes a few pages later, when Anodos encounters it again at night after having left the safety of the cottage. Here, Anodos describes the Ash – or, more correctly, its *shadow* or spirit – in chilling terms. He says that it reminded him of vampires (71). In Victorian times, this was not the romantic notion of the beautiful and dangerous, but redeemable creature of 21th Century popular culture, but rather a pre-Dracula 'reanimated corpse' (71 note). Furthermore, he describes this 'shadow-Ash' as having eyes that 'were alive, yet not with life', and says that 'a gnawing voracity, which devoured the devourer, seemed to be the indwelling and propelling power of the whole ghostly apparition' (71). In other words, evil is described as something that sucks the life out of you – both of the self (in this case the Ash, but the link between evil and the self will be explored further later on) and whoever comes in contact with it (Anodos). However, even more interesting is the description of the evil Ash's physical appearance. It is described as 'vague, shadowy, almost transparent, in the central parts, and gradually deepening in substance towards the outside, until it ended in extremities capable of casting such a shadow as fell from the hand, through the awful fingers of which I now saw the moon' (70). This illustrates a key aspect of the novel's – as well as MacDonald's – view of the nature of evil, as will be discussed in the following.

Courtney Salvey, in her article, performs a thorough analysis of *Phantastes* in which she strongly argues that MacDonald's two fantasy novels for adults, *Phantastes* and *Lilith*, illustrate 'different facets of an Augustinian conception of the universe in which evil is the privation of good and all things with substance are good' (17). The Augustinian aspect of MacDonald's theology will be dealt with in more detail later, but at present it is enough to note, as Salvey puts it, the idea that 'Because God is good and he created all things, nothing he created can be evil' (17). The Ash – that is, the physical tree – is a part of God's creation, and is therefore good. This is illustrated by the fact that when the daughter informs her mother and Anodos that the Ash has gone away for the night, Anodos looks out of the window and notes that 'there stood the ash-tree, to my eyes the same as before' (59). In other words, it is not the physical tree as part of the good, God-created nature that is evil or dangerous. As Nick Page notes, 'It is the Ash-tree's shadow that is the danger' (70 note). When Anodos subsequently encounters this evil spirit of the Ash, he describes it as exactly 'shadowy', as mentioned above.

The evil Ash is merely a hollow, distorted version of the actual tree. It is also, tellingly, most transparent in its middle, and later it is described by the good Beech-tree as having 'a hole in his heart' (75). Accordingly, then, evil, in *Phantastes*, does not appear to have a substance of its own. Rather, it is the inversion of created goodness, and therefore hollow – as Salvey puts it, '*Phantastes* illustrates that evil is not within the natural world but corrupts it, a parasite on anything with substance, including the psyche' (21). This hollowness as a characteristic of evil, mere emptiness in place of the substance of goodness, is again reflected towards the end of the novel, in the scene with the worshippers gathered in the forest. Anodos, by now a much-improved man, recognises the events as evil, and hurls the false image of God down the steps of the platform (262). A God that requires human sacrifice is not good, and so it cannot be God – but rather, again, an inversion. It is an evil fraud, and can also be read as a criticism of false religion and superficial holiness in our world – because, as Anodos tears down the false God, it is revealed to be hollow and a trap, leading to a murderous 'great brute, like a wolf, but twice the size' (262). This is precisely the same view of evil as expressed by MacDonald in *Unspoken Sermons*: 'evil exists only by the life of good, and has no life of its own,' he says (274), and 'Evil can destroy only itself and its own' (178).

But the main focus when it comes to the nature of evil as treated in *Phantastes*, is its relation to the self. It is a topic frequently touched upon in MacDonald's sermons, such as when he says that 'certainly no evil is, or ever could be, of the essential being and nature of the creature God made! The thing that is not good, however associated with our being, is against that being, not of it – is its enemy, on which we need to be avenged' (*Unspoken Sermons* 142). Here, MacDonald highlights the same view of evil as represented by the Ash, as something that is not a part of us as created beings. He also says that 'the one principle of hell is – "I am my own"' (264), and shows both how this is the power of hell, in other words, the essence of evil, and how it is an untruth that has been dispelled by Christ. The essence of evil, 'I am my own', is an inversion of the truth, which is the exact opposite: 'The truth is God; . . . The thought of God is the truth of everything. All well-being lies in true relation to God,' he says (266). Or as he imagines Jesus himself saying: 'My will is all for his will, for his will is right' (265).

In *Phantastes*, despite the evil Anodos encounters in the form of the Ash, the Alder-maiden (95), the ogress in the church of darkness and various run-ins with goblins and evil creatures, the main manifestation of evil is undoubtedly 'the Shadow'. He first

obtains it in the hut of the ogress (110-111), and it is shown throughout the remainder of the book to be a negative influence. When Anodos, horrified, asks the ogress what it is, she tells him that it is his shadow, and that 'you call it a different name in your world' (112). As Nick Page notes, this 'different name' has been widely discussed by scholars. Page concludes that 'The shadow is 'self', not as in our identity, but as in our selfishness or self-centredness. As the book progresses, Anodos will, repeatedly, face the challenge of defeating himself' (112 note). I largely agree with this interpretation, although self-reliance and possessiveness should be added as elements of that selfishness. Anodos even uses the term selfishness specifically – albeit not in direct relation to his shadow. It is nevertheless not difficult to draw the link to the Shadow when Anodos, after having chased the 'white lady' a second time, and while walking lost and resignedly through the underworld, says: 'Besides being delighted and proud that *my* songs had called the beautiful creature to life, the same fact caused me to feel a tenderness unspeakable for her, accompanied with a kind of feeling of property in her; for so *the goblin Selfishness* would reward the angel Love' (196, first italics by MacDonald, second mine).

Through these examples, one sees here that MacDonald and the novel's implied author both undoubtedly saw selfishness as an evil, and as the opponent of love, and thus of God, as God is love. It should be noted, however, that interestingly, despite the apparently sharp distinction MacDonald seems to draw between good and evil, some critics have claimed that in fact, MacDonald opposed such absolutism. As William Gray says, he 'resisted absolute dualisms, or binary oppositions,' and similarly, the shadow is, in fact, a 'necessary Shadow' (17). Although one could hardly call MacDonald a stranger to 'absolute dualisms', as this is the man who calls self-satisfaction 'in its very nature . . . a root of all sin' (*Unspoken Sermons* 198), it is true that he can be said to frequently qualify the negative aspects of his theology. For instance, he says in one of his sermons that God punishes sin, because 'in itself sin deserves punishment' (272). However, only a couple of lines before he also says that 'God does punish sin, but there is no opposition between punishment and forgiveness. The one may be essential to the possibility of the other.' In another sermon he says that when a man does wrong when attempting to do right, 'God will take care that he be shown the better way – will perhaps use the very thing which is his mistake to reveal to him the mistake it is' (198). This all matches quite well with passages in *Phantastes*, such as the knight's statement that 'All a man has to do, is to better what he can' (253), and not least the penultimate sentence of the novel:

'What we call evil, is the only and best shape, which, for the person and his condition at the time, could be assumed by the best good' (273). Here, the implied author seems to argue for a view of sin or evil as sometimes necessary, or at least as something unavoidable, which must simply be accepted and 'made the most of'. And indeed, the Shadow might, after all, be, if not 'necessary', as William Gray says, then at least used for good – it is certainly one of the devices used by the implied author to push Anodos further through Fairy Land, and further on his mental journey towards redemption and increased maturity. A 'lucky misfortune', as it turns out.

It is important to distinguish, here, between evil *fortune* and *moral* evil, a distinction clearly upheld by both MacDonald and the implied author in *Phantastes*. As McInnis admits, MacDonald's view of reality includes quite a lot of seemingly contradictory things, but, as he says, 'MacDonald thought that enormous amounts of adversity could be consistent with God's goodness and his good purposes' (127). However, one must not confuse the darker aspects of reality, 'shadows in general', as McInnis calls them, with 'the shadow of moral evil' (129). Correspondingly, the evil mentioned in the quote from *Phantastes* above – that is, the *appearance* of the shadow – is, precisely, not *moral* evil, but rather evil *fortune*, or simply *misfortune*. As McInnis sums up MacDonald's view – and I agree wholeheartedly with his interpretation both of the authorial view in *Phantastes* and of MacDonald's view in his theological writing on this point: 'When it cannot – or should not – be avoided, evil fortune is to be accepted as within God's good will, but moral evil is to be rejected at every opportunity' (134).

It is, in other words, this 'moral evil' that Anodos's famous shadow represents. That is, its *appearance* through Anodos's actions is a misfortune, but what it *represents* and promotes is moral evil. And so I return to the nature of this shadow, and more specifically to the important question of its substance and relation to the self. A key hint is found in *Phantastes* when Anodos is reminded of his shadow on his first full afternoon in the Fairy Palace. 'Shadow of me!' he exclaims in frustration, ' which art not me, but which representest thyself to me as me; here I may find a shadow of light which will devour thee, the shadow of darkness!' (133-134). It is a quote frequently employed in discussions on the nature of the Shadow, and thus of evil in the novel. But immediately before this exclamation, there is another statement by the narrator (that is, Anodos), which might be equally telling. Reflecting on the fact that the shadow's presence overshadows, so to speak, the experience of the beauty of the place, Anodos finds

comfort in the thought that 'I might here find the magic word of power to banish the demon and set me free, so that I should no longer be a man beside myself' (133). This sentence very clearly points out the separation of 'The Self' from the person, that is, the essential person who is a child and creation of God. The distinction that the implied author makes here is also found in MacDonald's sermons, such as when he says that 'True victory over self is the victory of God in the man, not of the man alone,' and 'The self is given to us that we may sacrifice it' (*Unspoken Sermons* 198). The self, as MacDonald appears to define it, is not part of the original, God-intended human, but an 'addition' that can and should be cast off again and sacrificed.

There is a sharp distinction between the person, or, rather, the true, original, God-given essence of the person, and the selfishness that keeps him from a full relationship with nature and God –and this view is echoed in *Phantastes*. In the quote above, Anodos calls his shadow a demon that basically duplicates him: 'A man beside myself'. Anodos has become two persons, but only one of them is the real, essential Anodos – when he finally loses his shadow towards the end of the novel, he, in fact, mistakes the loss of the Shadow for the loss of himself (247). Which, of course, is precisely the point. The Self must be lost for the true self to fully live. This mirrors MacDonald's words in his sermon fittingly titled 'Self-Denial': To be free, the self (that is, the person) must follow God instead of its own desires. Then, 'The time will come when it shall be so possessed, so enlarged, so idealized, by the indwelling God, who is its deeper, its deepest self, that there will be no longer any enforced denial of it needful, it has been finally denied and refused and sent into its own obedient place' (*Unspoken Sermons* 199). As McInnis puts it, MacDonald, while presenting the battle between good and evil as 'a real and significant battle', never presents it as a battle between equals. Instead, it is 'a battle between the Great Someone and those who would be nothing, or between a man and that "shadow of me"' (McInnis 159). Again this touches upon the aforementioned state of evil as emptiness, because to MacDonald, evil is not a part of nature. It is emptiness.

MacDonald did not have a view of the created world that included a dualism of the type necessitated if evil had any kind of substance, and thus necessarily must have a creator. Evil is, to MacDonald, not created, nor does it have a source. Rather, it is merely a nothingness, or, to be slightly more nuanced, a lessening of what is. Only God truly is – truly exists, on the deepest level. He is the source of everything, he is the essence of existence, and as he is goodness, evil cannot have true existence. Instead, to MacDonald,

evil is merely a twisted and inverted, or lessened, version of good, a view he flatly outlined in several of his sermons. In 'The Temptation in the Wilderness', where he discusses the temptation of Christ in the desert, he says: 'But does not all evil come from good? Yes; but it has come *from* it. It is no longer good. A good corrupted is no longer a good. . . . Evil is evil whatever it may have come from' (*Unspoken Sermons* 52). In 'Life', he describes both the nature of *self*: 'we are made for love, not for self. Our neighbour is our refuge; *self* is our demon-foe,' and of *God*: 'the infinite God, the great one life than whom is no other – only shadows, lovely shadows of him!' (171, his italics).

On the final page of the last sermon of the collection, 'The Inheritance', he sums up the argument thus: 'What springs from myself and not from God, is evil; it is a perversion of something of God's' (333). A perversion indeed – and this view of evil is also revealed as the underlying view in *Phantastes*. Throughout the novel, through various nefarious characters, the implied author repeatedly presents evil as hollow and/or a perverted version of the real, substantial world. The hollow and shadowy Ash has already been mentioned, as has the Alder, the ogress, the empty idol in the forest and Anodos's own shadow. There is also the woodman, a creature that, though not hollow, is merely 'like a block of wood roughly hewn into the mere outlines of a man; and hardly so' (256). It has no face and formless limbs, and the knight who is describing the creature is, tellingly, hesitant to describe it as 'a being'. To top it all, it is originally invisible. Some critics have read this as a social commentary (MacDonald, *Phantastes* 256 note). I would suggest that this can also be read, as I have just done, as another expression of a view of evil as a corruption of God's original good creation. It seems fitting, then, to end the discussion on the view of the nature of evil in *Phantastes* and its correspondence with MacDonald's theology, with MacDonald's perhaps most crystal clear definition of it, from his sermon titled 'Justice'. His views, as well as those expressed by the authorial voice in *Phantastes*, can effectively be summed up thus: 'evil exists only by the life of good, and has no life of its own, being in itself death' (275).

THE PHILOSOPHICAL THREAD

The theme of evil and its source hints at an important aspect of George MacDonald's world view, and one that deserves more thorough attention: the philosophical influences. MacDonald was a well-read man, especially for his position and standing in

society. He was thoroughly versed in literature, theology and philosophy – and was somewhat of a philosopher himself. This philosophical inclination comes across in his theological writing, and is echoed in his novels, not least in *Phantastes*. Several critics have, to varying extents, labelled him as some variety of a Platonist, or, at least, as revealing a 'Platonic idealism' in his attitude towards God and our physical world (Salvey 16). To some extent this makes sense, because his attitudes certainly reveal a view of the world – or, perhaps more accurately, of existence – in which this world is not the only one, and nor is it necessarily the best. A similar view is expressed by the implied author several places in *Phantastes*, although, when comparing the various expressions of such views in the novel, one can hardly help but notice that the attitudes expressed there towards the worlds, or planes of existence, seem somewhat inconsistent. As he is wandering through the forest, after having slept there during the afternoon and awoken to moonlight, Anodos reflects upon the relationship between the sun and the moon and its wider applications: 'Why are all reflections lovelier than what we call the reality? – not so grand or so strong, it may be, but always lovelier?' (125). A few lines later he then foreshadows the story-within-a-story found at the centre of the novel, when he says that 'All mirrors are magic mirrors'. This is obviously, at least partially, a reference to the story of Cosmo in the thirteenth chapter (148-171). Again in this story there appears to be a reflection of this world, only lovelier because of the presence of a beautiful young lady. However, upon closer inspection – and undoubtedly true to form for MacDonald, the incurable lover of complex, multi-layered images – the symbolism of this instance of reflection is revealed to be much less straightforward than was the case with the previous brief comment. In the Cosmo story, the reflected 'world' on the other side of the mirror is only lovelier because of the lady, and even though, to Cosmo, that side remains lovelier, its loveliness in terms of aesthetics is only increased as Cosmo improves the look of his room in the 'real world'. Then, to add to the confusion, in the end it is revealed that the lady he saw through the mirror was not in another world at all, but merely in a different part of the same town. Nonetheless, despite the complexity of this image, it, like the other quote above, hints at a Platonic view of the world.

However, in these two examples, our present world – the 'real world', if you like – appears to be the most real, if not the loveliest. But towards the end of the book the tone seems to change – interestingly, it happens as Anodos dies, and, notably, after first having come to peace with the idea of dying. He describes his experience of being dead

as breathing 'the clear mountain-air of the land of Death', making sure to point out that it meant 'not that I had in any way ceased to be what I had been' (266). He then continues: 'The very fact that anything can die, implies the existence of something that cannot die; which must either take to itself another form, as when the seed that is sown dies, and arises again; or, in conscious existence, may, perhaps, continue to lead a purely spiritual life.' It echoes the words he speaks when he goes through his first 'death', his suicide attempt that brings him to the house of the wise, old woman. Then, he talks of 'dreams of unspeakable joy,' and of meeting people who had died but tell him that they 'knew nothing of the grave' (200). Not least, this elated description of life, or, rather, some state of a conscious existence beyond death, is underscored by Anodos's reaction when he is again returned to life – and not merely to life as he has become used to knowing it in Fairy Land, but to his original 'real' world. He finds himself, painfully, 'once again conscious of a more limited, even a bodily and earthly life' (268), and 'Sinking from such a state of ideal bliss, into the world of shadows' (269). Notably, here, in a reversal of the description of reflections mentioned above, the real world is now described as shadows. It is as if the implied author has taken Anodos, and the reader, not only on a spiritual journey, but also a philosophical one. The imagery of reflections of shadows clearly draws upon a Platonic world view, in which this world is a dim reflection of the world of ideas. However, in keeping with the general Christian undercurrent of the novel, the vision of this 'other world' is of something more than merely a world of perfect 'moulds' for the faulty versions in our world. This Christian approach to the concept of the other world, the world of true beauty compared to the present shadow world, is most clearly expressed in *Phantastes* on the novel's final pages. After Anodos's return to his previous life in the 'real' world, he thinks he catches a glimpse of the face of the old wise woman among the branches of a beech, and hears a voice in the rustling of the leaves. '"A great good is coming – is coming – is coming to thee, Anodos,"' the voice seems to say (272) – and that good is described by Anodos only a few lines before: '"I have come through the door of Dismay; and the way back from the world into which that has led me, is through my tomb. Upon that the red sign lies, and I shall find it one day, and be glad."'

This combination of the idea of an afterlife in heaven and the Platonic idea of this world being a shadow version of the ideal realm, echoes MacDonald's words in one of his sermons, 'The Inheritance', where he says that 'the things I have here come from him, and are so plainly but a beginning' (332). However, the idea of the ideal versus the

present reality as an approach to the relationship between God and his divine realm and our fallen world is, perhaps, most strongly presented in another sermon, 'The Truth'. There, he talks in distinctly Platonic terms of humans as 'undeveloped Christ', just as 'the perfect meaning of a flower is the truth of a flower' (255). He continues: 'Every man, according to the divine idea of him, must come to the truth of that idea; and under every form of Christ is the Christ. The truth of every man, I say, is the perfected Christ in him.' There is more to this idea of two realms, including a slight difference in views between MacDonald and the implied author, which will be discussed later. But this idea of Christ as truth, and as the ideal all men must strive towards, is the essence of the Platonic streak found in both *Phantastes* and MacDonald's non-fiction.

However, although MacDonald is frequently deemed a Platonist – in Stephen Prickett's words, 'there is a quality shared alike by MacDonald and by Plato' (21) – others argue that this is a difficult claim to make. At least, calling MacDonald a Platonist definitely stretches the term somewhat, as MacDonald, ever unorthodox, hardly fits the bill in all aspects. Prickett, and others with him, simply maintain the general classification, while admitting that 'there is a difference between MacDonald and the earlier Platonists' (21). In another essay he calls him a 'temperamental Platonist', which is undoubtedly an interesting term (quoted in Salvey 16). The problem admitted by these critics is that it is contradictory for a Platonist to maintain the goodness of the material world while simultaneously claiming its unreality, as some suggest that MacDonald does (Salvey 16). As Courtney Salvey points out, MacDonald, by revelling in the material world despite being opposed to materialism, abandons the Platonic idea of locating the source of evil in the illusory material world (16-17). The combination of a view of this world as good and a personal longing for death does not, to Salvey, combine to make a very convincing Platonist. It is certainly true that MacDonald did indeed appreciate the world as a wonderful place of beauty. The world is God's handiwork, and an instrument for mediation between God and humans (*Unspoken Sermons* 190). And it is infinitely precious: 'I would not be supposed to depreciate the labours of science, but I say its discoveries are unspeakably less precious than the merest gifts of Nature, those which, from morning to night, we take unthinking from her hands' (191).

A similarly high valuation of nature is expressed by the implied author in *Phantastes*, when he describes the beauty of the Fairy Palace gardens as so intense and appealing that it weakens the Shadow so as to make it 'scarcely discernible' (133), and

prompts Anodos's proclamation of its separateness from himself (133-134). The appreciation is not merely of the magical nature of Fairy Land: in the last chapter, after having been returned to the real world, the 'world of shadows' as he at first calls it, Anodos describes the scene before him as he awakes lying in the open air just before sunrise: 'Over me rose the summer heaven, expectant of the sun. The clouds already saw him, coming from afar; and soon every dewdrop would rejoice in his individual presence within it' (270-271). This can hardly be anything but a proclamation of love for, and a rejoicing in, the beauty and goodness of the present world. In Salvey's view, this suggests not merely a flawed or 'temperamental' Platonism, but rather 'points to a different theology altogether' (17). It is, she finds, exactly what has been described above in the section on the view of evil – 'an Augustinian conception of the universe in which evil is the privation of good and all things with substance are good' (Salvey 17). In other words, according to Salvey neither MacDonald nor the authorial voice in *Phantastes* should be called Platonists. Rather, they belong to the Platonist-inspired, Augustinian theological tradition, in which the Platonist world view is filtered and refracted to allow a celebration of both this world and the next.

The crux of Salvey's argument is the Augustinian view of God as good and the source of all of creation, and therefore nothing created can be evil – thereby defining evil as the non-substantial privation of good. 'Whatever things exist are good, and the evil into whose origins I was inquiring is not a substance, for if it were a substance, it would be good,' Augustine says in his *Confessions* (124). As already mentioned, MacDonald was a well-read man, and it is no secret that although traces of Platonist thought can be found in the theology of a wide array of theologians and Christian thinkers ever since the early centuries and up to (and beyond) MacDonald's own time, much – if not most – of this is Platonism filtered and altered through Augustine. There is undoubtedly a difference between Augustine's proclamation that 'All things are beautiful because you [God] made them' (289) and the traditional Platonic view of matter as evil (Chilcott 28), and both *Phantastes* and MacDonald's sermons seem to be more in tune with the former.

And yet there is the longing, all the same: 'I find myself, unconsciously almost, looking about for the mystic mark of red [on the door of the wise old woman's cottage], with the vague hope of entering her door' (272), Anodos says after his return to the present world. MacDonald, in his sermons, expresses the same somewhat contradictory sentiments: 'never, in the midst of the good things of this lovely world, have I felt quite

at home in it' (*Unspoken Sermons* 332). Surely, there are intimations of a positive view of nature in both *Phantastes* and MacDonald's sermons. These do not easily combine with the Platonic view that matter is evil because it is a failed and insufficient representation in the particular of the idea or ideal in the spiritual dimension (Chilcott 28). However, just as Augustine agrees with some of his pre-conversion Platonic influences by underlining that nature, despite its beauty, is inexpressibly less beautiful than God (289), and admits that nature is flawed ('if the earth is fruitful, whence come so many thorns?' (187)), both MacDonald and the implied author of *Phantastes* agree with Platonism in seeing this world as inferior to the higher, divine realm. So it appears that Stephen Prickett's term 'temperamental Platonist' might, after all, be rather fitting – and as the next chapter will reveal, this type of freehand association with Platonism is a hallmark also of C.S. Lewis and the implied author of *The Chronicles of Narnia*.

It is, furthermore, natural to read *Phantastes* as mirroring Plato's famous cave allegory. Courtney Salvey, despite her reservations against Platonic interpretations of MacDonald's fiction, admits that the novel 'reveals a Platonic idealism in the conception of physical things as images of transcendent ideals which a person should seek to understand' (19). However, Anodos's idealism is still not fully Platonic, according to her, because he does not reject 'the physical, particular embodiment of the ideal after it has been used as a tool for contemplating that ideal' (20). Salvey here opposes the views of critics such as Frank Riga, who called this 'impure Platonism'. Instead, she sees it as an illustration of an Augustinian understanding of the universe, and a celebration of the natural world that suggests 'a sacramental view of nature', which also opposes the teachings of evangelical groups of his time (20). However, this interpretation cuts some rather significant corners. Undoubtedly, *Phantastes* does indeed present a 'sacramental view of nature', but the final two chapters of the novel might, in fact, be said to reveal the implied author of the book as more of a Platonist than MacDonald was himself.

Both MacDonald, in the final sermon in his *Unspoken Sermons*, and Anodos, in the final chapter of *Phantastes*, express a wish to leave the – admittedly good and beautiful – present world behind and move onto the next world, or higher dimension. Anodos is looking forward to returning to the death he has experienced through the door with the red sign (*Phantastes* 272). And MacDonald, even though he does indeed hail the world as good because created by a good God, also quite plainly states that 'Never has [this lovely world] shown me things lovely or grand enough to satisfy me. It is not all I should like

for a place to live in' (*Unspoken Sermons* 332). There is little doubt where he would rather be: 'Heaven will be continuous touch with God. The very sense of being will in itself be bliss' (331). However, as the final section of this chapter will make clear, MacDonald, like Augustine, appears to believe that the afterlife will include a physical existence. Eternity will not be spent in a purely spiritual form, instead there will be a 'corporeal presence' (*Unspoken Sermons* 161). The implied author of *Phantastes*, on the other hand, seems to suggest a Platonic existence, freed from the limitations of matter.

There is, in conclusion, no doubt that Courtney Salvey is right in her assertion that *Phantastes* and MacDonald present a largely Augustinian understanding of the universe. But this does not imply, as she appears to suggest, that the Platonic inspiration is non-existent, unimportant or should be over-looked. Rather, it reveals a faulty understanding on her part, both of MacDonald's theology, of Augustine's theology, and of the novel. There is a distinct concoction of Platonic, Neoplatonic and Augustinian ideas both in the world view expressed by the implied author of *Phantastes*, and in MacDonald's world view as it comes across in his sermons. And so it is, perhaps, for the best that Salvey concludes in rather vague terms, saying that 'The conception of good and evil illustrated by *Phantastes* is an implicit version of Augustine's Plato-informed conception of the universe and of evil' (24). That seems to sum it up rather nicely – and safely. And on that note it is time to get real, so to speak, and look at what both MacDonald and the authorial voice in *Phantastes* believed to be the truly real realm – namely heaven.

THE END

Any and all human life will end. It is the one absolute certainty of the human existence, and one of which George MacDonald was more painfully aware throughout his life than many others. However, there is no trace of hopelessness or frustration in regard to human mortality in his sermons. In fact, one can say it is quite the opposite. As Courtney Salvey puts it, 'MacDonald did not live in fear of death, but in longing for it' (16). And the same can be said of the implied author in *Phantastes*: when Anodos dies in Fairy Land, he clearly experiences bliss of a greater kind than he has ever known before. It is the end of his journey in Fairy Land - for now, at least. He has gone through the world and learned the value of love and selflessness, and eventually enters into a state of rest and pure joy. Granted, it is, as it turns out, only temporary, as he is returned to his old life in

the physical world. But nevertheless, it is a potent image of death and what lies beyond – an image in which it is not difficult to see the parallels to MacDonald's own thoughts, as he expresses them in his sermons, on existence after this 'mortal coil' has come to an end. As he lies in death, Anodos considers this new state and the meaning of it, in a telling paragraph: 'It was not that I had in any way ceased to be what I had been,' he reflects. Rather, he says, 'The very fact that anything can die, implies the existence of something that cannot die' (*Phantastes* 266). The passage echoes the words of MacDonald in several of his sermons, but perhaps none more than the words in the very first of his *Unspoken Sermons*, 'The Child in the Midst'. In it, he talks of the consuming wrath of God's divine love, and what must necessarily happen to a man when faced with this burning love – as all men must, whether in life or in death. 'The wrath will consume what they *call* themselves; so that the selves God made shall appear, coming out with tenfold consciousness of being,' he says, and continues:

> The avaricious, weary, selfish, suspicious old man shall have passed away. The young, ever young self, will remain. That which they *thought* themselves shall have vanished: that which they *felt* themselves, though they misjudged their own feelings, shall remain – remain glorified in repentant hope. For that which cannot be shaken shall remain. That which is immortal in God shall remain in man. The death that is in them shall be consumed. It is the law of Nature – that is, the law of God – that all that is destructible shall be destroyed. . . . When that is all burnt away and gone, then it has eternal life. (19-20, his italics)

In other words, as William Gray puts it, MacDonald, more than any other Christian preacher, presents death as 'a means to an end' (1). It is the famous concept of 'good death', which again reveals the close connection between the values and beliefs of the implied author and those of MacDonald, as 'good' or 'noble' death is central not only in *Phantastes*, but also in all of the author's other books. The concept can be traced back to the Romantic poet Novalis, who so heavily influenced MacDonald (McInnis 31). As will become evident later, C.S. Lewis followed in MacDonald's footsteps in embracing this theme (McInnis 123), and even used the term when describing his initial 'baptising' experience of reading *Phantastes*: 'the whole book had about it . . . quite unmistakably, a certain quality of Death, *good* Death' (Lewis, Preface xxxviii, his italics). However, not everyone has found MacDonald's – or the *implied* author of *Phantastes's* – preoccupation

with, and even appreciation for, death quite as encouraging. William Gray admits to being uncomfortable with this aspect of the novel, commenting that 'There is something uncomfortably close to a kind of suicidal obsession in *Phantastes*, with death being sought not so much as a means of spiritual growth, but rather as a despairing regression to an imagined state of bliss prior to the acquisition of individual personhood' (2).

Of course, one may argue that this view simply inverts the whole point of the novel's message, as death can also, in a less lofty but perhaps more fruitful interpretation, be seen not as a regression but rather as another step on an ascent towards the divine state for which humans were originally intended. True, theologically it is regress, or, more accurately, a return to the original, prelapsarian state. As the novel makes quite clear through the concept of the Shadow, the point is not to return to a state 'prior to the acquisition of individual personhood', as Gray puts it, but rather to willingly cast off again the selfish devotion to self that comes with this individual personhood that characterises the fallen human race. The goal is not a state prior to the fall, but rather one after redemption – lesson learnt. And this precisely parallels MacDonald's words in his sermon 'Self-Denial', where he says that 'we must refuse, abandon, deny self altogether as a ruling, or determining, or originating element in us. It is to be no longer the regent of our action' (*Unspoken Sermons* 199). The final goal, then, he continues, is a state where the Self is a 'slave of Christ' and thus 'it shall be so possessed, so enlarged, so idealized, by the indwelling God, who is its deeper, its deepest self, that there will be no longer any enforced denial of it needful.' To MacDonald, that is true freedom, and the victory won through 'good death', both spiritually in this life, and beyond the grave. It is undoubtedly the same kind of freedom that Anodos experiences when he is freed from the Shadow, and finally reaches the 'idealized' state after his death.

It should be noted that Anodos, in his death, never leaves earth. He remains a presence in the physical, present world, or, more precisely, in Fairy Land (although he does admittedly spend some time floating above it, on a cloud) – and as such *Phantastes* does not give the reader any full-fledged vision of the 'next' world, of heaven or the world of ideas, in Platonic terminology. (That is, of course, unless one sees Fairy Land as some sort of idealised world or foretaste of heaven, but as Fairy Land is every bit as flawed as our world, 'pre-death' Fairy Land will not be included in the current discussion of the divine realm.) However, as mentioned earlier, Anodos's return to life in the 'real' world is, notably, described as a descent into 'the world of shadows' (269). As

has already been thoroughly discussed, this is a term with strong connotations, and as such, it can easily be assumed that it is meant to suggest that the state Anodos is returning from – good death - contains at least traces of the ultimate state of bliss that awaits beyond his final death outside of the scope of the book.

A first point of interest is precisely the description given above, in Anodos's reflections after death. He describes the existence beyond death as that of an immortal part of the person – the *soul* would be a fitting term here, although not used by Anodos in this passage – which, in the continuation of the quote above, 'must either take to itself another form, as when the seed that is sown dies, and arises again; or, in conscious existence, may, perhaps, continue to lead a purely spiritual life' (266). As Colin Manlove describes the visions of post-death existence in MacDonald's fiction, death is 'the sole gateway to a vitality, a freedom, an expansion of being, beyond anything that mortal life can give' (157). In *Phantastes*, this new freedom and expansion of being seems to be presented as some sort of incorporeal existence, where gravity and matter is of no consequence, such as when Anodos passes through the ground and ascends to his 'floating chariot' (*Phantastes* 268). He roams freely between his corpse in the grave and a primrose that he inhabits, before forsaking any form of embodiment whatsoever, instead opting to see the world from above. This all suggests a Platonic view of the afterlife, freed from the shackles of evil matter. His continued presence on earth, however, and his elated words about feeling – and joining in – the heartbeat of Mother Earth, counters this with the Augustinian belief that the world, as substance, is good.

Interestingly, as was briefly mentioned in the last section, this seems to, if not directly contradict, then at least not fully correspond with the image of post-death heavenly life presented in MacDonald's sermons. There, he expresses the Augustinian view of resurrected, glorified, physical bodies – which, of course, is also a central tenet in traditional Christianity. As Jeff McInnis describes it, 'the redeeming bridegroom will consummate the marriage and his redeemed bride will experience what Christ's bodily resurrection was the first fruit of: a new harmony between spirits and nature' (280). In his sermon 'The Voice of Job', MacDonald envisions the afterlife somewhat differently than the implied author of *Phantastes*, however tentatively: 'things will be then what they are now; for God is one and the same there and here; and I shall be the same there I am here, however larger the life with which it may please the Father of my being to endow me' (*Unspoken Sermons* 191). Undoubtedly, it is not merely a body like the

present one, but it seems clear that he believed it to be a physical body indeed. He even directly answers the question 'with what body do they [those who have gone through death and are resurrected] come?' in the fittingly titled sermon 'The God of the Living': 'Surely we are not required to believe that the same body is raised again. That is against science, common sense, Scripture,' he begins, and goes on to ask who in their right mind would want his old human body back, the one which has 'died over and over' in life (*Unspoken Sermons* 90). However, he continues to explore what the body has done for us, saying that it is an instrument to learn and have the world revealed to us. And we cannot possibly be done with learning in this life, because, if so, then 'Is all that remains to be lost? Who that has loved this earth can but believe that the spiritual body of which St Paul speaks will be a yet higher channel of such revelation?' (91).

The solution, then, he believes, is that a body is necessary, though not the earthly one – yet it must be similar, since the body has also been, and will be, an instrument not only for experiencing revelations, but for revealing us to others. In fact, he says, it must not only be similar: 'it must be the same body, glorified as we are glorified, with all that was distinctive of each from his fellows more visible than ever before. . . . Will not this be the resurrection of the body? Of the same body though not of the same dead matter?' (91-92). This seems at least partially at odds with the vision of the afterlife expressed by the authorial voice in *Phantastes*, but as the final scenes in the novel do not technically present a *final* death, there is no complete comparison to be made. And then, of course, one must remember that *Phantastes* is, after all, fiction. MacDonald did allow his imagination to get the better of him from time to time, and he also opposed too rigidly allegorical readings of fairy tales: 'A fairytale is not an allegory. There may be allegory in it, but it is not an allegory,' he said ('The Fantastic Imagination' 278). Nevertheless, perhaps Anodos's experience when taking a bath in the pool in the Fairy Palace can hint at how the implied author of *Phantastes* – and the actual author behind him again – envisions the divine existence when one is finally fully submerged in God's Holy Presence: as Anodos dives into the magical water, he is no longer in a pool, although still in the same water. The world around him is now infinitely expanded (*Phantastes* 135) – and that, freedom and greatness, seems to be at the centre of heavenly life as it is described, more or less implicitly, in both *Phantastes* and MacDonald's sermons.

On that note, I will briefly explore some of the glimpses of this freedom and release. And *release* is undoubtedly a key word, because it describes what is arguably the most

distinct feature of death and the afterlife in *Phantastes*. In the first of Anodos's 'deaths', the possible, but ambiguous suicide (ambiguous because it is not clear whether he actually dies or not, although symbolically it is undoubtedly both a suicide and an illustration of death), the immediate sensation after he has thrown himself into the waves and surrendered to death is one of wonderful release: 'A blessing, like the kiss of a mother, seemed to alight on my soul; a calm, deeper than that which accompanies a hope deferred, bathed my spirit' (198). Again here, and as a foreshadowing of his coming meeting with the old wise woman, we arrive at the feminine image of God. Death, in *Phantastes*, seems to be like coming home to a loving mother's embrace – and being comforted: Anodos feels as if he is soothed and told, 'like a little sick child, that I should be better to-morrow' (199). MacDonald viewed heaven much in the same manner, as arriving home to love and comfort. As he describes eternal life in a sermon: 'It consists in a love as deep as it is universal' (*Unspoken Sermons* 169).

The implied author of *Phantastes* returns to this image of release as from a sickness in the penultimate chapter, in the already much discussed description of death there. This second (or less ambiguous) death and the new existence beyond it are described as being restored to health after having been ill: 'The hot fever of life had gone by, and I breathed the clear mountain-air of the land of Death,' Anodos says (266). It is, again, the same release as the one MacDonald envisages as the characteristic of eternity beyond death, which is not surprising in light of MacDonald's many experiences with illness, not least around the time of writing *Phantastes*. Death, to MacDonald, is not really death, but rather the opposite – more life, in a purer form. 'Weary with feebleness, [the old man] calls upon death, but in reality it is life he wants. . . . He longs for rest, but death cannot rest; death would be as much an end to rest as to weariness,' he says in his sermon 'Life'. He continues: 'Why does the poor, worn, out-worn suicide seek death? Is it not in reality to escape from death? – from the death of homelessness and hunger and cold; the death of failure, disappointment, and distraction; the death of the exhaustion of passion' (*Unspoken Sermons* 163). Likewise, it is release from this 'exhaustion of passion' that is the hallmark of life beyond death, in the future 'ideal' next world, according to the authorial voice in *Phantastes*. The afterlife is not presented as abundance of life in the form of liveliness or excited and rapturous activity, but rather as an existence of serene bliss: 'as if a cool hand had been laid upon my heart, and had stilled it' (*Phantastes* 266). Passion, it seems, is an exhausting lessened version of something far greater, as Anodos

discovers: 'If my passions were dead, the souls of the passions, those essential mysteries of the spirit which had imbodied themselves in the passions, and had given to them all their glory and wonderment, yet lived, yet glowed, with a pure, undying fire' (266). These 'souls of the passions' he calls 'angels of light', and they are 'oh, how beautiful beyond the old form!' (266). One can hardly read this without being reminded of the Platonic influences discussed above.

Finally then, one arrives at the essence of the vision of heaven that is presented by both MacDonald and the implied author of *Phantastes*: the ideal. As *Phantastes* concludes, when one goes through death, good death, one can finally truly know this ideal. And as Courtney Salvey notes, the true ideal, in the underlying Augustinian theology of the novel, is God (23). MacDonald says the same in his sermons: 'This life, this eternal life, consists for man in absolute oneness with God and all divine modes of being, oneness with every phase of right and harmony' (*Unspoken Sermons* 169). In the presence of God, 'my individuality has the freedom that belongs to it as born of his individuality, and [I am] in no slavery to my body, or my ancestry, or my prejudices, or any impulse whatever,' he concludes in the final sermon (332). And that, it seems, is the same sentiment as is expressed by the implied author through the ending of *Phantastes*. In the words of Anodos, life – true life – after death is where 'despair dies into infinite hope' (268).

Chapter 3: **C.S. Lewis and *The Chronicles of Narnia***

'I have given my imagination free rein yet not, I hope, without regard for edification – for building up both my neighbour and myself.'

C.S. Lewis on *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* (*Quotable* 924)

'"Well – he knows me," said Edmund. "He is the great Lion, the son of the Emperor-over-Sea, who saved me and saved Narnia."'

C.S. Lewis (*Chronicles* 475)

The seven books that make up *The Chronicles of Narnia* were published between 1950 and 1956, and written chiefly between 1948 and 1953[5], in what Paul F. Ford in his *Companion to Narnia* refers to as four 'bursts of Narnian Creativity' (17-22). This means that they were all (for the most part) written several years after the WWII radio broadcast, and subsequent publication in pamphlet form, of what eventually became known as *Mere Christianity* – Lewis's most famous apologetic and theological work[6]. In the following discussion, *Mere Christianity* will be used as the main source of C.S. Lewis's expressed theological views, and parallels and comparisons will be drawn between it and *The Chronicles*, similar to how *Unspoken Sermons* was used in the discussions on MacDonald and *Phantastes*. In fact, Lewis himself even once made it clear that 'he saw himself as being about the same task in writing the Narnia books as he had been about in writing *Mere Christianity*' (Blamires 15). However, as *Mere Christianity* deliberately and explicitly has a somewhat ecumenical theological profile, and as Lewis wrote much on his beliefs in other of his non-fiction works as well, some of these will also be used to present his Christian beliefs and world view.

---

[5] Walter Hooper, acclaimed Lewis scholar and biographer, notes in his mammoth of a book, *C.S. Lewis: A Companion & Guide*, that the first traces of what eventually became the first book (*The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*) are found in a manuscript probably written almost a decade earlier, in 1939 (402). However, this was only a very rough draft that merely hints towards what finally became LWW.

[6] Lewis gave a series of radio talks between 1942 and 1944, the contents of which were first published in written form in three separate parts in 1942, 1943, and 1944 respectively. These were later revised and adapted for publication as a single volume with some minor additions as *Mere Christianity* in 1952.

The Chronicles of Narnia, as a heptalogy (a seven-book series), is a much larger work than *Phantastes*, and more or less encompasses a whole developed, invented cosmology for the Narnian universe – and even our own. It recounts the story of a world from its creation to its destruction, and includes both a creation myth[7], the corruption of a perfect world, several of the world's key historical events, and an eschatology that includes 'a new heaven and a new earth'. Although it is revealed throughout the series that the world of Narnia is connected to ours through magical portals, it is only towards the end of the eschatology as presented in the final book that the full extent of the connection between the worlds is revealed. The conclusion of the series also clearly connects the epic to the Christian world view and eschatology in *our* world – or, technically, the literary version of our world, as the mention of Mr Sherlock Holmes reveals (Lewis, *Chronicles* 11). The books follow various children from our world, who, through magic, are called and transported to Narnia at key moments to aid and influence the history of that world from beginning to end. It is told by a narrator who appears to know the children and their feelings quite intimately, and who frequently 'breaks the fourth wall' by addressing the reader and making subjective comments on the action. However, he is not fully omniscient, mainly taking the approach of the children – and at one point (in the final chapter of *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*) it is suggested that he is telling the stories after having been told them by the children[8] (Lewis, *Chronicles* 539).

However, it is not only the narrator who is subjective. *The Chronicles* are widely considered to express distinctly Christian values, and to portray, or reflect, central aspects and elements of a Christian world view through the story of the world of Narnia. C.S. Lewis himself admitted as much many times, saying (of the first book to be written, *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*) that although he never deliberately set out to write a story that would teach children about Christianity, he gradually realised the Christian aspect as the images popped into his head and he began writing. He then saw a potential to 'steal past those watchful dragons', past obligation and 'a certain inhibition which had paralysed much of my own religion in childhood', and reveal the Christian message in its 'real potency' through the lens of an imaginary world (Lewis, *Of This and*

---

[7] More precisely, there is a creation *story* that as the series – or, rather, the timeline and history of the world of Narnia – moves forward, seems to turn into a myth in the minds of most of the world's inhabitants.

[8] *The Chronicles* appear somewhat inconsistent here, as this cannot be the case with the final book, *The Last Battle*, which includes the children's deaths in our world.

Other Worlds 73). But regardless of Lewis's own professions, it seems clear that this is also, within the book, the *implied* author's intention with his text – not least judging by the strongly suggestive imagery and the distinct stance of the narrator. Admittedly, it should be remembered that *The Chronicles* are neither allegories nor direct parallels to the Biblical story. Nevertheless, the following discussion both presupposes and suggests that the implied and the actual author share a largely corresponding value system and world view. I will draw parallels and comparisons between *Narnia* and *Mere Christianity* and others of Lewis's non-fiction books, focussing on the same aspects as in the previous chapter on *Phantastes*. It seems reasonable to assume that the non-fiction books explicitly portray Lewis's own views, and thus the discussion will propose to show how some of the views expressed in those books – that is, Lewis's Christian world view – correspond with and are echoed also in the underlying value system of *The Chronicles of Narnia* – and, by association, of its implied author.

THE NATURE OF GOD

The Chronicles of Narnia contain more obvious Christian symbolism than *Phantastes*, and nowhere is this more apparent than with respect to what can be read as portrayals, or representations, of God in the books. Though both works seem to portray a multi-faceted God, the approach is somewhat different. While *Phantastes*, as shown in the previous chapter, contains several different characters that each can be seen as illustrations of different aspects of God's nature, *The Chronicles* gather them all in one main, central God-character (although he takes on different forms throughout the series): Aslan, the Great Lion. While the various characters that display aspects of the divine nature in *Phantastes* are nevertheless limited, and sometimes flawed, characters (there is no divine omnipotence), Aslan is specifically revealed to *be* a God (it is clearly shown, even if it is not explicitly stated): he is the creator, the destroyer, the healer and the redeemer of the world, and the one to whom prayers should be directed.

However, it is somewhat imprecise to limit the God-imagery completely to Aslan, and in fact, Aslan is also not quite an omnipotent God character – at least not on his own, so to speak. Instead, he is said to be the son of the Emperor-beyond-the-Sea (and variations thereupon) (Lewis, *Chronicles* 146), and is clearly the representative of this almighty and never-seen divinity in Narnia. He also obeys the omnipotence of his divine

father, as evidenced by his obedience to the Emperor's Deep Magic (176). This, of course, sounds suspiciously like something out of another rather famous book – namely the Bible. And it also sounds like the God that Lewis believed in. In *Mere Christianity*, he describes the Christian view of God that he adhered to as of one who:

> …made the world – that space and time, heat and cold, and all the colours and tastes, and all the animals and vegetables, are things that God 'made up out of His head' as a man makes up a story. But [Christianity] also thinks that a great many things have gone wrong with the world that God made and that God insists, and insists very loudly, on our putting them right again. (31)

He then goes on to describe Jesus both as 'God' and as 'Son of God' (43), the one who redeemed and saved the broken world (44-49). David G. Clark even names 'redemption' as the one word Lewis's entire theology is centred on (168). This description of God also points to a central point of Christianity in terms of God's nature: the concept of the Trinity. Although less central to the *Narnia* stories, it is nevertheless illustrated in *The Chronicles* to some extent, and I will therefore begin by looking into this aspect.

Lewis expressly includes the concept in his view of God's nature in his non-fiction, calling God in *Mere Christianity* 'The Three-Personal God' (133), and stating that he is 'three Persons while remaining one Being' (135). If one compares this to what is found in *Narnia*, it certainly does seem like the implied author must be said to have something of the same view, although the topic is not discussed to any significant extent. Of course, Aslan and the Emperor-beyond-the-Sea are literary characters created to tell a specific literary plot, and as the full relationship between them is not central to the story it is not much dwelt upon. But some glimpses are given. At first glance, there might seem to be only two divine persons, and they do seem to be more separate and in a more hierarchical relationship than the Christian 'three-personal' God Lewis presents in *Mere Christianity*. It is also only Aslan – the *son* aspect – that is described in terms of his nature to any extent. In fact, Walter Hooper says of this unsatisfying representation of the Trinity that if the books have a theological weakness, it is possibly this. He then suggests that Lewis might have felt incapable of adequately portraying God the Father and God the Spirit in fiction form (438). Admittedly, Aslan mostly acts on his own as the highest authority, without referring to his Father except on very special occasions – though, as mentioned, he obeys the Deep Magic of this highest power. In this apparent

'independence' he is unlike Jesus in the Gospels. However, it is essential to notice a brief comment Aslan makes later in the series, in *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*: after Lucy has performed the visibility spell from the Magician's book, thus making Aslan visible, he connects his own person to that of his father. As already revealed in *The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe*, his father is the source of the Deep and Deeper Magic of Narnia – and, one must assume, as he is the supreme divine authority, also the origin of *all* magic. 'Do you think I wouldn't obey my own rules?' he asks Lucy (498), thereby identifying himself as essentially the same divine power as the Emperor-beyond-the-Sea. In other words, although the Emperor-beyond-the-Sea is credited with less actual action in *Narnia* than God the Father in traditional Christianity, this shows that Aslan and his father are one and the same, mirroring the relationship of Jesus and God the Father.

The somewhat trickier question, then, might be said to be the third person in the Christian Trinity: the Holy Spirit. In *Mere Christianity*, Lewis describes the Holy Spirit (or, if you will, The Holy *Ghost*) thus: 'The union between the Father and the Son is such a live concrete thing that this union itself is also a Person' (145). He then says that this Person of God is inside those who are Christians (146). This, of course, refers to the Bible's story of the day of Pentecost in Acts 2,2-4, when the Holy Spirit came as tongues of fire and filled the disciples. In Narnia, the Holy Spirit does not in the same way seem to 'fill' those who believe in, and follow, Aslan (although the air of Narnia itself does have an important strengthening effect on the children who enter that world, which can, of course, be read as a reference to the indwelling of the Spirit in the believers). However, the Spirit of God – or, rather, of the Emperor and Aslan, as the case may be – is nevertheless present. As Hooper notes, the original Greek and Hebrew sources of the word 'spirit' meant 'breath', and this is telling in terms of Narnia. For in that world, as Hooper continues, Aslan incorporates the final Person of the Trinity into himself 'by the use of his breath and the sweet fragrance of his person' (440). This spirit, or breath, does not appear to dwell especially in Aslan's followers. But it is, quite literally, the breath of life: in Narnia's very first moments, the world was created through Aslan's song (Lewis, *Chronicles* 61-63). Singing, naturally, is merely breath with sound. When the talking animals are selected from the rest of the beasts and given speech and wit, it is also by Aslan's breath (70), and when the stone statues in the castle of the White Witch are returned to life, it is the same warm breath of Aslan that resurrects them (187).

Of course, this can easily again be linked to the Holy Spirit of the Bible, as the main function of God's Spirit there is to act as a sign of those who believe, and who thereby qualify for eternal life. As Lewis says in *Mere Christianity*, 'Once a man is united to God, how could he not live forever?' (146). And finally, the perhaps most potent illustration of the three-person God in *The Chronicles* comes in *The Horse and his Boy*, as Shasta asks Aslan who he is: '"Myself," said the voice, very deep and low so that the earth shook: and again, "Myself," loud and clear and gay: and then the third time "Myself," whispered so softly you could hardly hear it, and yet it seemed to come from all round you as if the leaves rustled with it' (281). Again, here, the author subtly emphasises the Trinity as consisting of three distinct persons with different characteristics, characteristics that remind one of those described in *Mere Christianity*. In fact, in regard to the admittedly somewhat limited role or presence of a Holy Spirit character in *Narnia*, it can even be argued that, quite contrary to what Hooper suggests, it is not a theological weakness, but rather the opposite. In terms of the Spirit's presence in the world, the Narnian version actually mirrors its counterpart in the Bible: it was only after Jesus had ascended to heaven that the Holy Spirit came to reside in Christians. In the Old Testament, and for as long as Jesus was still bodily on earth, the role of the Holy Spirit was restricted to special situations. It resided only in certain individuals, such as prophets and kings. Likewise, for the duration of Narnian history, Aslan is, on-and-off, bodily present. Thus, the restricted use of a spirit presence, limiting it to Aslan's breath and scent, seems to be a rather good illustration of the pre-Pentecost role of the Holy Spirit.

In light of Aslan's prominent role as the only central God-character that is described to any great length in the books, it is only natural that the further exploration of the nature of God as illustrated in *The Chronicles* will be centred on him. It is, again, important to note, as Hooper emphasises, that *Narnia* is not systematic theology camouflaged as fairy tales (434). Lewis himself pointed out that Aslan was not, by him, meant to be a representation of Jesus as he really is in our world, but rather what he called a 'supposing' (*Letters to Children* 44-45). And as Hooper also points out, any attempts to establish exact theological equivalents between Aslan and Christ will break down in many ways (433). But as he nevertheless concludes, 'Lewis embodies in Aslan many of the qualities he found in Christ' (435). Such a statement threatens to launch us into dangerous theoretical waters, of course, but regardless of one's position on authorial authority, the similarities between the character of Aslan and Christianity's

teaching on Christ can hardly be denied. Likewise, Lewis's view of God as expressed in his non-fiction clearly corresponds to a great extent with the God-figure of Aslan.

Perhaps the most important and clearest similarity is what Hooper terms the 'intolerable severity and irresistible tenderness' (435). He is talking about Aslan in relation to the qualities of the God-person of Christ especially, and through his actions the lion does admittedly resemble Christ more than God the Father. However, if one compares with Lewis's non-fiction, I find that the qualities of Aslan's character apply also to the Godhead as a whole. As previously mentioned, Jeff McInnis sees Aslan as inspired not only by the character of Jesus, but also by the Christ-like character of the knight in *Phantastes* (248-249), an interpretation that has been rejected, or at least questioned, by Jeffrey Bilbro (27). But regardless of whether or not MacDonald's knight inspired the creation of the character of Aslan, the two characters do certainly serve to illustrate similar qualities that also coincide with Lewis's view of God. Hooper's description of Aslan's combined severity and tenderness directly echoes what could arguably be called one of the most beautiful sentences Lewis ever wrote, the final sentence of the chapter describing his initial conversion to theism (although he had not yet reached Christianity) in *Surprised by Joy*. There, he says that 'The hardness of God is kinder than the softness of men, and His compulsion is our liberation' (266). Several different characters observe precisely the same upon meeting Aslan in *Narnia*.

One of the most telling descriptions might be Hwin's impulsive words when she first meets him: '"Please," she said, "you're so beautiful. You may eat me if you like. I'd sooner be eaten by you than fed by anyone else"' (*Chronicles* 299). Such a statement, ill-informed as it may be, nevertheless speaks volumes about the awe the lion's combined goodness and terrible greatness inspires in those who meet him. And Hwin does well to show such enormous respect. Aslan is, after all, famously not a *tame* lion. As Mr Beaver puts it, '"you mustn't press him. He's wild, you know. Not like a tame lion"' (194). And earlier: '"he isn't safe. But he's good"' (146). There is severe power and righteousness, but, as Lucy observes in what might easily be the best description of them all: '"Terrible paws," thought Lucy, "if he didn't know how to velvet them!"' (169).

Closely related to this dichotomy of sternness and tenderness is the idea of the combination of almighty power and utter surrender, of divinity and humanity. Again, it is obvious from his non-fiction that C.S. Lewis upheld both concepts as fully and simultaneously present in God. He said both that God 'is so brim-full of existence that He

can give existence away, can cause things to be' (from *Miracles*, quoted in Lewis, *Quotable* 247), and that 'The perfect surrender and humiliation were undergone by Christ: perfect because he was God, surrender and humiliation because He was man (*Mere Christianity* 50). This seeming juxtaposition is present also in Narnia. As Russell W. Dalton puts it in his article 'Aslan Is On the Move: Images of Providence in The Chronicles of Narnia': 'Through the character of Aslan, Lewis presents images of Christ and Christ's divine intervention in the world that reflect his own particular theological viewpoints' (129). And he continues:

> What sort of character can be both the all-powerful God of classical theism who is in complete control of creation and yet is still a crucified, merciful God who allows for and even demands human agency in the world? What sort of Christ figure intervenes at some times but not at others? In Aslan, Lewis attempted to present an image of Christ that holds together these seemingly contradictory sets of characteristics. (132)

Aslan is the creator of the world, as seen in *The Magician's Nephew*, the ruler who can firmly state that '"You would not have called to me unless I had been calling to you"' (558), and the lord of time who says that 'I call all times soon' (499). As a side note, the idea of God being outside of, beside or above time – or, rather, around it, time being included in his timeless presence – is a recurring topic of Lewis's in his non-fiction. He says, for instance, in *Mere Christianity*, that 'Almost certainly God is not in Time' (139).

But Aslan is also the actual, physical lion that steps into time and that can equally firmly correct Bree's lofty and faulty description of him, telling him in no uncertain terms that 'I am a true Beast' (299). He gets sad and lonely (179), he is actually, truly abused and dead (even cold) (182), and he allows the lives and fates of the inhabitants of Narnia to rely on the choices and bravery of human children. At one point, he commands Jill to do all she can to save Prince Rilian's life 'or else [die] in the attempt' (559). It is a command, and both the Prince's, Jill's and Eustace's fates here seemingly rely on her ability to remember and adhere to the signs he gives her, because Aslan, as Dalton puts it, allows for and demands human agency. But why? The answer might be found in *Mere Christianity*, where Lewis, when discussing free will and why God chose to give it to humans, says that 'free will, though it makes evil possible, is also the only thing that makes possible any love or goodness or joy worth having. . . . Of course God knew

what would happen if they used their freedom the wrong way: apparently He thought it worth the risk' (39-40). It is the famous 'problem of evil' in its most condensed form, and in his treatment of it, though many would probably argue that his solution is simplistic and unsatisfactory, Lewis is fully in line with his literary ideal John Milton. Both authors strongly promoted the notion of human free will, in opposition to the traditionally Lutheran view of an un-free will, or bound choice (Forde 47). Lewis even repeats much of the same in his *A Preface to Paradise Lost*: 'Though God has made all creatures good He foreknows that some will voluntarily make themselves bad . . . and also foreknows the good use which He will then make of their badness' (66). It is precisely what can be seen in *Narnia*: Aslan allows evil to exist, but turns evil and painful situations to the best.

Finally, some attention should be given to what could be called the 'personality' of Aslan, and how that relates to the image of God as presented in Lewis's non-fiction. The first thing that strikes any observant reader in this respect is, undoubtedly, that both Aslan and God are presented as very complex, with many features – which is as it should be. Much was said in the last chapter on MacDonald's preoccupation with presenting the feminine qualities of God, both in his fiction and in his sermons, but little of this seems to have rubbed off on his admirer Lewis. Indeed, Aslan is, for most of his appearances, in his usual shape as a lion. Although naturally there are lions of both genders, the lion is an animal traditionally depicted with typically masculine traits such as immense power, authority and physical strength. It is also noticeable that Aslan, whether in lion form or any other, is referred to as 'he' or 'it', never 'she'. And much is made of Aslan's mane, the obvious mark of a male lion, which in Aslan's case is frequently referred to as golden, impressive and the source of much of his splendour and glory. As he reappears after his death, he is described as standing in the sunrise, shining and 'shaking his mane', which had been regrown (184). And when Shasta first meets him, the mane takes centre stage: 'The High King above all kings stooped towards him. Its mane, and some strange and solemn perfume that hung about the mane, was all round him' (282). This insistence on the masculine authority of Aslan fits well with what Lewis said in his essay 'Priestesses in the Church?', where he comments on the trend of feminising theological language. 'Since God is in fact not a biological being and has no sex,' he asks rhetorically, 'what can it matter whether we say *He* or *She*, *Father* or *Mother*, *Son* or *Daughter*?' He immediately answers his own question: 'But Christians think that God Himself has taught us how to speak of Him. To say that it does not matter is to say either that all the masculine

imagery is not inspired, is merely human in origin, or else that, though inspired, it is quite arbitrary and unessential' (quoted in Lewis, *Quotable* 248).

However, although no feminine characters are used to represent or illustrate any sides of God's nature in *Narnia*, like there is in *Phantastes*, this does not mean that God is not shown to have 'gentle' qualities. The 'irresistible tenderness' that Hooper refers to, is found in numerous ways, not least in Aslan's willingness to be light-hearted and playful. 'Laugh and fear not,' he says when the first joke is made (or acted) in the new-born Narnia (72), and he has several romps with the children, not least as the first celebration of his own resurrection (185). But notably, on both those occasions, he immediately afterwards turns to serious matters with great authority, which just further highlights the great complexity of his nature. Aslan is also a great healer – though he often delegates that task to Lucy and her healing cordial. But he is the one who heals the stone animals (187), who replaces Reepicheep's tail (413), who brings Caspian's old nurse back to good health (409), and who heals Eustace from his dragon form (475). He is gentle, caring and nurturing, as when he whips up glorious meals, at one point in the deeply symbolic form of a Lamb inviting the children to breakfast in a 'sweet milky voice' (540). And he is quietly comforting and gentle (even when he reprimands, as seen so often with Lucy). He cries for his dead friend Caspian (661) – and who can forget Shasta's night at the tombs, when Aslan gives him warmth and comfort in the shape of a cat, yet he also scares off the dangerous jackals with an earth-shaking roar (245-246). And in the greatest danger, he appears as an albatross, leading the Dawn Treader out of the shadow mist of the Dark Island, while whispering words of comfort to Lucy (511).

It all fits very well with the famous words of Psalm 23: 'The Lord is my shepherd', it says, and what else was the albatross, but a shepherd in the darkness? He 'maketh me to lie down in green pastures', 'leadeth me beside the still waters', 'restoreth my soul', 'guideth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake' and 'preparest a table before me in the presence of my enemies' (*The Holy Bible*). Likewise, Aslan supplies food, guidance and comfort. And not least: 'though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me' – there was Aslan, right beside Shasta, among the tombs. Of course, again, it must be remembered that *Narnia* is not meant to be a direct parallel to the Bible, but the similarities are nevertheless very noticeable.

Returning, then, from the Bible to Lewis's own words, there is no doubt that the image of gentle, tender love that is found in the god-character of Aslan also permeates Lewis's image of God as he shapes it in his non-fiction – although it is hardly at the forefront. It seems that in his non-fiction Lewis was more preoccupied with the intensity and greatness of God's love, than with its gentleness. But the nourishing aspect is not absent: 'God loves us; not because we are loveable but because He is love, not because he needs to receive but because He delights to give,' he says in a letter (Lewis, *Quotable* 408). In *The Four Loves*, he describes God's love – or God *as* love – as an abundance of giving: 'Divine Love is Gift-love. The Father gives all He is and has to the Son. The Son gives Himself back to the Father, and gives Himself to the world, and for the world to the Fathers, and thus gives the world (in Himself) back to the Father too' (i). And in *Mere Christianity* he calls Christ's redemptive act through death 'The perfect surrender' (50), a description that could certainly also be given to Aslan's death in Edmund's stead on the Stone Table. But, as mentioned, Lewis in his non-fiction focuses more on the terrible greatness of God's goodness and righteousness, at one point calling what he saw in the New Testament 'terror and comfort' intertwined (Lewis, Preface xxxv).

As children's books, one would hardly expect *The Chronicles* to dwell quite as much on this awe-inspiring aspect. Nevertheless, the books do reflect the idea of the greatness of divine love and justice. It is conveyed through both the enormous variety in the ways Aslan's love is expressed, from soft whispers to violent, angry roars, and the awe and terror his presence instils in those who are subject to it (as when Aslan first meets Hwin). The Pevensie children certainly experienced the greatness of even the mere mention of his name: 'At the name of Aslan each one of the children felt something jump in its inside,' the narrator tells us, and describes how 'Edmund felt a sensation of mysterious horror, Peter felt suddenly brave and adventurous,' and Susan and Lucy felt deeply pleased and joyful (141). On Deathwater Island, Lucy gasped and was silenced, as were Edmund, Eustace, Caspian and Reepicheep, as they saw Aslan shining, 'the size of an elephant', in the distance (485). The mere glimpse of the back of this elephant-sized lion puts terror in the faces of the bullies at Experiment House (662). And in the final judgment of the Narnian population, all the talking Beasts are compelled to come face to face with him, reacting to his gaze with either fear and hatred or love, and sent either to darkness or to Aslan's country (751). As David G. Clark notes about that scene in his book *C. S. Lewis: A Guide to His Theology*, it 'gets to the heart of the matter' (162). And it

clearly echoes the words of Lewis both in *Mere Christianity*, where he says that God will return, and 'this time it will be God without disguise; something so overwhelming that it will strike either irresistible love or irresistible horror into every creature' (54), and in his famous sermon 'The Weight of Glory':

> In the end that Face which is the delight or the terror of the universe must be turned upon each of us either with one expression or with the other, either conferring glory inexpressible or inflicting shame that can never be cured or disguised. . . . It is written that we shall "stand before" Him, shall appear, shall be inspected. The promise of glory is the promise, almost incredible and only possible by the work of Christ, that some of us, that any of us who really chooses, shall actually survive that examination, shall find approval, shall please God. (6)

In other words, the god-image in *The Chronicles*, though it dwells more on the gentleness of divine love than Lewis's non-fiction, nevertheless corresponds with the image of God Lewis presents in books like *Mere Christianity*. It is a God who 'is quite definitely "good" or "righteous", a God who takes sides, who loves love and hates hatred, who wants us to behave in one way and not in another' (30), who is not happy that things have gone wrong with the world he created and, 'insists, and insists very loudly, on our putting them right again' (31). The God Lewis believed in was a God who is 'immeasurably superior' to us (102). But it was also a God who, in the Person of Jesus, said that he was 'humble and meek' (43), and who 'volunteered to bear a punishment instead of us' (46). It is the same 'intolerable severity and irresistible tenderness' that is reflected in the character of Aslan – and it is the same sacrifice that Aslan makes, on a smaller scale, for Edmund. After all, 'he isn't safe. But he is good' (*Chronicles* 146).

THE NATURE OF EVIL

The first thing one must do when reading *Narnia*, as well as *Phantastes*, in light of the idea of evil, is to make a very important distinction. It is essential, for the understanding of the implied authors' views, to keep in mind that the evil that is described in the novels is not all of the same nature; in fact, there are two distinct types of evil present. One is wholly consistent with what could be said to be God's divine, mysterious, and diverse goodness, while the other is firmly against it. As McInnis puts it, 'one will get a grossly

distorted picture of MacDonald and Lewis's views of evil if one fails to see how sharp a line they both draw between evil fortune on the one hand and moral evil on the other' (127). This is why the misfortunes that cast a shadow over the early lives of Shasta and Aravis in *The Horse and his Boy* can still be the source of valuable lessons and eventual good, whereas the evil of, for instance, Jadis and uncle Andrew, can be nothing but a source of pain for those in their path, and cause their own demise. But of course, even moral evil comes in various forms and strength. There is a vast gap between the flawed actions of Jill on the cliff (Lewis, *Chronicles* 554-555) and the infinite cruelty of Jadis or the Lady of the Green Kirtle. Jill's case can even be said to be a special one, as her obstinacy – a moral flaw – leads to an instance of evil fortune. Such is often the case with humans, it seems, judging from Lewis's *Chronicles*, and such cases will be looked at in due time. But I will begin by looking at what is arguably the most prominent expression of evil in *Narnia*: The recurring character of Jadis/the White Witch, and her sister in spirit, the Lady of the Green Kirtle/the Queen of Underland.

It is interesting to note that these two characters, the two most evil, and most prominent evil of the series, are both women. And they are not alone – there are several other evil women – or 'wicked women' – in the books. Uncle Andrew's godmother Mrs. Lefay, for instance, both inspires Andrew's evil nature and more or less unwittingly supplies him with the resources that ultimately bring evil into Narnia in the first place (Lewis, *Chronicles* 19). Then there is the relatively harmless, although Narnia-opposed Alberta, the mother of Eustace. And of course there is the foolish Susan, who grows up to adopt certain traits of the wicked women, thus being swiftly expelled from the eventual, eternal bliss of the True Narnia – at least as far as the reader knows. This focus on female evil, obviously, stands in strong contrast to MacDonald's extensive use of feminine representations of God and goodness. Cathy McSporran, in her article 'Daughters of Lilith', suggests, in light of this, that in *The Chronicles of Narnia*, 'the image of Lilith looms larger than that of Satan' (191). Lilith, of course, is Adam's first wife, according to legend, who rebelled and became a 'demon of the night'. McSporran's strong claim is debatable, but it is clear that this demon of the legend was in Lewis's mind when he created the character of the White Witch. The connection is even explicitly revealed, as Mr Beaver says of the Witch that 'She comes of your father Adam's . . . first wife, her they called Lilith. And she was one of the Jinn' (Lewis, *Chronicles* 147).

This revelation of Mr Beaver's is also important regardless of the gender-issue. Because immediately afterwards, he also reveals that her ancestry on the other side is of the giants. In other words, although the White Witch (or Jadis) appears to be human (an exceptionally tall human), she is not. 'There isn't a drop of real human blood in the Witch,' as Mr Beaver concludes. And this is crucial, because unlike the evil humans, there are no redeeming qualities or even hints of human complexity in the characters of Jadis and the Queen of Underland. They are thoroughly evil, encompassing and performing endless cruelty. This, of course, fits very well with the Christian understanding of the Devil and evil spirits as 'Fallen Angels'. As Lewis puts it in *Mere Christianity*, the sin of Satan, which he taught the humans in the Garden of Eden, was this: 'wanting to be the centre – wanting to be God' (41). Traditional Christianity explains the complete and irreversible state of Satan and his demons by their status as purely spiritual beings in the same realm of existence as God. They made their choice of turning away from the good for which they were created, in full knowledge of God's being and the nature of their choice – thus, their choice was final, and there is no redemption. They are purely evil. There is no full parallel to this in *The Chronicles* – although Jadis is, indeed, older than the world of Narnia, she is not older than the physical creation: she is from the world of Charn, and the last descendant of a long line of originally great and good kings (Lewis, *Chronicles* 41). However, the fact that she is revealed to be without human blood – as Mr Beaver says, 'there's no two views about things that look like humans and aren't' (147) – and is even the descendant of a legendary demon, makes her every bit as purely evil as the Devil. She is, after all, even capable of speaking the Deplorable Word, thus killing an entire world. And all because of pride, which Lewis famously calls 'the great sin' and 'the essential vice, the utmost evil' (*Mere Christianity* 100). Likewise, although the Lady of the Green Kirtle is not given any background, and is never actually linked to Jadis, they are clearly cut from the same cloth. She is no more human than Jadis, and is finally killed in serpent form – a familiar, and biblical, form of Satan.

On the surface, then, despite the connotations to Lilith and the biblical story of evil, and especially, perhaps, in the case of the Lady of the Green Kirtle, who is given no backstory of a fall, these two characters seem, at first, to suggest a somewhat dualistic view of evil. Lewis describes it as the belief that behind everything there are two equal and independent powers, one good and one bad, that are locked in endless battle (*Mere Christianity* 34-35). Admittedly, Jadis's stated origin problematises this. The books also

clearly state that the entire universe does, eventually, belong to the Emperor-beyond-the-Sea, and that Jadis's knowledge goes back only to the dawn of time, whereas the Emperor put the Deeper Magic into the world even before this (Lewis, *Chronicles* 185). In other words, the two forces are not equal as such. But both of these witches appear to come into existence already evil, are motivated purely by self-interest, and are the main enemies of all things good. They conquer and rule relatively unchecked for long periods.

Still, upon closer inspection, the situation in *Narnia* is not one inspired by Dualism. Rather, the presentation of this epic battle between good and evil throughout time in *The Chronicles,* and Lewis's thoughts on the subject in, for instance, *Mere Christianity*, reveal the same view of evil. Both the implied author of the novels and Lewis in his non-fiction convey a view of evil that *resembles* that of Dualism (Lewis called Dualism 'the manliest and most sensible creed' next to Christianity (*Mere Christianity* 35)) – but there are certain important differences. 'Christianity,' Lewis says, 'agrees with Dualism that this universe is at war. But it does not think this is a war between independent powers. It thinks it is a civil war, a rebellion, and that we are living in a part of the universe occupied by the rebel' (*Mere Christianity* 37). The difference, according to Lewis, is that Christianity maintains that the Dark Power was created by God just like everything else, and was originally good. This view, then, is reflected in the character of Jadis. Although her knowledge, according to Aslan himself, does stretch to the dawn of time, and although she does indeed come from beyond the dawn of Narnian time, she is nevertheless a created being. Her ancestors were originally good, but appear to have gradually become consumed by greed and pride (Lewis, *Chronicles* 35). Likewise, her ancestral mother Lilith, according to legend, was also a human created from the earth, but rebelled, and became the mother of demons. In the Narnian version, the story is made even stronger by giving Lilith herself the status of jinn, thus stripping her, and subsequently Jadis, of any humanity. But this does not negate the fact that Lilith was created as a good gift to Adam. Furthermore, Jadis is said to have giant blood, and although most giants in Narnia are cruel beings, the existence of good giants suggests that this race was also originally good. For her part, the Lady of the Green Kirtle is suspected first by the owls, and later by Prince Rilian and 'the older and wiser Beasts and Dwarfs' to be 'one of the same crew' as the White Witch who 'came out of the north' (577). In other words she is one of the 'Northern Witches' (655). As Jadis was the first

witch in Narnia and represents the entrance of evil into the world, it is highly likely that the Queen of Underland either originates from Jadis or shares a similar origin.

This connection of even the most purely evil creatures of Narnia to an origin based in good links directly to the most important distinction between Dualism and Christianity when it comes to the nature of evil, as defined by Lewis in *Mere Christianity*. Thus, it reveals that Narnia's implied author maintains the same definition of evil as *Phantastes*, namely that 'badness is only spoiled goodness' (Lewis, *Mere Christianity* 36). Lewis explains it plainly, as evil being 'a parasite, not an original thing' (37), and continues: 'The powers which enable evil to carry on are powers given it by goodness. All the things which enable a bad man to be effectively bad are in themselves a good thing.' Both of Narnia's chief witches are described as infinitely beautiful, and beauty is undoubtedly a good and God-created thing, as shown, for instance, through the creation of Narnia. They show resolution and cleverness, both hailed by Lewis in *Mere Christianity*, and likewise encouraged by Aslan throughout the *Narnian* narrative. But as the story also vividly proves, these inherently good things can all be twisted and used for evil when taken to excessive lengths. As Charlie W. Starr points out in his article 'The Silver Chair and the Silver Screen', 'Lewis questioned the logic of saying that a higher thing naturally had to come from a lesser thing. . . . Could it not be the other way around?' (13). The implied author of *Narnia* shows exactly the same notion. As McInnis notes, both MacDonald and Lewis saw evil 'as a condition but not real as an original "substance" of its own' (156) – a view influenced by Augustine, as will be discussed later.

However, it is notable that in *Narnia*, evil is nevertheless such a strong presence that it eventually takes on the physical shape not only of the 'humanoid' witches, which can likely be traced to good origins, but also of the demon/devil-like Tash (Lewis, *Chronicles* 712, 739). Tash, then, is the physical manifestation of evil. He is not a being that chooses the evil path, but one that appears when evil is called. Admittedly, Tash is described as partially transparent and more like solid smoke than a firm substance, and this *can* be read, as William C. Johnson and Marcia K. Houtman do in their article 'Platonic Shadows in C. S. Lewis' Narnia *Chronicles*', as an exemplification of 'the mistaken identification of the "shadows," or insubstantial, for the Real' (79). Such Platonic influences will be discussed in the next section, but in the case of Tash, it is nevertheless notable that he is a decidedly physical creature with will and abilities (a 'demon', Poggin the Dwarf calls it (713)). Similarly, in *Mere Christianity*, Lewis appears

to grant evil a more substantial existence than McInnis suggests. Although Lewis defines Satan as a created, and thus not independent being, he is the ultimate rebel from before the dawn of time, and 'the Power behind death and disease, and sin' (37).

Finally, in regard to the witches and the demon Tash, these characters perhaps most vividly reveal what is, both in *Narnia* and for Lewis, as it was for MacDonald, the essence of evil: Self-centredness and pride. 'It was through Pride that the devil became the devil,' Lewis warns in *Mere Christianity* (100), and hammers it in even further: 'Pride leads to every other vice: it is the complete anti-God state of mind.' The authorial voice in *The Chronicles* repeats that message throughout the entire Narnian narrative, not least through the above-mentioned characters. No doubt, many characters in the books display the flaw of self-centredness, but perhaps none more than the two witches. After all, what is more self-centred than attempting to erase the memory of an entire world from the minds of innocents, in order to build an army and conquer it for oneself? 'There is no Narnia, no Overworld, no sky, no sun, no Aslan,' the Queen of Underland says (Lewis, *Chronicles* 632). 'Only me,' she could have added. Or even worse, can anything be more conceited than destroying an entire world merely to win a war, before plotting first to conquer one world and then to snatch an entire world out of the hands – or, rather, paws – of its creator at the very dawn of creation? And all merely out of the sense of entitlement one gets from a belief in one's own superiority. 'What would be wrong for you or for any of the common people is not wrong in a great Queen such as I,' says Jadis (42). The entire *Chronicles of Narnia* seem to be devoted to teaching children and adults alike the exact opposite. Pride and self-conceit, the books repeatedly demonstrate, will eventually consume you. The witches are killed, one by the self-sacrificing Aslan himself, and the other by those who pledge allegiance to him and are willing to sacrifice themselves for the freedom of others if need be. And when evil in Narnia once again gains such momentum that it manifests itself in the presence of the demon Tash in *The Last Battle*, the sadistic monkey Shift and the ruthless Rishda Tarkaan are devoured (745) and taken (739), respectively. Tash himself is then dispelled in the name of Aslan (740). No one, in the end, can withstand Aslan. No self is strong enough. Similarly, in *Mere Christianity*, Lewis says of a human in relation to God that 'In God you come up against something which is in every respect immeasurably superior to yourself' (102). God, to Lewis, is too great for any pride to have any power other than for destruction, and so he can conclude of this greatest of all evils: 'Pride is spiritual cancer' (103).

And Pride is a disease easily caught, as the *Narnia* novels reveal. The world of Narnia is a world riddled with evil, and it is by no means limited to the witches, even though they are, undoubtedly, evil's greatest proponents. Many are the characters that fall for the seductive call of pride, and other evils in its wake. The heroes are no exception – in fact, they are rather the rule. The children are called to Narnia to battle evil that has gotten out of hand, but they also fall victim to the same temptations. Most famously, of course, there is Edmund, who in his quest for attention, power, admiration, and candy falls for the tricks of the White Witch. He betrays both his own three siblings, his good benefactors the Beavers, and an entire country of good creatures. His fall begins not with pride, but with greed – an evil, but less so than pride, as Lewis points out in *Mere Christianity* (101). But soon greed is mingled with pride, and before long it is pride that motivates him. The scene with Edmund and the Witch in the sledge is an interesting illustration of the dangerous, slippery slope of sin and self-centredness (*Chronicles* 126). When the Turkish Delight is gone, Edmund asks for more, but is asked to bring his brother and sisters to her first, and he promises to try (greed). The Witch, through flattery and promises of making Edmund a prince with status and candy in abundance, then gradually awakens his pride, and in his state of mingled greed and pride in the form of vanity he forgets his task, pushing her to make him a prince right away. When he is reminded of his task – the Witch cleverly flattering and tempting him even more as she does so – his self-image becomes so inflated and his pride becomes so great that he spitefully says of his siblings that 'There's nothing special about *them'*. He has reached what Lewis in *Mere Christianity* refers to as 'the real black, diabolical Pride' (104), a pride so dangerous that in Edmund's case it makes him for a while go completely blind to the results of his actions, which eventually start a war and cost Aslan his life.

But Edmund is not alone, although few reach the lows – or the catastrophic consequences – of his sin. Lucy, the child with perhaps the closest relationship to Aslan, falls victim to her pride when coming across the spell for immeasurable beauty in the Magician's book on Coriakin's Island (Lewis, *Chronicles* 495). Luckily, it is only the pride of vanity, what Lewis calls 'the least bad and most pardonable sort. . . . a fault, but a child-like and even (in an odd way) a humble fault' (*Mere Christianity* 104). And luckier still, a vision of Aslan stops her from casting the spell. To Lewis, vanity reveals that you, though in a sinful state of mind, are still regardful of others, value their opinion and are not yet overly confident enough to be satisfied with your own admiration (*Mere*

Christianity 104). In *Narnia*, the author shows us how vanity drives Lucy to almost cast a spell with irreversible consequences, because (as the narrator reveals about her on several occasions) she is insecure as the youngest and in thinking herself less beautiful than Susan. But, in a twist of complexity, her insecurity, which allows her to still value others' opinions of her, also saves her from herself through her love and fear of Aslan.

Many others also follow suit to various degrees, such as Aravis and Bree, who are far too preoccupied with their 'noble' position, Caspian and Edmund in their brief argument on Deathwater Island (Lewis, *Chronicles* 484), the condescending Eustace before his stint as a dragon, Uncle Andrew's declaration of freedom from 'common rules' on the basis of his knowledge of 'hidden wisdom' (19), and Jill on the cliff (554). And of course there is the beautiful, but too 'grown-up' Susan, who from the very beginning reveals a tendency to want to appear older (and better) than her years (111). Unlike Edmund, who undoubtedly displays much worse personality traits when first entering the wardrobe, Susan's personality does not appear to have been permanently improved by her original experiences in Narnia. In fact, although *The Horse and his Boy* clearly shows her as loving and compassionate, it is also apparent that even during her time *in* Narnia as a reigning queen her fondness for 'superficial' things grows, and her vanity is strengthened. When the Pevensies return to Narnia in *Prince Caspian*, she is the one most adamant not to believe Lucy when she claims to have seen Aslan. And, of course, she is famously the only friend of Narnia who does not return for good at the end of *The Last Battle*. Susan's fate is, arguably, the most often and most heavily criticised aspect of the entire *Chronicles*, and also brings this discussion to the final aspect that will be considered in regard to the nature of evil: the potential for forgiveness.

As important as constant vigilance against evil and the danger of pride is in *Narnia*, it quickly becomes clear to any observant reader that the implied author's mantra throughout the series is not just one of danger and darkness, but also one of hope and comfort. 'Even a traitor may mend. I have known one that did,' Edmund says in *The Horse and his Boy* (305). One is instantly reminded of Aslan's words in the scene of forgiveness and reconciliation between Edmund and his brother and sisters: 'Here is your brother . . . and – there is no need to talk to him about what is past' (174). Likewise, who can forget Aslan shedding the dragon form off of Eustace, and dressing him in new clothes (474-475)? Eustace's transformation can easily be read as an illustration of the Bible's words in 2. Corinthians 5,17 of becoming a 'new creature' in Christ, and in

Colossians 3, where the Scripture talks of putting on the 'new man'. In *Mere Christianity*, Lewis, fittingly, includes both an entire chapter devoted to forgiveness (Book 3, chapter 7, 91-99) and two chapters on becoming new men (Book 4, chapters 10 and 11, 171-187). And as mentioned, redemption can be said to be the essence of Lewis's theology. But just as Eustace did not get rid of all his bad habits at once, neither will a Christian, according to Lewis, become perfect right away. 'For mere improvement is not redemption, though redemption always improves people even here and now and will, in the end, improve them to a degree we cannot yet imagine' (*Mere Christianity* 178).

So where does all of this leave Susan? The implied author of *Narnia* gives the reader no real explanation, true. But the author of *Mere Christianity* does: 'Give up yourself, and you will find your real self. Lose your life and you will save it' (187). It is an obvious paraphrase of the famous words of Jesus, repeated several times in the gospels: 'He that findeth his life shall lose it; and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it' (Matt. 10.39). Cathy McSporran indignantly notes that no one – not even her own sister – goes 'to great lengths to ask that Susan be pardoned' (202). But the readers did – and Lewis replied, pointing out the obvious: Susan is not necessarily doomed, she is, after all, still alive. 'There is plenty of time for her to mend,' he says, 'and perhaps she will get to Aslan's country in the end – in her own way' (*Letters to Children* 67). *The Chronicles*, admittedly, never make it explicit, but the truth is there, when one reads carefully. It is there throughout the narrative: redemption is possible, even when evil seems to be in charge. Eustace, Jill, Puddleglum and Rilian found strength to carry on resisting the Witch, even as their lives were hanging by a thread. And as darkness fell on Narnia and all seemed hopeless, Tirian and his motley crew stood proud and determined for their country, never yielding hope until their final breaths. Where there is life, there is hope.

THE PHILOSOPHICAL THREAD

Unlike George MacDonald, Lewis in *The Chronicles of Narnia* makes it quite explicit what is the philosophical cornerstone of the stories. Indeed, he frames the entire narrative with it through the words of Professor Digory Kirke in the first and last published books. In *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, the Professor waves away Peter and Susan's concerns about the unlikeliness of Lucy's stories of a world within the wardrobe with what appears to be his signature phrase: '"Logic!" said the Professor half to himself.

"Why don't they teach logic at these schools?"' (131). In *The Last Battle*, he finally reveals what his idea of logic appears to be, in a near mirror quote: '"It's all in Plato, all in Plato, bless me, what *do* they teach them at these schools?"' (759, Lewis's italics). The question-based discussion style he uses with Peter and Susan in the first instance is stereotypically Platonic – or, rather, in the style Plato learnt from his teacher Socrates. And the vision of heaven in *The Last Battle* is clearly inspired by Plato´s theory of ideas and the truly real. But there is no need to merely take the Professor's – or Lord Digory's – word for it, because the entire series reveals a close connection to the ideas of Plato.

Importantly, however, one must not too easily and indiscriminately take Digory's words for complete truth. Although *The Chronicles* clearly reveal many bonds to Platonic and Neoplatonic thought, far from all aspects of the stories are compatible with Platonism. Instead, Lewis, or rather the implied author of *Narnia*, appears to have used select concepts in Plato where it fit into his vision of the stories and the world view he wished to present through them (Fisher 3). As William G. Johnson and Marcia K. Houtman point out in their article on Plato in *The Chronicles*, Lewis's Platonism is 'highly selective and highly diffused' (76). Much of the experiences of the children in *The Last Battle* and elsewhere in *The Chronicles* can hardly be traced back to the Greek philosopher. And furthermore, Lewis's application of Plato's ideas is channelled through what Johnson and Houtman calls his 'Platonized Christianity' (rather than 'Christianized Platonism' – an essential difference). It is, unmistakably, more Christian than ancient Greek, or, more precisely, a select picking of Plato's ideas filtered through the history of the Christian Church, from St. Paul, via Augustine, the Florentine Neoplatonists, and the Christian Humanists (Johnson and Houtman 77). Nevertheless, the presence of Platonic thought is undeniable, and arguably even more frequent than what is recognisable at first glance: Paul F. Ford calls it 'an almost continuous Platonic undercurrent that is often hardly noticeable' (333). Naturally, an in-depth exploration and analysis of *all* traces of Platonism in *The Chronicles* is too extensive an endeavour to attempt here, instead a brief look at a few of the most central points will have to suffice.

Perhaps the most constant instance of Platonic inheritance in *Narnia* is the importance laid on the development of true knowledge of reality. Lewis develops the theme throughout the entire series, in various ways and to various degrees. It begins (and, to a degree, ends) with Digory, who is the first in the chronological history of Narnia to experience the multitude of worlds (along with Polly), and the first to go after

Aslan (*Chronicles* 73) and speak with him (79). He is also the one who first challenges Peter and Susan's initial, narrow-minded view of reality: '"Well, sir, if things are real, they're there all the time," [Peter said]. "Are they?" said the Professor; and Peter did not know quite what to say' (131). And not least, in the New Narnia in *The Last Battle*, he is the one who explains to Peter and the others the nature of true reality (759). For Plato, Ford notes, true knowledge of reality is 'an art, a struggle, and a discipline,' and those who would learn must turn to 'genuinely philosophical and morally upright individuals' (334). He goes on to explain how, within Christian Platonism, it is to God and especially Christ one must turn for guidance, since he is 'not only the Way and the Life but also the Truth'. However, Ford points out, this does not change the basic Platonic view that knowledge requires maturity and a special state of mind. And indeed, as Ford seems to indicate, there is no denying that the chief representation of truth and wisdom in *Narnia* is the Christ-figure, Aslan. It is to him the children turn and grow closer as they mature, and it is through his presence and power that they grow and gain wisdom. However, on this point, the books are arguably even closer to Plato's original views than Ford suggests. Despite the clear Christian Platonic focus with Aslan as the main source of truth, the series also stresses the importance of being close to, and benefitting from, other wise men and women. Professor Kirke's gentle Socratic guidance is important to the Pevensies, and so is the wisdom and knowledge of the Beavers and the centaurs. Shasta, Aravis, Bree and Hwin learn from the Hermit of the Southern March, and Caspian has his entire destiny shaped by his wise nurse and teacher. The list goes on. Naturally, in light of Christianity and what is known of the power and influence of Aslan in Narnia, these people must be seen as sent by the one true Truth. But they nevertheless underline the Platonic ideal of surrounding oneself with wise and good teachers.

However, although this quest for knowledge of reality is a near constant undercurrent throughout the series, a closely related Platonic theme is more obvious, and arguably more important: it is the contrast between appearance and reality. Lewis does not directly discuss his Platonic influences in *Mere Christianity*, but the echoes of Plato's view of reality is undeniable when he says of the final meeting with God upon death that 'the anaesthetic fog which we call "nature" or "the real world" fades away and the Presence in which you have always stood becomes palpable, immediate and unavoidable' (179). It is natural to think of the 'world within world, Narnia within Narnia' that Mr Tumnus and Lucy talk about towards the very end of *The Last Battle*

(765). '"This is still Narnia, and more real and more beautiful than the Narnia down below..."' as Lucy puts it. But the implied author of *The Chronicles* also illustrates this 'anaesthetic fog' that hides true reality to those who are unable to see past appearances in other ways throughout the series. It is, for instance, important and central to the plot in *Prince Caspian*. Most notably, it is illustrated by Lucy's ability to see Aslan while the others are too narrow-minded and sceptical. As Ford puts it, 'Lucy, the apparent dreamer among her more sober-minded brothers and sister, is the one who is really wide-awake, just as Plato portrays Socrates as the one wide-awake man in ancient Athens' (336). Only when they dare to look beyond appearances and trust Lucy's claims of speaking the truth, are they able to find their way. Similarly, Caspian, who is helped to see and believe in a Narnia the current rulers have banished so far away they no longer even believe in it themselves, also highlights the importance of such enlightenment.

This, again, sounds suspiciously like Lewis's own experiences of atheism, as he describes them in *Surprised by Joy* and *Mere Christianity*: 'When I was an atheist I had to try to persuade myself that most of the human race have always been wrong about the question that mattered to them most,' he says (*Mere Christianity* 29). And later: 'real things are not simple' (33). Instead, he explains, reality is complicated – and 'usually odd'. 'It is not neat, not obvious, not what you expect. . . . Reality, in fact, is usually something you could not have guessed. That is one of the reasons I believe Christianity' (34). Like Plato, Lewis – and the children in *Narnia* – need to look beyond appearances. They have different helpers, Plato being guided by Socrates, Lucy by Aslan, the others by Lucy, Caspian by his teachers – and Lewis by his friends, and, he believed, The Holy Spirit. But ultimately Lewis and the authorial voice in Narnia stress the same Platonic thought: the truth about reality is greater than what is immediately apparent. Which is also, incidentally, practically the implicit manifesto of the Fantasy genre. The idea of transcendent realities is, after all, fundamental to the very idea of 'fantasy', thus making the genre especially suitable to such discussions of transcendental beliefs and ethics.

Plato's most well-known discussion of this idea, or view of reality, is found in his famous 'Allegory of the Cave', from Book Seven of the *Republic* (Johnson and Houtman 78). And one of the most thorough illustrations of this in *Narnia* is also found in a cave, far beneath the ground in the Underland in *The Silver Chair*. In this book, the *Narnia* narrative draws upon Platonic doctrine and imagery much more obviously than in previous books, perhaps foreshadowing the culmination of the Platonic influence to

come in the final chronicle. Again the implied author makes use of the Socratic method: the Queen of Underland questions her captives Jill, Eustace, Puddleglum, and Prince Rilian, as they argue over the existence of the much more beautiful overworld of Narnia. Paul F. Ford notes that Prince Rilian here illustrates Plato's view that the human soul knows deep down that its existence in this world is a result of a fall from a better, brighter world of truth (337). He goes on to point out that the Platonism merges into Christian theology when the witch almost succeeds but has her plans thwarted by Puddleglum, who manages to put out most of the fire and break the enchantment. (Interestingly, a fire also causes the shadows that are mistaken for reality in Plato's allegory.) The essential difference here, according to Ford, is that 'it is Puddleglum's bravery, obedience, and obstinate faith in Aslan that finally break the enchantment – not some sort of philosophical attainment or illumination' (338). However, it should also be noted that despite the Prince's longing and deep-down knowledge of his past existence, he is utterly unable to reach for the light and get back to the overworld by himself. His longing is completely restrained by the witch's spell and chains. It takes an active intervention by Aslan, who sends his helpers from above, to free him. This echoes the words of Lewis on the difference between Platonism and Christianity on this point:

> The essential attitude of Platonism is aspiration or longing: the human soul, imprisoned in the shadowy, unreal world of Nature, stretches out its hands and struggles towards the beauty and reality of that which lies (as Plato says) "on the other side of existence". . . . In Christianity, however, the human soul is not the seeker but the sought: it is God who seeks, who descends from the other world to find and heal Man. (From *Studies in Medieval and Renaissance Literature,* "Edmund Spenser, 1552-99", quoted in Lewis *Quotable* 474-475)

The use of the 'Allegory of the Cave' here also brings us to the final book, and the final point that will be covered here about Platonism in *Narnia*, namely the events in and around the stable in *The Last Battle*. That book is so brimful of Platonic and Neoplatonic inspiration that only a fraction of it can be covered here. However, an important aspect to note is that not only do Plato's cave allegory and Lewis's version in *The Silver Chair* arrive at different views of who is the active seeker; the imagery is also used to address different things. H. Dennis Fisher notes in his essay 'C. S. Lewis, Platonism and Aslan's Country' that while 'Plato used the allegory of the cave as an illustration of philosophic

awakening, C. S. Lewis used it masterfully to address the naturalistic assumptions that rule out the reality of God' (6). This can be seen in the argument between the witch and her captives in *The Silver Chair*, but is much more thoroughly illustrated in *The Last Battle*. Again, here, the fire appears that deceives captives in an increasingly darker world. Unlike in *The Silver Chair*, where the fire helps to trick captives into thinking that Aslan is not real, the poor animals in Narnia's last days are tricked into believing a false version of him. It all, of course, boils down to the same concept of a false reality anyway.

However, while the Queen of Underland is fully aware of what she is doing, the evil creatures behind the deceit on Stable Hill themselves go even further than the deceitful image they promote. Both the monkey Shift and the Tarkaan and his Calormene soldiers believe only in the present world. They know the falseness of the shadowy image cast by the fire, but as a result, they rule out the existence of Aslan, or any power, completely. And so they charge ahead, sure of the existence only of what they know and see, with fatal results as they reach the end of their – and Narnia's – existence. The dwarfs suffer a similar fate, after first having been deceived and subsequently disillusioned by the false Aslan. In the end, inside the stable, they are unable to let go of their conviction that only what they know is real, much like a cave-dweller who is blinded when he is released into the light, and cannot see or trust the new, truer reality. Instead, in Fisher's words, they stick to the 'naturalistic assumptions' in which the New Narnia and Aslan have no place. 'How in the name of all Humbug can I see what ain't there?' says Diggle the Dwarf (Lewis, *Chronicles* 746). And Aslan must eventually conclude: 'They have chosen cunning instead of belief. Their prison is only in their own minds, yet they are in that prison; and so afraid of being taken in that they cannot be taken out' (748). The choice of the dwarfs is reminiscent of the words of Lewis in *Mere Christianity*: 'If what you want is an argument against Christianity . . . you can easily find some stupid and unsatisfactory Christian and say, "So there's your boasted new man! Give me the old kind' (178). It is hardly a direct parallel, but both instances make the same point: if you judge merely from what you can observe in a flawed, shadowy world and quench any longing for something better, you will never know the better state that awaits.

Much more could be said about the Platonic elements in *The Last Battle* and in *The Chronicles* in general, and how they relate to Lewis's 'Platonized Christianity'. This has only been a brief and jumbled glance. However, one last point must be made, about the events that take place in the final chapters of the final book. Ford calls these events

'explicit and full-blown Platonic metaphysics' (339), but they are arguably only partially Platonic in their nature. As previously mentioned, Lewis freely implemented select aspects of Platonic and Neoplatonic thought into his own theology, and this is clearly also the case for the implied author in *Narnia*. There is some obvious inspiration, of course, from the famously Platonic view of the perfect, spiritual, higher and truer reality of ideas, of which the present world is merely a shadow. As already shown, Lewis echoes this in *Mere Christianity*, when he talks of this world fading away and revealing a truer, eternal reality (179). And in *The Chronicles*, the Old Narnia fades away as a better, truer, and bigger version of Narnia (and yet another one, and another one) is revealed. Digory even calls the old world 'a shadow or a copy' of the eternal Narnia (759). But in fact, when comparing it to Lewis's non-fiction, Digory's words here are only half in tune with the man who wrote them. Returning to Lewis's essay on Edmund Spenser (published in 1954, two years before *The Last Battle*), he there comments on the difference – at least in emphasis – between Platonism and Christianity in terms of their belief in an 'other' world, and its relation to our physical one. 'For a Platonist,' he says, 'the contrast is usually that between an original and a copy, between the real and the merely apparent, between the clear and the confused: for a Christian, between the eternal and the temporary, or the perfect and the partially spoiled' (quoted in Lewis, *Quotable* 474).

Interestingly, in the earlier *Mere Christianity* he leans more towards traditional Platonic terms when he says of longings which earthly pleasures cannot satisfy, that the earthly pleasures were meant only 'to suggest the real thing', and that they are 'only a kind of copy, or echo, or mirage' (113). It appears, then, that although the Christian emphasis Lewis distinguishes from traditional Platonism in the Spenser essay is clearly illustrated in *Narnia*, the implied author of *The Chronicles* leans more towards the view expressed by Lewis a decade earlier in *Mere Christianity*. Through the words of Digory, as well as through what is finally revealed of the make-up of the Narnian vision of the universe, he includes and puts equally much emphasis on the more traditionally Platonic view. Nevertheless, the bottom line is clear: both Plato, Lewis and the authorial voice in *Narnia* believed that the soul has an inner longing for release. And this longing (granted, the latter two also recognised the longing of an active God, rather than an inactive Demiurge) eventually brings you to the ideal world, out of a flawed world that, in Lewis's words, needs redemption (*Mere Christianity* 178). The mantra in the last chapters of *The Last Battle* is 'further up and further in', and it is the same ascent

towards the real light and world of ideal forms that Plato's cave-dwellers must make to be free (Johnson and Houtman 85). And in a sense, it is the same movement that must be performed by a person seeking freedom from the naturalistic assumptions that hold him from redemption, according to Lewis: 'Look for yourself, and you will find in the long run only hatred, loneliness, despair, rage, ruin and decay. But look for Christ and you will find Him, and with Him everything else thrown in' (*Mere Christianity* 187).

Finally, a brief detour must be made back to the previous section, on the nature of evil. Lewis, like his predecessor MacDonald, saw evil as a privation of good, and not as an original entity. This view can also be traced back to Platonic philosophy. As mentioned, the Platonic elements Lewis draws upon are likely an amalgamation of various source materials and impulses. It is impossible to ascertain what comes directly from Plato, and what is 'second-hand', filtered through Church Fathers, the Christian Humanist tradition etc. (Johnson and Houtman 86). However, the view of evil as a non-substance is distinctly Augustinian. Paul F. Ford specifically points out that 'Lewis is very Augustinian in his theology of moral evil' (206). Indeed, Augustine explicitly states in Book Seven of his *Confessions*, when talking of his meditations on the nature of evil in light of both Christianity and Platonic texts, that 'whatever things exist are good, and the evil into whose origins I was inquiring is not a substance, for if it were a substance, it would be good' (125). But, although Ford is undoubtedly right in assuming that Lewis is inspired by, and is in line with, the Augustinian view of evil, it seems that both Lewis in his non-fiction and *The Chronicles* portray evil as something at least in some sense substantial. As previously addressed, it is undoubtedly both dependent and a privation of good, but it also appears to have some substance, nonetheless. And so, again, this shows how Lewis freely drew inspiration from Platonic and other sources, but also just as freely adapted them as he saw fit. As Johnson and Houtman point out in relation to his discussions on *Sehnsucht*, Lewis never seemed to be concerned that what he developed 'was only half a Platonic theory' (81). The authorial voice in *The Chronicles* appears to be fully in tune with this attitude. And so the words of Digory, '"It's all in Plato, all in Plato"' (Lewis, *Chronicles* 759), is only half true. Because much of it *is* in Plato, indeed. And some is in Augustine, or in other sources. But most of all, it is all in *Narnia*.

Unlike *Phantastes*, which only gives the reader a short glimpse into a somewhat ambiguous afterlife, *The Chronicles of Narnia* present a grand, spectacular and richly described vision of heaven and the afterlife for those who follow Aslan – and Christ, as is implicitly understood. Both the symbolism throughout the series, and the fact that the Pevensie parents also arrive in the same 'paradise' upon death, suggest such a direct link between Aslan and Christ (the parents are only briefly mentioned, but Lucy's comment about the stable in her world that 'once had something inside it that was bigger than our whole world' (*Chronicles* 744) implies a Christian upbringing). In Narnia, heaven is more commonly known as 'Aslan's country', alternatively 'Aslan's land' or 'Aslan's mountain'. As the names suggest, this is where Aslan and his followers – those who recognise Aslan with joy (Ford 94; Lewis, *Chronicles* 751) – reside for all eternity. Aslan's country is most thoroughly described in the last chapters of *The Last Battle*, when the old Narnia comes to an end and the truly real, New Narnia is revealed, and revealed to be a part of this perfect paradise. But the readers – and some of the children and other central characters – are given short glimpses of the blissfulness of the place in previous books as well.

Chronologically, the first glimpse of the glory of Aslan's country is arguably Digory, Polly and Strawberry/Fledge's journey to fetch a silvery apple from the tree in the great garden in the West, in or beyond the Western Wild, in *The Magician's Nephew* (Lewis, *Chronicles* 91). However, whether this is actually Aslan's country is debatable, as it is apparently a part of the Old Narnia, and reachable for two human children and a flying horse who are still very much alive in that world. Yet, it is found in the far west, which fits with the description of the location of Aslan's country in *The Last Battle*. It also carries a great resemblance to the landscape described in that concluding book. Digory and Polly even recognise it as the same place during the great run in the final chapter of the series (762). It could, however, be the same only in the sense that the former was a shadow of the latter. But regardless, what Digory and Polly (and especially Digory, who was the only one to enter the garden) saw and experienced was undoubtedly a taste of what was to come for them at the end of days.

The descriptions are very close to the descriptions in *The Last Battle*, which is not surprising considering the two books were written almost simultaneously (Hooper 405). The children (and Fledge) notice 'a heavenly smell, warm and golden, as if from all

the most delicious fruits and flowers of the world,' with the air being so warm and sweet 'that it almost brought the tears to your eyes' (Lewis, *Chronicles* 91). Digory, upon entering the actual walled garden, notices that 'it looked more private than ever', that 'Everything was very quiet' and that 'The lovely smell was all round him: it was a happy place but very serious' (92). And the only right way in is through the gates of gold, which you can only enter and still find happiness if you are selfless. Importantly, Digory is in no way a perfectly selfless person. He is flawed, and he is tempted, even in this Garden of Eden. As Peter notes in *The Last Battle*, when you finally reach Aslan's country as your final destination, it is 'the country where everything is allowed' (742), which implies that you can only wish for good things when you are there. '"You cannot want wrong things any more, now that you have died, my son,"' Aslan tells Caspian at the end of *The Silver Chair*. But until a person reaches that place, he will struggle with faults, sin and evil tendencies, as is constantly shown throughout *The Chronicles*. Lewis explains this same view of humanity and redemption in *Mere Christianity*, when he says that 'Those who put themselves in His hands will become perfect, as He is perfect – perfect in love, wisdom, joy, beauty, and immortality. The change will not be completed in this life, for death is an important part of the treatment' (171). Earlier in the same book, he explains this further:

> The point is not that God will refuse you admission to His eternal world if you have not got certain qualities of character: the point is that if people have not got at least the beginnings of those qualities inside them, then no possible external conditions could make a 'Heaven' for them – that is, could make them happy with the deep, strong, unshakable kind of happiness God intends for us. (67)

This is what is illustrated at the start of Narnia's existence, through the flawed but good-intentioned Digory's visit to the garden. And the illustration is completed – just like Digory – with the glorious ascent 'further up and further in' – in *The Last Battle*.

Aslan's country does not play any major role in the narrative of the history of Narnia between these two extremities, and in several of the books it goes quite without mention. The final scenes and chapters mentioned above will be discussed shortly, but first, I will take a brief look at some other short glimpses throughout *The Chronicles*. The first real 'taste of heaven', in terms of order of publication, and the second in terms of chronology, is found in *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*. It is first experienced by

Eustace, who is taken by Aslan to a garden deep in the mountains, where he is cleansed and bathed in a large well to be returned to his human form (474-475). The garden is only briefly described, but it is not difficult to interpret this as the same garden Digory visited. Then later, as they are sailing east towards the uttermost borders of the Narnian world, the whole crew experience several things that can only be described as foretastes of heaven: they drink the sweet water that fulfils them beyond anything they have felt before ('drinkable light', as Reepicheep calls it), and experience a blissful state filled with bright light (532). Later they are surrounded by white lilies from which 'there rose a smell which Lucy found very hard to describe; sweet – yes, but not at all sleepy or overpowering, a fresh, wild, lonely smell that seemed to get into your brain and make you feel that you could go up mountains at a run or wrestle with an elephant' (536). And later yet, Edmund, Lucy, Eustace and Reepicheep finally arrive at the world's end, where they catch a brief glimpse, beyond the great wave, of a land beyond the sun: a land of great, luscious mountains, and they notice 'a smell and a sound, a musical sound' that they could never forget or describe (539). Reepicheep, 'quivering with happiness', sails over the wave and, as is revealed in *The Last Battle*, arrives safely in Aslan's country. Notably, this is in the east, beyond the sun and beyond the eastern parts of Narnia, while the garden, as well as the New Narnia in *The Last Battle*, is to the west. This only helps visualise the all-encompassing nature of Aslan's country, for, as Lucy discovers in the end, these great mountains to the far east are only part of the giant mountain range that circles the whole world, and connects it to Aslan's country and all other worlds (765).

The image the author paints of Aslan's country in these chapters easily reminds one of words written by Lewis on the topic of heaven in various of his other books. In the preface to his fantasy *The Great Divorce*, Lewis notes that 'it will be true for those who have completed the journey (and for no others) to say that good is everything and Heaven everywhere', and furthermore that 'earth, if chosen instead of Heaven, will turn out to have been, all along, only a region in Hell: and earth, if put second to Heaven, to have been from the beginning a part of Heaven itself' (ix). And in *Mere Christianity*, Lewis explains the reason for the widespread use of symbolism when trying to describe heaven, and the prevalence of music in such descriptions: 'All the scriptural imagery (harps, crowns, gold, etc.) is, of course, a merely symbolical attempt to express the inexpressible. Musical instruments are mentioned because for many people (not all) music is the thing known in the present life which most strongly suggests ecstasy and

infinity' (113). To Lewis, as is apparent throughout his non-fiction, heaven is a place of indescribable beauty and joy, above and beyond what can be comprehended by a mere human in this life. It is this same sense of inability to fully translate the characters' experiences into words that is expressed by the narrator in *Narnia*.

In the final scene of *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*, the reader is also given the first hint of how one can enter Aslan's country – or heaven, for the earthlings. 'It lies across a river,' Aslan explains, 'But do not fear that, for I am the great Bridge Builder' (541). It is likely a reference to the river Styx in Greek mythology, the border between earth as the realm of life, and the Underworld, where the dead resided. This passage through death (Reepicheep appears to have been an exception, resembling the direct ascension of Enoch and Elijah in the Bible) is later shown 'in action' in both *The Silver Chair* and *The Last Battle*, through the death of King Caspian and the train accident.

In *The Silver Chair*, in fact, the children both enter and exit Narnia via a cliff immeasurably high above the rest of the world, which at least *appears* to be a part of Aslan's country. It is called the Mountain of Aslan (660), and is described in similar vein as the other times Aslan's country is mentioned, with blazing sunshine on a June day, and 'smooth turf, smoother and brighter than Jill had ever seen before, and blue sky and, darting to and fro, things so bright that they might have been jewels or huge butterflies' (553). Again, sounds play a key role, with the birdsong being 'much more like music – rather advanced music which you don't quite take in at the first hearing – than birds' songs ever are in our world,' and the music playing against a backdrop of 'immense silence' (554). It is a high mountain, and it is not in the Old Narnia, as Aslan explains that Narnia is 'far from here' (559). But neither is it the New Narnia, which is described in *The Last Battle*. Evidently, it is a different part of Aslan's land, for Jill notes in that final book both that she has been to Aslan's country before, and that the New Narnia is different from what she saw then (758). Nevertheless, it is a beautiful place, and, importantly, it is apparently the place to which good Narnians go when they die. In the case of the one death and transition the children get to witness, the one of Caspian, it is not *across* a river, as in the symbolic reference of Aslan's to Lucy in the previous book, but through the waters of one nonetheless (661). Caspian never forgot the good deeds of Aslan, and he could never shake off the longing for Aslan's country. He remained faithful to the lion until the end. And that, finally, brought him truly home. In *Mere Christianity*, this is precisely how Lewis describes a heaven-bound, forever hopeful Christian: 'I must

keep alive in myself the desire for my true country, which I shall not find till after death' (113). In other words, the implied author of *Narnia* suggests that the way to heaven is through faith, hope and death, and this is mirrored in Lewis's non-fiction.

Finally, there is the culmination of *The Chronicles*, the final events of a world that is to be replaced and perfected, in *The Last Battle*. It is the end and the beginning at the same time, as the epic's penultimate sentence reveals (767). And it is possibly one of the most beautiful and colourful descriptions of heaven in modern literature. These final chapters have already been referenced heavily throughout both this section and the previous one, but even so, some final remarks are in order.

Walter Hooper calls this seventh *Narnia* book 'the most perfect example of Symbolism in all Lewis's work' (426). And as has already been mentioned in the previous section, it is here Lewis fully explores the Platonic idea that 'everything good and true in this material world is a "copy" of something in the eternal world of "Ideas" or "Forms"' (426). In *The Last Battle*, the author illustrates a view, in true 'Platonized Christian' fashion, of heaven as 'the unchanging reality behind this shifting changing world of shadows' (Hooper 428). At first glance, the final chapters of *The Last Battle* can, in fact, seem at least as Platonic as they are Christian. As William Gray notes, the events leading up to the exit/entry through the stable door, the 'Narnian Apocalypse', work 'rather effectively as a pastiche of the Biblical book of Revelation'. But things get more complicated with the final chapters, what he calls 'the more problematic life-after-death sequence which is explicitly based on Platonism' (59). Of course, it is of the utmost importance, again, to remember that *The Chronicles* are, indeed, fiction, and so should not be read as a work of apologetics. But it is equally important to note that, although these last chapters are, as Gray says, 'explicitly based on Platonism', they are not thoroughly Platonic, and nor do the Platonic elements exclude influence from Christian teachings on heaven. As H. Dennis Fisher puts it, 'Lewis also shows surprising self-restraint in removing Platonic elements that are noncompatible with orthodox Christian faith' (7), and he goes on to note that the best example of this is found in Lewis's reflections on heaven as they are illustrated in Aslan's country.

One notable example is the fact that the humans and Narnians who enter Aslan's country are not disembodied spirits, but beings of flesh and blood. They are transformed to the height of their physical bloom, and have 'supernatural' – for lack of a better word – abilities such as high-speed running without exhaustion and improved sight, but they

are nevertheless clearly meant to spend eternity in a physical world as physical beings. This is not in line with Platonic dualism, which views body and soul as separate, opposed entities, and idealises a purely spiritual state as the highest form of existence. However, it *is* fully in line with both Christian 'monistic' ideas of body and soul as one, or essentially inseparable, and the thoughts presented by Lewis in his sermon 'The Weight of Glory'. The image of heavenly existence portrayed by the implied author in *Narnia*, and the one described by Lewis in that sermon, is one and the same. 'The whole man is to drink joy from the fountain of joy', he says, and continues by putting himself firmly in the Augustinian tradition: 'As St. Augustine said, the rapture of the saved soul will "flow over" into the glorified body' (9). Lewis's aim is 'to drive out . . . thoughts that what is saved is a mere ghost, or that the risen body lives in numb insensibility. The body was made for the Lord.' He continues in much the same vein in *The Problem of Pain*, saying that 'All that you are, sins apart, is destined, if you will let God have His good way, to utter satisfaction' (135). In other words, although the portrayal of heaven in Narnia as an ideal version of the world(s), of which the old world was only a flawed 'shadow', is clearly heavily influenced by Platonic conceptions, the portrayal of the existence of the redeemed in heaven is completely in tune with Christian tradition and Lewis's beliefs.

The Last Battle also gives the reader a fuller view of what Aslan's country is like, compared to the shorter glimpses in previous books. And notably, the imagery is the same, and merely a continuation and expansion of the earlier descriptions. It is beautiful, of course, all in vivid green and clear blue and bright yellow and deep red. It is 'a deeper country: every rock and flower and blade of grass looked as if it meant more' (Lewis, *Chronicles* 760). It is larger than our world, and increasingly larger and better the 'further up and further in you go', and it is a place where you cannot feel fear (761). It has 'a delicious smell' (764), and time is of no consequence there (765). It is, in short, an indescribably wonderful place – literally impossible to do justice in words (759-760). Again this echoes Lewis's words in *The Problem of Pain*: '"something better" – not this or that experience, but beyond it – is almost the definition of the thing I am trying to describe' (137). And when the narrator in *Narnia* says that 'time there is not like time here', unable to differentiate between half an hour and half a century (765), it easily reminds one of Lewis's words in *Mere Christianity*. 'Almost certainly God is not in Time,' he says (139), although he notes that this is his personal belief and not the words of the Bible: 'It is a "Christian idea"', he explains, 'in the sense that great and wise Christians

have held it and there is nothing in it contrary to Christianity. But it is not in the Bible or any of the creeds' (142). Clearly, then, this again illustrates the frequently concurrent beliefs of the implied author of *The Chronicles* and Lewis himself.

There is, finally, another instance where *The Last Battle* reveals a distinct relation specifically to Lewis's personal Christian views and theology. It is the case of Emeth. The Calormene soldier was a devout follower of Tash, but clearly also a good person. He followed Tash out of goodness and loyalty, because Tash was the only divinity available to him. And so Aslan accepts him into his eternal country, because his devotion was to goodness – and thus, as Tash is evil, his good deeds were a service to Aslan, although he did not himself realise this (757). This scene certainly does not, at first glance, seem to be in line with orthodox Christianity, as such an inclusion of a 'heathen', an idol-worshipper, into heaven, however good he is, diminishes the necessity of following the one way through Christ, the redeemer. Of course, this is *Narnia*, and thus a fantasy. Anything is possible, and not everything in the books is derived from, or concurs with, Christian theology. But Emeth can also be said to represent all those in our world who have not had the chance to hear the Christian gospel. And so this 'good heathen' makes the most of what he has available, what is traditionally called the 'natural revelation'. His good attempts at right worship, though aimed at a false god, can be seen as a response to Romans 1,20: 'For the invisible things of him since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made, *even* his everlasting power and divinity; that they may be without excuse' (*The Holy Bible*). But Emeth *is* excused, because he acted upon the observations he made as best he could. Lewis tackles this precise topic, the situation of those who have not heard, in *Mere Christianity*, saying that this used to puzzle him. However, he has clearly come to a belief that he is comfortable with, and that, though not orthodox Christian, does not directly oppose traditional theology. 'Is it not frightfully unfair,' he says, 'that this new life should be confined to people who have heard of Christ and been able to believe in Him? But the truth is God has not told us what His arrangements about the other people are. We do know that no man can be saved except through Christ; we do not know that only those who know Him can be saved through Him' (53). Enter Emeth, through whom the authorial voice in *Narnia* beautifully illustrates the same idea.

In conclusion, the implied author of *The Chronicles of Narnia* and Lewis, the thinker behind his non-fiction reveal, in various ways, the same wondering approach to the

mysteries of the universe and a spiritual reality, both in terms of heaven and the topics covered in the previous sections. *Narnia* tackles the great questions with both open-mindedness and a firm gravitation towards a Christian world view. It casts its net wide, but knows where it belongs. '"I have come home at last!"' Jewel the Unicorn declares when he finally reaches Aslan's country. '"This is my real country! I belong here. This is the land I have been looking for all my life, though I never knew it till now"' (Lewis, *Chronicles* 760). And Lewis describes heaven in the same way in *The Problem of Pain*: '"Here at last is the thing I was made for"' (134). Or as he puts it in *Mere Christianity*: 'If I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world' (113). Jewel and the other Narnians and humans finally found that world. And so heaven, to both the implied author of *The Chronicles* and to Lewis himself, is more than a final destination. It is, as the famous slogan goes, 'satisfaction guaranteed'.

Chapter 4: **Two Worlds Under One Sky**

'What springs from myself and not from God, is evil; it is a perversion of something of God's.'

George MacDonald (*Unspoken Sermons* 333)

'I have never concealed the fact that I regarded [MacDonald] as my master; indeed I fancy I have never written a book in which I did not quote from him. But it has not seemed to me that those who have received my books kindly take even now sufficient notice of the affiliation.'

C.S. Lewis (Preface xxxvii)

'What I learned to love in *Phantastes* was goodness,' C.S. Lewis says in the preface to his George MacDonald anthology (xxxviii-xxxix). He also said that he believed he had never written a book in which he did not quote from his predecessor, a man he admired more for his excellence as a preacher than for his merits as a fiction writer. And there is little doubt that this rings true for *The Chronicles of Narnia*, a work in which parallel worlds, symbolic landscapes, caves, sea voyages, and epic battles are equally as prevalent as in MacDonald's fantasy, but in which the language is, arguably, exceedingly tighter. The two writers are certainly more closely related in contents and message than in style.

MacDonald's *Phantastes* and Lewis's *The Chronicles of Narnia* are two works that have helped define the modern Fantasy genre. So far I have discussed their individual merits in relation to the world views expressed by the authors in their non-fiction. This final chapter, however, will attempt to bring MacDonald and Lewis together. The two authors, separated by time, never met. But their books – as well as their faiths – have hardly stopped meeting since Lewis first picked up his copy of *Phantastes* on a whim, a book that would later spearhead his list of the books that had done most to shape his 'vocational attitude' and 'philosophy of life' (Hooper 752). The following discussion will bring the novels and their authors together, by tracing some of the similarities and differences the novels exhibit in terms of an underlying world view. The discussion will centre around the same four topics as the previous chapters, namely their views on God,

evil, and heaven, as well as Platonic/Augustinian influences. However, the latter topic will in this chapter be discussed as part of the discussions on evil and heaven.

There are many ways in which MacDonald could be said to have inspired Lewis, ranging from the deeply theological to the more mundane. One example is the many doors and passages that fill the pages of both *Phantastes* and *Narnia*. The novels even, in a sense, begin in the same way. *Phantastes* famously opens with Anodos opening a secret little chamber inside a cupboard in an old secretary, in an unused room (43). Not only does the original *Narnia* chronicle also begin with the discovery of a wardrobe in an unused room, but all of the journeys to Narnia are later revealed to have their origins in Uncle Andrew's discovery of a box of magical dust inside a secret drawer in an old bureau (19). Jeff McInnis, in his book *Shadows and Chivalry*, draws on the prevalence of these doors when discussing MacDonald's influence on Lewis. He points out that the young Lewis, in the final poem of *Spirits in Bondage*, describes a speaker who is unable to get to the other side of a doorway, to a union with his ideal heaven. McInnis then notes, in regard to these early spiritual longings of the young atheist Lewis, that 'the story of MacDonald's influence upon Lewis might be quickly summarised by pointing out that MacDonald helped Lewis realise that he was looking in the wrong direction' (274). He then quotes the narrator of MacDonald's novel *Alec Forbes*, who says that 'the door into life generally opens behind us'. And it is probably true that MacDonald, at least to some extent, helped Lewis begin to 'turn around' – although the spiritual movement that gradually ensued was a slow process aided by many other friends and writers in addition to MacDonald. But even so, MacDonald helped open a door through which Lewis believed he found what he was searching for, the same door through which MacDonald gazed throughout his life. However, as this chapter will show, what they saw through that door was frequently similar, but not always quite the same. Then again, they might simply have been looking for different things.

THE GRAND AND THE GENTLE

The past chapters have already clearly shown how both *Phantastes* and *The Chronicles of Narnia* contain characters with obvious God-like traits, and how they express an understanding of the nature of God largely in compliance with the God described in the authors' non-fiction writing. Furthermore, there is no doubt that both the novels and

their authors reveal a belief in a good God, and emphasise this goodness as the essential quality of God's nature. 'I believe that there is nothing good for me or for any man but God, and more and more of God,' proclaimed MacDonald in one of his sermons (*Unspoken Sermons* 286). And in his book *The Four Loves*, C.S. Lewis calls God no less than 'Love Himself' (9). There is no mistaking the close relation of these words to the words of the implied authors of *Phantastes* and *The Chronicles*: Anodos ends his narrative by describing how he catches a glimpse – or perhaps a mirage – of the ancient wise woman, who is arguably the most prominent God-figure in the novel. The woman's voice assures him that 'a great good is coming – is coming – is coming to thee' (MacDonald, *Phantastes* 272), and Anodos also proclaims his certainty that 'good is always coming' (273). And in the original chronicle, *The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe*, Mr Beaver states the truth plainly: '"he's good. He's the King, I tell you"' (146).

It is safe to say, then, that the two authors, as well as the implied authors of both *Phantastes* and *The Chronicles*, portray a largely corresponding view of God in terms of his nature. The difference between the views chiefly comes down not to disagreement but to a partial difference in focus; both authors are adamant that God is first and foremost good, and that a misunderstanding of this quality of God is worse even than unbelief. As McInnis puts it, both authors 'believed that bowing down before an idea of God that made him less than perfectly good was akin to devil worship' (210), because, as is frequently emphasised by the authors in their non-fiction, a belief in a God who is not all good, or less than good, is simply not good at all. Such inferior goodness is illustrated in *Phantastes* when Anodos finds positive sides to his companion shadow (117), although the book as a whole clearly proves that the shadow is a negative influence. Anodos also meets an old hag in the cave after leaving the Fairy Palace, who offers him a life with herself transformed into a beautiful companion (193-194). There is pleasure to be had through accepting this offer, but not pure goodness, and so it is not enough – not worthy of praise or adherence. But perhaps the strongest illustration of the importance of following the right 'sort' of God is offered by the author of *The Last Battle,* when Aslan meets Emeth. In an inverted, positive version of the warning against believing in an image of God who is not all good, Emeth believes in the goodness of God despite the devil worship he is taught. And so Aslan can say 'I take to me the services which thou hast done to him. For I and he are of such different kinds that no service which is vile can be done to me, and none which is not vile can be done to him' (Lewis, *Chronicles* 757).

But despite the overarching theme of God's goodness in the portrayal of God both in MacDonald and Lewis's non-fiction and in their novels, that goodness is represented in different ways. There is a difference in focus between the image of God in *Narnia* and in Lewis's theological writings on the one hand, and the image in *Phantastes* and *Unspoken Sermons* on the other. As the chapter on *Phantastes* showed, there is a strong prevalence of feminine – i.e. gentle – qualities in the portrayals of God's nature in both that novel and in MacDonald's expressed theology. Admittedly, that might seem strange coming from the man who ends the first sermon of his sermon collection with a rather sinister quote from Hebrews 12,29: 'Our God is a consuming fire' (*Unspoken Sermons* 13). Yet gentleness appears to be the cornerstone of his entire theology. Only a few paragraphs before, he describes God thus: 'In this, then, is God like the child: that he is simply and altogether our friend, our father – our more than friend, father, and mother – our infinite love – perfect God' (12). And a few lines later he criticises theological approaches that allow other aspects of God's nature to take centre stage: 'How terribly, then, have the theologians misrepresented God in the measures of the low and showy, not the lofty and simple humanities! Nearly all of them represent him as a great King on a grand throne, thinking how grand he is, and making it the business of his being and the end of his universe to keep up his glory' (12). In contrast to the theologians MacDonald criticises, *Phantastes* can be said to illustrate precisely the image of God he wants to rescue from such misrepresentations. The humble knight, the ancient woman in her simple abode and the tiny woman in her 'natural' dress echo the 'more than friend, father, and mother' of MacDonald's sermon. Perhaps especially illustrative is the ancient woman, who becomes like a mother to Anodos (219), and guides him with endless gentleness. When Anodos finally breaks the false wooden God on the throne in the forest church, hurling it down the steps, Nick Page, the editor of the special edition of *Phantastes* by Paternoster, comments in a footnote that 'MacDonald mistrusted any theology or religious system which placed the judgmental God above the merciful Christ (262).

Certainly, one can hardly claim that Lewis opposes the view of a gentle, nurturing God, or that he is a representative of the theologians MacDonald opposes (Lewis constantly emphasised that he was a layman, not a professional theologian). He took great care to put the purity and selflessness of God and Christ's love front and centre, as his description of God in *The Problem of Pain* illustrates: 'God is Goodness. He can give good, but cannot need or get it. In that sense all His love is, as it were, bottomlessly

selfless by very definition; it has everything to give and nothing to receive' (38). And on the following page: 'Before and behind all the relations of God to man, as we now learn them from Christianity, yawns the abyss of a Divine act of pure giving' (39). Neither do *The Chronicles* portray merely a strict God. There is the gentle comfort of Aslan as the cat during Shasta's night among the tombs (245-247), and the embrace and soft lick on the nose when Lucy meets Aslan again in *Prince Caspian* (380). There is Aslan the white lamb with the milky voice serving breakfast at the end of *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader* (540), and not least there is Aslan crying over Caspian at the end of *The Silver Chair* (661). Nevertheless, it quickly becomes clear that the God in *Mere Christianity*, as well as Aslan and his father in *The Chronicles*, are equally importantly a God and God characters who deserve and demand respect and humble admiration. They even cause fear. Notably, even the truly tender moments spent with Aslan are either combined with, or immediately followed by, him displaying his grandness, power, or 'tough love' in the form of firm guidance. '"Lucy,"' he says right after embracing her, '"we must not lie here for long. You have work in hand, and much time has been lost today"' (380). He then corrects her with a faint growl and a piercing stare when she tries to blame her siblings. This juxtaposition of gentleness and firmness, goodness and grandeur, is the defining paradox that constitutes the supremacy and divinity of Aslan's being. Lucy sums it up perhaps best of all earlier, upon first meeting Aslan: '"Terrible paws," thought Lucy, "if he didn't know how to velvet them!" (169). Aslan growls, runs, and shakes his mane, demanding respect wherever in whoever he meets – even in his enemies. He is good, but his goodness is so pure that it does not tolerate evil. His goodness comes through not in making those he love *feel* good, but in guiding them towards becoming better people.

It is precisely the same Lewis talks about in *The Problem of Pain*, when he notes that 'A God who did not regard this [our own worst sins] with unappeasable distaste would not be a good being' (46). It is one of the central principles in Lewis's writings on God: he never skirts over the demands and respect God's goodness necessitates, or counteracts them by emphasising God's gentle love, which could be said to be a trademark of MacDonald's theology. Instead, he underlines them, while also explaining why he believes it could be no other way. In *Mere Christianity*, in a chapter fittingly titled 'Is Christianity Hard or Easy?', he explains that it is hard, because God's goodness demands perfection, and he will transform those who choose to follow him. But it is also easy, because it is God who acts. He explains why it must be like this: 'When he said, "Be

perfect," He meant it. He meant that we must go in for the full treatment. It is hard; but the sort of compromise we are all hankering after is harder – in fact, it is impossible' (164). Of course, the God of MacDonald's sermons is not completely placid and without demands either. MacDonald is not a prosperity theologian. He preaches a God who demands self-refusing, such as in his sermon 'The Last Farthing': 'there can be no deliverance for human soul, . . . but in paying the last farthing, in becoming lowly, penitent, self-refusing' (*Unspoken Sermons* 151). However, God's demands, according to MacDonald, are not based on his own holiness, but solely on what will benefit man in the end. Lewis clearly agrees that God does what is best for his children, but again it comes down to a difference in focus. Lewis emphasises God's grandness and power, not in an attempt to undermine his gentle and nurturing love, but because that goodness is so pure that it demands respect on the basis of its divine greatness. MacDonald, through his thundering prose, never excludes God's grandeur, but emphasises the unconditional and unending parent-child love aspect. *The Chronicles of Narnia* and *Phantastes*, through their illustrations of a supreme and awe-imposing God of infinite but uncompromising goodness, versus a feminine, motherly, infinitely patient God of loving kindness, express this same difference in emphasis. But both views of God are present in both works. The tiny woman in the secretary is rather fierce, after all, and so is the knight when needed. And in *Narnia*, the Calormene's devotion to Tash certainly underlines 'the hideousness of spiritual devotions that have little of God's humble love in them' (McInnis 224).

Furthermore, both authors still agree that Christianity is, indeed, hard. God is good, but whether he is gentle or firm, the act of becoming, and growing as a Christian is not always a purely pleasant journey. As Jeff McInnis notes, neither MacDonald nor Lewis thought the act of becoming a 'Son of God' was easy or natural. Rather, the humility and strength that it demands makes it very difficult indeed (256). They 'believed that this art of becoming more loving was too hard for humans to accomplish on their own. They both believed it to be impossible, in fact, without divine intervention' (261). This is apparent in their non-fiction: MacDonald says that 'to turn from and against self is to begin to be pure of heart' (*Unspoken Sermons* 194), and it is something that has to be done daily. 'It is a deeper and harder thing than any sole effort of most herculean will may finally effect,' he says (202) – though he also believes that the indwelling God will eventually possess and idealise the deepest self so that 'there will be no longer any enforced denial of it needful' (199). Lewis says much the same in *Mere Christianity*:

'[God] knows perfectly well that your own efforts are never going to bring you anywhere near perfection' (167). But 'If we let Him – for we can prevent Him, if we choose – He will make the feeblest and filthiest of us into a god or goddess . . . The process will be long and in parts very painful, but that is what we are in for' (170). In other words they both believe in a God who is the active part in the relationship and in the act of salvation.

The implied authors of *Phantastes* and *The Chronicles* appear to portray a similar view of such an active God. Granted, the divine characters in *Phantastes* are less explicit and comprehensive than Aslan, but the similarities are nevertheless obvious. Both narratives centre on quests. Anodos's journey begins as a quest for his ideal lady, but gradually becomes a quest for his ideal self instead – the ideal, selfless state which the rusty knight exemplifies, and that the ancient woman urges and guides him towards. Similarly, the various children (both earthly and Narnian) in *The Chronicles* embark on journeys of personal growth, as they gradually get closer to the ideal, perfect, pure and good Aslan, who represents all they should become. Notably, both Anodos and the children fail miserably – and repeatedly – on their own. Yet they are urged to continue trying, despite the impossibility of the task. They all experience the 'divine intervention' that Jeff McInnis mentions. God, as depicted in these novels through characters with divine characteristics, is both the ideal that the protagonists strive towards and an active divinity that intervenes. The tiny woman sends Anodos to Fairy Land, although his own curiosity was required. Likewise, Aslan brings the children to Narnia through magic portals, which the children sought out in their curiosity. Anodos grows by travelling with, and learning from, the knight, and is nourished, strengthened, educated and sent on his way by the ancient wise woman. And the children grow stronger and wiser for each day spent in Narnia in the presence of Aslan: he guides them both openly and more discreetly, pushing them to face challenges both in their own minds and in the world around them. Anodos and the children are taught to be strong, yet none of the quests would come to anything had it not been for the God characters who push them to reach their potential. Like the God described by Lewis and MacDonald in their non-fiction, the novels represent God as one who is not only perfectly good, but also one without whose intervention none of the humans could ever hope to be.

MacDonald and Lewis shared a largely corresponding view on evil. Evil is, in short, a bad thing – although not all apparently bad things are necessarily evil, or at least not moral evil. The implied authors of *Phantastes* and *The Chronicles of Narnia* clearly share this conviction. However, the two works have their differences also on this topic. One aspect especially cannot go unmentioned: the novels' deployment of femininity differs quite strongly – at least at first sight. That is not to say that they necessarily disagree or reveal essentially divergent views of women in general. However, it is an undeniable fact that while *Phantastes* emphasises the feminine qualities of God, *The Chronicles* do more or less the opposite, positioning two women of remarkable beauty and female cunning as the main foils of the good forces in the epic. Of course, there are also many good female characters in the books: Lucy, whom Aslan so often treats with attention that almost borders on favouritism, quickly springs to mind. Jill, Polly, Aravis, Ramandu's daughter, and sometimes Susan – not to mention the ever-lovely Mrs Beaver – are also all examples of female warmth, wisdom and gentleness. But even so, the strong presence of the wicked witches, as well as the ridiculed shallowness of Lasaraleen and the eventual downfall of Susan cannot be denied. Lewis's work has garnered much criticism for this over the past decades, from various wings of the literary establishment. As Cathy McSporran sums it up in her article 'Daughters of Lilith', 'It is perhaps too glib to claim, as Philip Pullman does, that C. S. Lewis did not like women, and that this dislike is palpable in *the Chronicles of Narnia*. It is undeniable, however, that some aspects of female being and behaviour are treated as terrifying, even demoniac' (203). It should, however, again not be forgotten that *Narnia* is fiction, and that even though McSporran is correct in terms of the strong connection between female characters and evil in the novels, Pullman's criticism misses the mark. *The Chronicles* are hardly women-empowering reading, but this aspect of the books cannot be said to necessarily reflect the views found in Lewis's non-fiction. True, Lewis spent most of his life as a sworn bachelor, and admitted that he often did not understand women. But he also fell in love and married, and upheld life-long, intellectual 'pen-friendships' with several women.

Meanwhile, *Phantastes* at first seems thoroughly positive towards women. Not only are several female characters deployed as representations of divine wisdom and power, the knight is also frequently given feminine – although never effeminate – qualities. The

beauty of the marble lady, the innocence of the young woman with the crystal globe, the goodness of the Beech-tree, and the humble faith of the country women all read as praise of the great goodness of femininity. However, some of the most evil creatures in Fairy Land are also female. There is the Alder-maiden with her hollowness and evil seduction targeted at Anodos's selfish lust, and there is not least the ogress in the Church of Darkness. In other words, it seems that while the implied author of *Phantastes* emphasises the goodness of female virtue, the author of *The Chronicles* is more concerned with feminine power's potential for evil. But they both cover both aspects. Both also seem to warn about the dangers connected with an assumed female propensity for meddling, as well as the dangers of lust and reckless yearning, especially for men in the face of feminine beauty. This dual approach is a departure from the more one-sided positivity of MacDonald's sermons, where he says that 'The deepest, purest love of a woman has its well-spring in [God]' (13). But it is also a departure from the attitudes demonstrated by Lewis in his other writing. When discussing his novel *Till We Have Faces* with a long-time female pen-friend, he reveals that he has received praise for his understanding of the female psyche: 'I believe I've done what no mere male author has done before, talked thro' the mouth of, and lived in the mind of, an *ugly* woman for a whole book. All female readers so far have approved the feminine psychology of it: i.e. no masculine note intrudes' (*Letters to an American Lady* 52). Granted, the term 'ugly woman' might expose him to criticism. But more importantly, the comment reveals that Lewis, despite his long-standing status as a determined bachelor, both understood and appreciated the intricacies of the female mind, as attested by his female readers. Hardly the hallmark of a hater of women, surely. In fact, it seems that both authors, as well as both implied authors, to varying extent both praise and warn against feminine power. However, *The Chronicles of Narnia*, and Lewis the author, appear to have a more nuanced understanding and respect for the complexities of the female psyche, whereas *Phantastes* and MacDonald display a rather more shallow and polarised view.

Regardless of the relative depth of the novels' – and the authors' – understanding and treatment of women in relation to psyche and evil, there is little doubt that both authors had highly developed views and theories on the nature of evil, and the presence of evil in the world. One key aspect in relation to this is the distinction between evil fortune and moral evil. Both authors believed that the various grievances and troubles humans face on earth are compatible with the notion of a good God. As Jeff McInnis puts

it, 'both authors wrote their books believing that the fact of a good God could be reconciled with the fact of this world's "evil" fortune: pain, suffering and other calamity' (124). McInnis also says specifically about MacDonald's writings, that although his books are dark at times, and grew darker later in his life, 'the trust in God's goodness, despite circumstances, is there from the very beginning and is consistently reiterated throughout his literary career' (114). This attitude is clearly echoed in *Phantastes*, where, for instance, Anodos goes through the various doors of the ancient woman's cottage without her stopping him (209). He has various painful experiences, such as the death of a loved brother and unrequited love, symbolic of the grievances most people encounter in their lives. Upon his return to the cottage, the ancient woman, who allowed him to go out and experience this pain, is ready and waiting with her soothing love.

Much the same situation is found in *The Chronicles of Narnia*, where Aslan frequently allows misfortunes to happen. He allows the lack of wind, the hunger and the thirst that the seafarers on the *Dawn Treader* experience, and he allows Eustace to unknowingly turn himself into a dragon. He allows the hardships, the snowstorm and the missed signs in *The Silver Chair*, and (as he is the ruler of *worlds*) the months of sadness, pain and fear caused by the illness of Digory's mother. He allows the death of King Caspian just as father and son are reunited, and he allows the attempted rescue of the kidnapped, infant Prince Cor to be unsuccessful, leading to the prince growing up under gruelling conditions as Shasta. In this last example, Aslan not only allows it, he is explicitly shown to actively control the outcome throughout the series of 'unfortunate' events. The lion hints at a crucial distinction when he reveals to Shasta on the mountain how he has been with him through all his troubles. '"I do not call you unfortunate,"' he tells the boy after having listened to all his sorrows (281). As Paul F. Ford puts it, Aslan 'reveals that none of this has been bad luck or misfortune, but is rather a providence' (397). Painful things are allowed to happen, but in the end, most of the time the pain leads to a greater good and a stronger trust in, and dependency on, Aslan.

This notion of providence that *The Chronicles* display is mirrored in C.S. Lewis's book *The Problem of Pain*, where he discusses the necessity of pain and troubles in the life of human beings. Lewis does not necessarily give a satisfactory answer to the traditional 'problem of evil', but he certainly goes to great lengths to explain and defend Christianity against those who argue that human troubles are always evil, and thus incompatible with a good God. 'God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our

conscience, but shouts in our pains: it is His megaphone to rouse a deaf world,' he says in a famous quote from the book (81). He then explains that our troubles are a result of – or perhaps rather a remedy for – the tendency of the fallen human race to be numbed by happiness and to look for fulfilment in any other place than where it is to be truly found:

> God, who has made us, knows what we are and that our happiness lies in Him. Yet we will not seek it in Him as long as He leaves us any other resort where it can even plausibly be looked for. While what we call "our own life" remains agreeable we will not surrender it to Him. What then can God do in our interests but to make "our own life" less agreeable to us, and take away the plausible sources of false happiness? It is just here, where God's providence seems at first to be most cruel, that the Divine humility, the stooping down of the Highest, most deserves praise. (84)

In other words, Lewis considers 'evil fortune' to be a way for God to help his children in the long run (i.e. eternal life versus the short span of a human life on earth). 'Modest prosperity and the happiness of their children' are temporal pleasures, which, unlike the prospect of an eternity spent blissfully with God, will fade; therefore, God 'troubles them, warning them in advance of an insufficiency that one day they will have to discover' (85). Earthly troubles, he seems to say, are necessary in order for humans not to be tempted to rely on earthly pleasures instead of the true goodness of God.

In his sermons, George MacDonald expresses much the same view: 'Am I not a fool whenever loss troubles me more than recovery would gladden? God would have me wise, and smile at the trifle. Is it not time I lost a few things when I care for them so unreasonably? This losing of things is of the mercy of God; it comes to teach us to let them go' (*Unspoken Sermons* 120). Finally, the implied author of *Phantastes* also explicitly expresses this idea of providence. As Anodos is about to depart from the ancient woman's cottage for good, she offers him some words of comfort: '"In whatever sorrow you may be,"' she says, '"however inconsolable and irremediable it may appear, believe me that the old woman in the cottage, with the young eyes . . . knows something, though she must not always tell it, that would quite satisfy you about it, even in the worst moments of your distress"' (218). And at the very end of the last chapter, Anodos ends his story by revealing that he has understood the old woman's words and taken them to heart: 'What we call evil, is the only and best shape, which, for the person and

his condition at the time, could be assumed by the best good' (273). As McInnis sums it up, 'both MacDonald and Lewis came to believe that the troubles of this world are somehow necessary for the redemption of souls who are not already all good' (134). According to McInnis, this even includes some troubles that are caused by individuals' moral evil; such things can temporarily still be consistent with God's good will. And as evidenced above, *The Chronicles* and *Phantastes* illustrate the same views. As mentioned, this can hardly be called a waterproof answer to the notoriously difficult 'problem of evil', but at least the two authors and the novels are all united in their beliefs.

However, this admittance of the potential good of evil fortune, and even of evil caused by individuals' morally evil intentions, does not equal an acceptance of moral evil. In McInnis's words, 'this is a far cry from the sort of individuation that allows moral evil a place in ultimate reality' (134), a notion never expressed by any of the authors. The idea of such acceptance has, however, been suggested by critics in regard to MacDonald. Specifically, MacDonald's recent biographer William Raeper seems to suggest a more positive attitude to moral evil through interpreting MacDonald's stories in light of Carl Jung's theories (McInnis 126). Raeper approaches the stories – including *Phantastes* – through the lens of Jung's definition of 'individuation': good and evil elements of the human psyche will be reconciled in a move to wholeness. He then appears to conclude that moral evil, in MacDonald's view, should be included in a person's growth toward wholeness (McInnis 129). His stories are 'examples of the subconscious psyche allowing good and evil things, including morally good and evil things, to exist side by side in a harmony unachievable in one's conscious life' (130). These claims are flatly rejected by McInnis, who calls them 'simply untrue' (129) and retorts that 'MacDonald saw this moral evil as something that could never be negotiated with, that could never be included in the wholeness of an individual or the wholeness of ultimate reality' (126). MacDonald did admittedly allow for quite 'enormous amounts of diversity' to be consistent with the idea of a good God (127), but this does not imply a reconciliation of moral good and moral evil. As McInnis concludes: '[MacDonald] does indeed encourage a move to totality and wholeness, but only by killing the monster within – a monster which, to MacDonald's thinking, has no legitimate place there' (129). There is little doubt that McInnis here gives a more convincing argument than Raeper. How Raeper comes to draw such conclusions appear almost inconceivable, in fact, as they must involve rather extreme instances of far-fetched interpretations and omissions.

There are few things MacDonald speaks of more often in his sermons than the importance of killing 'the peddling creature we so wrongly call our *self*' (*Unspoken Sermons* 66), and the entire narrative of *Phantastes* consists of Anodos's quest to fight both the evil of his own selfishness and the moral evils committed in Fairy Land.

Still, although MacDonald and Lewis were in full agreement that moral evil is, indeed, evil and inexcusable, they did not necessarily fully agree on the effects of such evil. McInnis does, at least, concede to Raeper that MacDonald appears to have preferred repentance to initial innocence, in other words granting moral evil value as the cause for repentance and growth. Meanwhile, he claims, Lewis, although he highly valued repentance, nevertheless believed that 'something great has been "lost forever" when evil is committed', even though God has the power to make good of all actions (133). McInnis's claims here must undoubtedly be taken with a generous pinch of salt, as his assessment appears to rest principally on opinions voiced in fictional works. However, there is less doubt that the two implied authors of *Phantastes* and *The Chronicles* do somewhat disagree on the goodness of innocence versus the goodness of redemption.

In *Phantastes*, after his first suicide attempt and the following experience of bliss, Anodos says that 'I was almost glad I had sinned' (200). When he meets again the young woman whose crystal globe he broke, she is thankful and does not even need to forgive him: '"You broke my globe. Yet I thank you. Perhaps I owe you many thanks for breaking it." . . . I knelt before her, and thanked her, and begged her to forgive me. "Rise, rise," she said; "I have nothing to forgive; I thank you"' (245). And soon after, upon reflecting on this experience and what he has learned, Anodos concludes: 'I learned that it is better, a thousand-fold, for a proud man to fall and be humbled, than to hold up his head in his pride and fancied innocence' (247). In fact, the entire narrative reflects this same attitude. Unlike the children in *Narnia*, Anodos is not brought to Fairy Land to save it, but to save himself. He is taken from a state of innocence, or at least apparent innocence, and brought through temptation, fall and redemption in Fairy Land, in order to emerge from this other world or dimension fallen and redeemed, humbled and a better man.

Meanwhile, if there is one thing Aslan makes abundantly clear throughout *The Chronicles of Narnia*, it is that decisions, good or bad, are irreversible. For each bad, or evil, action, a potential good is lost forever. That is not to say that bad things cannot be made right, but doing wrong has consequences that cannot be magically erased by later regret and redemption. Lucy learns this the hard way in Prince *Caspian*: '"You mean,"

said Lucy rather faintly, "that it would have turned out all right – somehow? But how? Please, Aslan! Am I not to know?"' she pleads after having finally admitted that she was wrong to listen to her brothers and sister instead of Aslan's call (380). And Aslan tells her the hard, but obvious truth: '"To know what would have happened, child?" said Aslan. "No. Nobody is ever told that."' In other words, doing wrong is, according to the implied author of *Narnia*, a spoiled chance for doing good. Even if forgiveness is possible and God, or Aslan, can make good from bad anytime, the potential of the initial right and good is nevertheless lost, and both Lucy and the future are changed because of it.

Finally, there is the actual nature of evil. As evidenced through the discussion in the previous chapters, George MacDonald and C.S. Lewis are very much in agreement on this, at least to a large extent. They both see self-centredness and pride as the root of all evil. In his sermon 'Kingship', MacDonald describes the essence of evil over several lines, starting with the sentence 'For the one principle of hell is – "I am my own"', and continuing to emphasise the words 'I', 'my' and 'myself' more than thirty times in the next few sentences (*Unspoken Sermons* 264). Lewis had underlined the first sentence of this passage in his personal copy of the sermons, and later included it in the George MacDonald anthology he edited (McInnis 161), which strongly suggests that he agreed with his predecessor. Lewis also explicitly says the same in *Mere Christianity*, in the chapter titled 'The Great Sin': 'According to Christian teachers, the essential vice, the utmost evil is Pride. . . . it was through Pride that the devil became the devil: Pride leads to every other vice: it is the complete anti-God state of mind' (100). Both *Phantastes* and *The Chronicles of Narnia* present this same view of evil. The essence of evil, in both of those works, is shown to be pride and conceit. It is the defining feature of Anodos's shadow, what it feeds on and what Anodos has to conquer for it to disappear. Although the term most frequently used in *Phantastes* is 'self', there is no doubt that the 'self' in question is a prideful attitude. When the shadow is finally gone, Anodos reflects on what the cure was, and he mentions both pride and vanity (a form of pride) as the flaws he had now been rid of (247). And in *Narnia*, what is Edmund's great sin rooted in? What must Eustace become a dragon to be rid of? What is Lucy's temptation in the Magician's book? And what makes the witches believe they can defeat Aslan and conquer – even be entitled to conquer – the land and world of Narnia? It is pride. When Jadis eats the forbidden apple, she looks 'prouder than ever' (93). And throughout the narrative, it is pride and selfishness that must be conquered, one way or another. As Paul W. Ford sums

it up, 'To Lewis's way of thinking, vanity – the desire to be loved beyond the limits God sets – is the chink in a person's armor that allows evil to enter in. In *The Chronicles*, pride and vanity are shown transmuted into greed and love of power' (447).

Yet, despite the general agreement between MacDonald, Lewis and the implied authors of their novels on this essence of evil, they are not necessarily quite unanimous when it comes to evil's actual substance. MacDonald and Lewis, as well as their novels, largely take an Augustinian stance in presenting evil mainly as the privation of good, and not an independent force. However, only MacDonald and the implied author of *Phantastes* fully concur with Augustine's views in regard to substantiality: 'whatever things exist are good, and the evil into whose origins I was inquiring is not a substance, for if it were a substance, it would be good. . . . evil does not exist at all' (Augustine 124-125). The idea that all that exists is good is, of course, not merely an Augustinian thought, but a commonly held Platonic axiom, which Augustine implemented into his Christian world view. In *Phantastes*, the view that only good things can truly exist is symbolised throughout: the most prominent evil creatures, the Ash and the Alder-maiden, are described as hollow, the throne in the Forest Church is revealed to be equally hollow, and, most importantly, Anodos's shadow is, as shadows generally are, insubstantial and a mere nothingness (although, admittedly, it can kill the grass on which it falls (114-115)). Similarly, MacDonald says in a sermon that 'evil exists only by the life of good, and has no life of its own, being in itself death' (*Unspoken Sermons* 274). (Interestingly, as C. M. Chilcott points out in his article 'The Platonic Theory of Evil', several of Plato's dialogues suggest that Plato actually refused to see death as evil (31).)

Meanwhile, Lewis, as well as the authorial voice in *The Chronicles*, are not quite as categorical in their definition of evil. True, Lewis maintains that evil is essentially goodness gone bad. As he says in his *A Preface to Paradise Lost*, 'What we call bad things are good things perverted' (65). But he immediately explains this further by saying that 'This perversion arises when a conscious creature becomes more interested in itself than in God, . . . and wishes to exist "on its own". . . . This is the sin of Pride. The first creature who ever committed it was Satan.' Moreover, he continues by stating that 'good can exist without evil, . . . but not evil without good.' In other words evil is a *dependent*, not an *independent* power. Yet he nevertheless acknowledges it as a power in this world and one that is, indeed, evil, as opposed to merely not good. 'Good and bad angels have the same Nature,' all created by God, but nevertheless some are, in fact, *bad*, and 'will

voluntarily make themselves bad', he explains (66). 'Satan *wants* to go on being Satan' he then concludes (100, Lewis's italics), and so it seems that for Lewis, Satan, by his evil will, is a physical, evil presence in the current universe. This again shows that Lewis thus clearly picks and chooses what he wants of Platonic and Augustinian thoughts. Although, in fact, some of Plato's dialogues reveal that to Plato, evil and substance were the same inasmuch as matter was failed ideas, and so 'evil has a purely negative existence' (Chilcott 28). Negative, but matter and thus existence nonetheless. Similarly, in *The Chronicles*, the implied author presents evil as substance just as much as Lewis does in his non-fiction. Not only are the witches demonic beings of irreversible evil, but evil even materialises into the physical shape of Tash when called (739). The demon is not independent, since it is banished in the name of Aslan, but it is certainly physical enough to take Rishda Tarkaan and bring him, his 'lawful prey', to his 'own place' (740).

THE FINAL FRONTIER

Both MacDonald and Lewis clearly believed in an afterlife. MacDonald spoke of this earthly life and 'some state of existence beyond it' as one and the same (*Unspoken Sermons* 191). And Lewis looked forward to an eternal life after death: 'We are summoned to pass in through Nature, beyond her, into that splendour which she fitfully reflects. And in there, in beyond Nature, we shall eat of the tree of life' ('The Weight of Glory' 8). The implied authors of *Phantastes* and *The Chronicles of Narnia* express the same belief, through their descriptions of passing through death to a higher, better existence. In both *Phantastes* and *The Chronicles*, there is also an emphasis on the importance, or value, of going to this new existence through the door of a 'noble death'. 'Who lives, he dies; who dies, he is alive,'[9] one section of a chapter in *Phantastes* begins (161), and nothing is more noble than the death of Cosmo, who frees his beloved and thus can die with a smile on his face (171). And not least, upon Anodos's final death in Fairy Land, the one that will take him through heaven and back to his earthly life, he exclaims: 'I was dead, and right content' (264). Anodos has died doing the ultimate good, saving others from death, and so he has also earned the ultimate praise from his ideal lady: '"He has died well"', she says. Similarly, in *The Chronicles*, in the final hours of the last battle of Narnia, Jill states that she would '"rather be killed fighting for Narnia than

---

[9] This line is missing in the first edition from 1858.

grow old and stupid at home"' (720). Jewel the Unicorn expresses the feelings of all the believers who have held out until the end: '"If Aslan gave me my choice I would choose no other life than the life I have had and no other death than the one we go to"' (721).

These acts of selfless sacrifice, and of thinking not of oneself but of others first, echo the message constantly repeated by MacDonald in his sermons, and later expressed also by Lewis: the best a human can do is to give up the self, and let the old, selfish person die – metaphorically, and in the end also literally. 'The self is given to us that we may sacrifice it,' MacDonald says (*Unspoken Sermons* 198). Furthermore: 'We can live in no way but that in which Jesus lived, in which life was made in him. That way is, to give up our life' (230). Likewise, Lewis says in *Mere Christianity*: 'Give up yourself, and you will find your real self. Lose your life and you will save it. Submit to death, death of your ambitions and your favourite wishes every day and death of your whole body in the end: submit with every fibre of your being, and you will find eternal life' (187).

However, although both authors, as well as both novels, express a belief in an afterlife, there is less of a unanimous consensus regarding the precise nature of this continued existence after death. Lewis explicitly stated that he believed the 'glorified body' was a physical body. The afterlife did not mean a ghostly existence, and 'The whole man is to drink joy from the fountain of joy. As St. Augustine said, the rapture of the saved soul will "flow over" into the glorified body' ('The Weight of Glory' 9). Thus he places his view within an Augustinian theological tradition of, if not monism, then at least rather limited dualism. *The Chronicles*, and especially *The Last Battle*, clearly present a corresponding view. The humans and animals who are accepted into the 'New Narnia' are certainly transformed so that they inhabit 'glorified bodies', bodies able to do things 'that would have been quite impossible in our world' (762), but unable to feel afraid (761). These are nevertheless physical bodies with senses and shape.

MacDonald, on the other hand, was less firmly decided on the form of existence in the afterlife – or, rather, he had little interest in knowing. 'I care little to speculate on the kind of this body [beyond death],' he said (*Unspoken Sermons* 161). But he still appears to have assumed that there would be some form of corporeal existence, as he also says that 'it will be a body to show the same self as before – but . . . a body to show the being truly – without the defects, that is, and imperfections of the former bodily revelation' (161). The implied author of *Phantastes*, however, presents a different vision of the afterlife, through the descriptions in the novel's penultimate chapter. Anodos is dead,

and – for the time being – chiefly, or possibly solely, a spiritual being. 'It was not that I had in any way ceased to be what I had been,' Anodos says, but then continues: 'The very fact that anything can die, implies the existence of something that cannot die; which must either take to itself another form, as when the seed that is sown dies, and arises again; or, in conscious existence, may, perhaps, continue to lead a purely spiritual life' (266). In *Phantastes*, at least, the conclusion seems to be the latter. Anodos might not feel like he has ceased to be what he used to be, but he is now purely a spirit, freed from the restraints of a physical body. The only physical shapes he inhabits are his own corpse for a while, in which he rests (266), and a primrose, which he inhabits after having risen through the ground (267). He then spends the rest of his time beyond death floating on a cloud, before he sinks 'from such a state of ideal bliss, into the world of shadows which again closed around and infolded me' (269). In this way, *Phantastes* can be said to present a more radically dualistic, Platonic version of the afterlife than MacDonald, Lewis and the authorial voice in *Narnia*. As Michael Sudduth, professor of philosophy and religion at San Fransisco State University explains, 'Plato's account of post-mortem survival presents *disembodied* and *embodied* . . . vehicles of survival, but disembodied . . . is clearly the highest form of survival . . . The goal of life is for the soul permanently to escape the body' (quoted in Fisher 8, his italics). Anodos, for a time, at least, reaches this goal. Also, as mentioned, Plato did not consider death as evil, and the implied author of *Phantastes* agrees. As Chris Brawley puts it in his article 'The Ideal and the Shadow': 'What Anodos discovers is that death is a joyous event' (103).

This Platonic view of death and the final state of existence in the novel is quite fascinating. Especially because *Phantastes* can also, at other times, be said to contradict the Platonic view of the universe – or, rather, of this world and the next. MacDonald was a big fan of nature, even if he might have grown increasingly weary with this world in his later years, and longed for the next. In the penultimate paragraph of the final sermon of the third series of *Unspoken Sermons*, he talks about never having felt quite at home in the world, because 'Never has it shown me things lovely or grand enough to satisfy me. It is not all I should like for a place to live in' (332). Yet immediately before, he talks of 'the good things of this lovely world'. In an earlier sermon from series two he talks at length about the glory and beauty of the present world, concluding that 'life is one, and things will be then [beyond death] what they are now' (190). As Courtney Salvey puts it: 'for Macdonald, both this world and the next are good, but this world is good because it

points to God' (16). Similarly, in *Phantastes*, the implied author uses the voice of the narrator – that is, Anodos – to enthuse at length over the beauty of the nature around him, saying at one point, in the grounds of the Fairy Palace, that 'all nature lived and glowed; the very earth grew warm beneath me' (134). This beauty is so lovely and powerful that it almost eradicates Anodos's shadow on its own.

Meanwhile, Lewis is in this sense much more Platonic in his views, frequently calling the world, in Platonic terms, a shadow or echo. In *Mere Christianity,* he says: 'I must keep alive in myself the desire for my true country, which I shall not find till after death' (113). Later, he describes the transition through death thus: 'the anaesthetic fog which we call "nature" or "the real world" fades away' (179). The implied author of *Narnia* describes the difference between this world and the next in similar terms, especially in *The Last Battle*. In this grand vision of the afterlife, the reader sees the old world described as 'the Shadowlands' (767). The new world is 'the real Narnia' and 'the real England' (766), where all the good things that ever were in the old 'shadow version' are kept and everything is in its ultimate, ideal form. (This last point can actually be said to reveal the influence of MacDonald on Lewis. As Jeff McInnis points out, Lewis 'had once seemed interested in only an escape from Earth, matter and a Nature whom he depicted as Satan', but these closing pages of *The Chronicles of Narnia* are reminiscent of the final scene of MacDonald's first book, *Within and Without*, where heaven is described as encapsulating all the joys one knew on earth (McInnis 282).)

However, while Lewis and the authorial voice in *Narnia* appear more in tune with Plato than MacDonald and *Phantastes*, in terms of the devaluation of the present world in favour of the next, Lewis and *The Chronicles* are, as already discussed, in direct disagreement with Plato in their emphasis on corporeal redemption and resurrection. In his article on Platonism and symbols of heaven in *Narnia*, H. Dennis Fisher notes that Lewis is in tune with Platonism in that the final redemption includes an inner, spiritual transformation to 'the ultimate "form"', the idealised version of humans (9). But he then turns away from the Platonic view by refusing to accept the immateriality of the realm of the Platonic 'Forms' as the highest form of existence. Essentially, then, the various corresponding and diverging views on heaven and the afterlife expressed by Lewis, MacDonald and the implied authors of the novels, reveal a fascinating contradiction: *Phantastes* and *The Chronicles of Narnia* can both be said to be simultaneously Platonic *and* non-Platonic, but in different ways. While *Phantastes* portrays a spiritual afterlife,

but value this present world of matter rather too much to be palatable to someone with a Platonic world view, *The Chronicles* do the opposite, through maintaining the physicality of the eternal existence, but devaluing the present world.

Finally, this differing valuation of the present world also means that the two works both adhere to J.R.R. Tolkien's famous definition of Fairy-Stories, at least in terms of their endings. To Tolkien, 'The eucatastrophic tale is the true form of fairy-tale' (85), 'Eucatastrophe' being defined as the opposite of tragedy, as 'the happy ending: or more correctly of the good catastrophe, the sudden joyous "turn"' (85-86). Tolkien also suggests that this eucatasrophic form or formula might be 'a far-off gleam or echo of *evangelium* in the real world'. The fairy-stories are so appealing because they mirror the much greater and grander eucatastrophic story of The Gospels (88, Tolkien's italics). Fairy-stories certainly do *seem* to lend themselves well to such grand transcendental and ethical questions. But regardless of whether Tolkien is correct on this or not, Lewis and MacDonald clearly appear to agree. However, in a fascinating and notable twist, *Phantastes* and *The Chronicles* (or, to be quite precise, the concluding chronicle, *The Last Battle*) have completely *opposite* eucatastrophes, both involving the relationship between the present world and the next. Undoubtedly, both novels see the afterlife as a generally good thing. But Anodos is returned to *this* world, now enabled to fully appreciate and enjoy it because of his insight into the divine truth and the prospect of an eternity of blissful existence. Meanwhile, the children (and the other creatures) in *Narnia* are finally *removed* from this ultimately unsatisfying world, and sent to the next, better one. They are both happy endings, and they both include an eternal state of bliss, but they are also different. Just like their authors.

Chapter 5: **Conclusion**

This thesis has looked at the novels *Phantastes* by George MacDonald and *The Chronicles of Narnia* by C.S. Lewis, in order to extract and dissect the implied authors' views of God, evil, and heaven, as well as their relationship to the philosophical teachings of Plato and Augustine. The aim has been both to compare and contrast the views expressed by the authorial voices in the novels, and to compare these to the views of the historical authors on the same topics, as they are found in the authors' non-fiction.

Although both *Phantastes* and *The Chronicles* are quest-based Fantasy novels, centred on journeys of personal growth and written by Christian authors, the books are also very different, both in size, scope, and focus. *Phantastes* does not have any one figure as obviously divine in nature as Aslan, nor does it have an eschatological aspect on the level of the last *Narnia* chronicle. But on the other hand, *The Chronicles* with their more epic storylines, younger protagonists and equally younger target audience are less expressly philosophical than their older, shorter counterpart. However, there has been much to discuss on the topics in question in both of these fictional universes.

I have argued that both *Phantastes* and *The Chronicles* feature divine characters that represent central aspects of the Christian God, most prominently his goodness. But while *Phantastes* emphasises gentleness and femininity in its various divine characters, *The Chronicles* put more emphasis on the greatness and grandness of a supreme God's all-encompassing power, and the humility and respect such power and a noble, self-sacrificing goodness command. God, or the divine powers embodied by the characters, are essentially the same in both novels – there are no directly opposing views, only a difference in focus. A similar difference in focus is also found in MacDonald and Lewis's non-fiction, in their discussions on the nature of God. The implied authors of *Phantastes* and *The Chronicles* echo the historical authors' views, although especially in the case of *Phantastes*, the portrayal of divine power is more limited than in MacDonald's sermons.

Interestingly, while *The Chronicles* contain the most distinct representation of divinity, it is arguably *Phantastes* that offers the most thorough discussion of evil, as well as its most intriguing embodiment. Although both literary universes are virtually littered with evil creatures, including witches and demons, the most interesting one is probably Anodos's shadow. Its appearance, existence and demise links evil to the self and to corruption of the self more closely than any of the other representations in the

novels. The witches in *Narnia*, as well as Tash, are pure evil to the core – note the word. And the various children must fight their own demons, so to speak. But Anodos must virtually give up everything in order to gain his freedom, and this 'killing of the self' is also precisely what MacDonald repeats over and over again in his sermons. The implied author of *The Chronicles*, on the other hand, paints a picture of evil as more of an outside power, a dependent but nevertheless real power that attempts to pull humans away from goodness and into darkness. The evil creatures in *The Chronicles*, unlike those in *Phantastes* (especially the shadow), are not subject to the powers of the mind and heart of its victims – their strength and existence are not linked to anything but Aslan's universal power over all creation (although their powers over specific creatures obviously require susceptible minds). This is closely in tune with Lewis's strong emphasis on the physical existence and power of Satan.

This question of whether or not evil is a power in and of itself, or merely a corruption of good, and whether it is substantial or merely the emptiness left when goodness – the only thing that can have substance – is removed, also delves deeply into the philosophies of Plato and Augustine. As this thesis has shown, both implied authors, as well as both MacDonald and Lewis, are influenced by both philosophers. However, they also show a great deal of freedom and independence in their treatment of the topics, without adhering to any one school of thought. And again the implied and historical authors of each novel mirror each other: in *Phantastes*, the Shadow, the Ash, the Alder-maiden and the idol on the throne are all hollow, thus echoing MacDonald's descriptions in his sermons of evil as having 'no life of its own' (*Unspoken Sermons* 274). In this MacDonald and the novel's authorial voice are both closely in compliance with Augustine – Anodos is himself good, and so are the physical trees, it is merely their shadowy mirror images that are evil. On the other hand, both Lewis and the implied author of *The Chronicles* lean more towards a Platonic understanding on this topic, although also borrowing from Augustine. Tash, though assumed to be a non-existent, false god throughout most of the books, is finally revealed to be a real, if admittedly partially see-through creature, ultimately under the power of Aslan, but nevertheless with power over those who are evil in the physical world. Likewise, the witches are equally, as created beings, not truly independent, but they are undoubtedly both physical and truly evil. Still, for the most part, *The Chronicles* do portray creation as good, thus combining the seemingly contradictory views of Plato and Augustine on

physical matter. Lewis, in his non-fiction, expresses this same view of creation as good, while maintaining that evil is not merely an insubstantial void left when goodness has been corrupted, but also a physical, real existence in this world.

Finally, the question of whether physical matter is evil or good leads directly into the final question, namely the nature of heaven. As I have shown, this is where the implied author of *Phantastes* most clearly diverges from the views of the others. *Phantastes* presents a vision of the afterlife as insubstantial, thus adhering to Plato's notion of the afterlife as the realm of the ideas and an existence in pure spirit form. Meanwhile, both *The Chronicles* and Lewis very clearly envision a heaven where all good things are in their ideal form, thus acknowledging Plato's vision (Professor Kirke even explicitly says so (759)). But in the afterlife everything is also more *substantial* than in the present world. This is a fundamentally more Augustinian approach, which opposes the Platonic notion of matter as evil or the lowest state of existence. In his sermons, MacDonald, likewise, appears to lean more towards Augustine, although he is less categorical in his brief discussions of the heavenly existence than Lewis and *Narnia*. Nevertheless, there is undoubtedly a divergence between MacDonald's professed beliefs and the vision presented by the authorial voice in *Phantastes* on this point.

Ultimately, there is a clear similarity between the world views underlying the narratives and those expressed by MacDonald and Lewis in their non-fiction. The implied and historical authors appear to hold largely corresponding views on the topics that have been discussed, although there are some differences, both in terms of focus and more fundamentally. Furthermore, the two implied authors clearly share a similar world view, although again, they are not always in complete unison. And finally, the many similarities suggest at least some level of inspiration by MacDonald on Lewis. They are not twin souls, nor are their novels, but certainly all are fairly closely related.

Naturally, there are many more topics that could be discussed regarding the world views in these novels, than the four covered in this thesis. A deeper exploration of the philosophical and literary influences would also be a rewarding topic, given time, space and resources. However, such analyses would probably also benefit from including a broader selection of the authors' work, such as MacDonald's *Lilith* and Lewis's *Till We Have Faces* or his *Space Trilogy*, and as such, it would likely represent a rather extensive endeavour. Luckily, studies of these authors are endlessly fascinating. I can attest to that.

Works cited

Primary sources:

MacDonald, George. *Phantastes: A Faerie Romance for Men and Women*. Special Ed. Ed. Nick Page. London: Paternoster, 2008. Print.

Lewis, C.S. *The Chronicles of Narnia*. London: HarperCollins, 2001. Print.

Secondary sources:

'Anglican Communion, The.' *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*. 2nd ed. Ed. F. L. Cross and E. A. Livingstone. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1983. Print.

Augustine, Saint. *Confessions*. Trans. Henry Chadwick. Ed. Henry Chadwick. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1991. Print.

Bennet, Andrew, and Nicholas Royle. *An Introduction to Literature, Criticism and Theory*. 3rd ed. Harlow: Pearson Education, 2004. Print.

Bilbro, Jeffrey. 'Phantastical Regress: The Return of Desire and Deed in *Phantastes* and *The Pilgrim's Regress*.' *Mythlore* 28.3/4 (2010): 21-37. Web.

Blamires, Harry. 'Teaching the Universal Truth: C. S. Lewis among the Intellectuals.' *The Pilgrim's Guide: C. S. Lewis and the Art of Witness*. Ed. David Mills. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1998. 15-26. Print.

Brawley, Chris. 'The Ideal And the Shadow: George MacDonald's *Phantastes*.' *North Wind* 25 (2006): 91-112. Web.

Buchanan, Bishop Colin O. 'Anglicanism: Anglican Communion and Its Theology.' *The Cambridge Dictionary of Christianity*. Ed. Daniel Patte. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2010. Print.

'Calvin, John.' *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*. 2nd ed. Ed. F. L. Cross and E. A. Livingstone. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1983. Print.

'Calvinism.' *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*. 2nd ed. Ed. F. L. Cross and E. A. Livingstone. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1983. Print.

Chesterton, G. K. Introduction. *George MacDonald and his Wife*. By Greville MacDonald. New York: Dial Press, 1924. 9-15. Print.

Chilcott, C. M. 'The Platonic Theory of Evil.' The Classical Quarterly 17.1 (1923): 27-31. Web.

Clark, David G. *C.S. Lewis: A Guide to His Theology*. Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2007. Print.

Dalton, Russell W. 'Aslan Is On the Move: Images of Providence in *The Chronicles of Narnia*.' *Revisiting Narnia: Fantasy, Myth and Religion in C. S. Lewis' Chronicles*. Ed. Shanna Caughey. Dallas: Benbella Books, 2005. 129-145. Print.

Fisher, H. Dennis. 'C.S. Lewis, Platonism and Aslan's Country: Symbols of Heaven in *The Chronicles of Narnia*.' *Inklings Forever*. 2. (2010): 1-16. Web. 22 January 2013.

Ford, Paul F. *Companion to Narnia: A Complete Guide to the Magical World of C. S. Lewis's* The Chronicles of Narnia. Revised edition. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2005. Print.

Forde, Gerhard O. *The Captivation of The Will: Luther vs. Erasmus on Freedom and Bondage*. Ed. Steven Paulson. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2005. Print.

Gaarden, Bonnie. *The Christian Goddess: Archetype and Theology in the Fantasies of George MacDonald*. Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson UP, 2011. Print.

Gray, William. *Death and Fantasy: Essays on Philip Pullman, C.S. Lewis, George MacDonald and R.L. Stevenson*. Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009. Print.

Greenblatt, Stephen. *Shakespearean Negotiations: The Circulation of Social Energy in Renaissance England*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990. Print.

Greenblatt, Stephen. *The Greenblatt Reader*. Ed. Michael Payne. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2005. Print.

Habib, M. A. R. *Modern Literary Criticism and Theory: A History*. Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2008. Print.

The Holy Bible. London: Henry Frowde; London: C. J. Clay And Sons, 1887. Print.

Hooper, Walter. *C.S. Lewis: A Companion & Guide*. London: Fount, 1997. Print.

Johnson, William G., and Marica K. Houtman. 'Platonic Shadows in C. S. Lewis' Narnia Chronicles.' *Modern Fiction Studies* 32.1 (1986): 75-87. Print.

Lewis, C.S. *The Four Loves*. London: HarperCollins, 2002. Print.

Lewis, C.S. *The Great Divorce*. C.S. Lewis Signature Classics Edition. London: Collins, 2012. Print.

Lewis, C.S. *Letters to Children*. Eds. Lyle W. Dorsett and Marjorie Lamp Mead. New York: Touchstone, 1995. Print.

Lewis, C.S. *Mere Christianity*. London: Fount, 1997. Print.

Lewis, C.S. *Of This and Other Worlds*. Ed. Walter Hooper. London: Collins, 1982. Print.

Lewis, C.S. Preface. *George MacDonald: An Anthology: 365 Readings*. By George MacDonald. Ed. C.S. Lewis. New York: HarperCollins, 2001. xxiii-xxxix. Print.

Lewis, C.S. *A Preface To Paradise Lost*. London: Oxford UP, 1942. Print.

Lewis, C.S. *Surprised by Joy: The Shape of my Early Life*. London: HarperCollins, 2002. Print.

Lewis, C.S. 'The Weight of Glory'. First preached as a sermon, 1941, later appeared in *The Weight of Glory*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1965. This version accessed online: http://www.verber.com/mark/xian/weight-of-glory.pdf. Pdf file. 25. Nov. 2012.

Lothe, Jakob. *Narrative in Fiction and Film: An Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2000. Print.

MacDonald, George. 'The Fantastic Imagination.' Included as appendix in: George MacDonald. *Phantastes: A Faerie Romance for Men and Women*. Special Ed. Ed. Nick Page. London: Paternoster, 2008. 275-281. Print.

MacDonald, George. *Unspoken Sermons: Series I, II, and III*. Radford: Wilder Publications, 2008. Print.

Manlove, Colin. 'MacDonald and Kingsley: A Victorian Contrast.' *The Gold Thread: Essays on George MacDonald*. Ed. William Raeper. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 1990. 140-162. Print.

McInnis, Jeff. *Shadows and Chivalry: C.S. Lewis and George MacDonald on Suffering, Evil, and Goodness*. Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2007. Print.

McKee, Elsie Anne. 'Calvin, Jean.' *The Cambridge Dictionary of Christianity*. Ed. Daniel Patte. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2010. Print.

McSporran, Cathy. 'Daughters of Lilith: Witches and Wicked Women in *The Chronicles of Narnia*.' *Revisiting Narnia: Fantasy, Myth and Religion in C. S. Lewis' Chronicles*. Ed. Shanna Caughey. Dallas: Benbella Books, 2005. 191-204. Print.

Naugle, David K. *Worldview: The History of a Concept*. Grand Rapids/Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2002. Print.

Note, Nicole et al. 'Worldview and Cultures: Philosophical Reflections from an Intercultural Perspective. An Introduction.' *Worldviews and Cultures: Philosophical Reflections from an Intercultural Perspective*. Eds. Nicole Note et al. Dordrecht: Springer, 2009. 1-9. Print.

Page, Nick. Introduction. *Phantastes: A Faerie Romance for Men and Women*. By George MacDonald. Special Ed. Ed. Nick Page. London: Paternoster, 2008. 7-30. Print.

Palmer, Gary B. *Toward a Theory of Cultural Linguistics*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1996. Print.

'Plato.' *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*. 2nd ed. Ed. F. L. Cross and E. A. Livingstone. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1983. Print.

'Platonism.' *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*. 2nd ed. Ed. F. L. Cross and E. A. Livingstone. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1983. Print.

Prickett, Stephen. 'The Two Worlds of George MacDonald.' *North Wind* 2 (1983): 14-23. Web.

'Sabbatarianism.' *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*. 2nd ed. Ed. F. L. Cross and E. A. Livingstone. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1983. Print.

Salvey, Courtney. 'Riddled with Evil: Fantasy as Theodicy in George MacDonald's *Phantastes* and *Lilith*.' *North Wind* 27 (2008): 16-34. Web.

Starr, Charlie W. 'The Silver Chair and the Silver Screen: C. S. Lewis on Myth, Fairy Tale and Film.' *Revisiting Narnia: Fantasy, Myth and Religion in C. S. Lewis' Chronicles*. Ed. Shanna Caughey. Dallas: Benbella Books, 2005. 3-23. Print.

TeSelle, Eugene. 'Augustine of Hippo.' *The Cambridge Dictionary of Christianity*. Ed. Daniel Patte. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2010. Print.

Tolkien, J.R.R. 'On Fairy-stories.' *The Tolkien Reader.* By Tolkien. New York: Ballantine Books, 1966. 33-90. Print.