

An Examination of Human Psychology in The Lord of the Rings, The Chronicles of Narnia, and Harry Potter

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Abstract- This study examines selected works of fantasy literature through the prism of psychological and epistemological theories to uncover the underlying mechanisms that shape these stories. This study aims to understand how these documents influence human consciousness and contribute to changing human inner values to a more caring and anthropocentric worldview. These stories not only influenced literary criticism, but also provided valuable insight into the human mind and created fascinating imaginative experiences that encouraged readers to suspend their disbelief. Great work by J.R.R. Tolkien, K.S. Lewis and JK Rowling has several layers of meaning that contribute to its enduring significance and intellectual depth. Although these texts have been widely studied, few studies have investigated them using modern psychological approaches. To fill this gap, this study analyzes The Lord of the Rings, The Chronicles of Narnia, and Harry Potter through the theories and concepts of prominent psychologists and thinkers, including Sigmund Freud, William James, Carl Gustav Jung, Alfred Adler, Jacques Lacan, Viktor E. Frankl, and Slavoj Žižek. The selected stories are particularly suitable for psychological interpretation, as they reveal the internal mental structure of the characters and open the possibility of a psychoanalytic study of the text.

The dissertation contains six chapters.

The first chapter discusses the relationship between psychology and literature, tracing the development of fantasy literature and examining the contributions of selected writers and psychologists. The relevance of this study is also confirmed by a comprehensive review of existing research studies.

Chapter 2, "Approaching the Unconscious," explores the subject's psychological journey through Lacan's concepts of imaginary, symbolic, and real orders. It shows how readers unconsciously identify with characters and events in fantasy worlds and project aspects of their personality onto these stories. The chapter goes on to show how these three psychological dimensions influence a person's behavior and mental health.

Chapter 3, "Glimpses of Otherworlds," explores the psychological importance of time and space in fantasy stories. By exploring the structure and function of secondary worlds, this chapter highlights how fictional

worlds foster the psychological growth and development of characters and readers.

Chapter 4, "Understanding Archaic Existence," focuses on supernatural and archetypal elements in selected texts. Based on Jungian psychology, we analyze the role of the collective unconscious and archaic figures in the formation of characters' experiences and identities.

This chapter shows how different psychological types manifest as different personality structures in fantasy stories.

Chapter 5, "A Fantasy Journey," explores the influence of the superego and the concept of a tolerant society. Using archetypal imagery and alchemical symbolism, explore how fantasy stories transcend traditional distinctions between good and evil.

The final chapter concludes that fantasy and psychology have a productive and mutually enriching relationship.

Fantasy is an important aspect of the human experience, as it allows people to better understand themselves and the world around them. Through the exploration of imaginary reality, readers gain insight into the complexity of the human psyche, making the psychological journeys expressed in fantasy literature more meaningful and understandable.

Keywords- *Fantasy Literature, Psychological Criticism, Epistemological Psychology, Psychoanalysis, Human Psyche, J. R. R. Tolkien, C. S. Lewis, J. K. Rowling, Sigmund Freud, Carl G. Jung, Jacques Lacan, Collective Unconscious*

I. INTRODUCTION

The relationship between psychology and literature has long attracted the attention of researchers, as both fields are interested in understanding human nature. Psychology studies human behavior, emotions, motivations, desires, and mental processes, while literature expresses these aspects through stories, characters, and imaginary experiences. Psychoanalysis has become an important approach in literary criticism because literary works often reveal hidden aspects of the human mind.

With the development of psychoanalysis, the link between psychology and literature has been considerably strengthened. Sigmund Freud argued that creative expression arises from unconscious desires, fantasies, and hidden conflicts within the human psyche.

According to him, literary works provide valuable information about these hidden mental processes.

Freud believed that just as dreams convey repressed thoughts through images and metaphors, writers often express unconscious desires and anxieties in symbolic form. His ideas inspired critics to interpret literature not simply as a product of artistic imagination, but as a reflection of psychological reality.

Psychoanalytic criticism has moved beyond the study of authorial intentions to study artistic creativity, reader response, and the complex interplay between text and unconscious mental processes.

Literature and psychoanalysis continue to enrich each other as they explore the mysteries of human consciousness.

Freud himself recognized that poets and storytellers had discovered many truths about the unconscious long before psychoanalysis became a scientific discipline.

Therefore, literary texts often served as examples to support psychological theories, and psychological concepts offered new ways to interpret literature.

Fantasy literature occupies a unique place in this relationship because it gives form to human imagination and unconscious desires.

Fantasy, myth, and legend have been essential elements of storytelling throughout human history.

The imaginative faculty allows individuals to move beyond immediate reality and create alternative worlds populated by extraordinary beings, magical events, and supernatural experiences.

Such narratives are not merely escapes from reality; they often express deep psychological truths and emotional needs.

Throughout history, fantasy stories have helped people cope with difficult situations and social crises.

In times of suffering, conflict, and uncertainty, fantasy has served as a symbolic expression of hope, resistance, and meaning.

Although fantasy is sometimes seen as wish-fulfillment, it often functions as the voice of the collective unconscious, allowing readers to indirectly confront their fears, desires, and existential questions. Through creative symbols and storylines, fantasy literature conveys psychological experiences that are difficult to express in realistic stories.

Fantasy has its roots in ancient myths, religious stories, legends, and folk tales. Many of the early stories included supernatural elements, heroic quests, divine intervention, and magical transformations.

These stories formed the basis on which modern fantasy literature developed.

Works such as Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* introduced readers to gods, monsters, heroes, and adventures, establishing many of the conventions later associated with fantasy.

Likewise, medieval and Renaissance writers used fantasy to explore moral, philosophical, and spiritual issues.

Fantasy literature is distinguished by its ability to create worlds that are not free from reality, but free from the restrictions imposed by ordinary reality.

Such worlds allow writers to explore universal issues from a new perspective. Through imaginative settings and symbolic characters, fantasy explores questions of identity, morality, power, courage, sacrifice, and personal transformation.

These themes resonate deeply with readers because they reflect psychological issues common to the human experience.

Modern fantasy emerged as a distinct literary genre during the 19th and 20th centuries.

Scholars and writers have increasingly recognized the value of fantasy as a full-fledged literary form capable of addressing complex psychological and philosophical issues.

J.R.R. Tolkien played a pivotal role in defining modern fantasy theory in his essay "On Fairy Tales," in which he argued that fantasy has important psychological functions such as restoration, escape, and solace. According to Tolkien, fantasy allows the reader to perceive reality with new clarity and also provides emotional and spiritual comfort.

Over time, various forms of fantasy literature have developed. Some stories introduce supernatural elements into realistic settings, while others transport readers to entirely new worlds.

For example, in portal fantasy, characters enter a second world through a magical door, as seen in C.S. Lewis' *The Chronicles of Narnia*. Immersive fantasy, on the other hand, places the reader directly into another fully developed world, as exemplified by Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*. These imaginative worlds encourage readers to dive deeply into unfamiliar environments while contemplating issues relevant to their own lives.

Fantasy literature is especially important from a psychological perspective because it often draws on archetypes and symbols that originate in what Carl Jung called the collective unconscious.

Heroes, wise mentors, magical helpers, monsters, and quests are recurring patterns that appear across cultures and historical periods.

These archetypal structures resonate with readers because they reflect universal aspects of human experience and psychological development.

Modern fantasy continues to appeal to readers of all ages because it combines imaginative freedom with meaningful exploration of personal and social issues.

Fantasy is not a minor form of literature and provides valuable opportunities for self-discovery, emotional growth, and psychological understanding. By presenting symbolic representations of inner conflicts and aspirations, fantasy literature helps readers understand themselves and the world around them in profound and lasting ways.

II. APPROACHING THE UNCONSCIOUS

"Activities seem to float in a wider sea of possibilities from out of which they were chosen; and somewhere, indeterminism says, such possibilities exist, and form part of the truth."

— William James

The human mind is both vast and profoundly mysterious. Swami Vivekananda observed that the individual mind is a part of the universal mind, connected with every other mind and in communication with the whole world. While the conscious mind can obstruct the discovery of truth, fantasy opens a pathway toward it, enabling the willing subject to act from a place of secure inner conviction. Modern science increasingly supports the view that consciousness is fundamental, and that the mind — or something of a mental nature — exists independently of the body and its spatial and temporal limitations. The "make-believe" activity of reading great fantasy narratives allows readers to deal with impulses and desires they may be unaware of, compensating for the limitations and frustrations of lived experience. As Freud observed, writers possess a rare perceptiveness regarding the hidden feelings of others, and the courage to give voice to their own unconscious minds. Tolkien extended this further, calling the writing of fantasy a "sub-creative art" — a fundamentally human right, because human beings are themselves made in the image of a Maker. Jung similarly argued that the artist is the "collective man," shaping and carrying the unconscious psychic life of all humanity.

Drawing on Freud, literature allows the reader to encounter "forbidden fantasies" in a safe space, creating a productive interchange between writer and reader. Recent biology has supported Freud's insight that changing one's thinking can, at a neurological level, alter one's very constitution. Fantasy narratives, in particular, access the subconscious mind, which cognitive neuroscientists estimate governs ninety-five percent of human life. A psychoanalytic reading of fantasy therefore identifies a central or nuclear fantasy — a unifying core within the text — around which all elements interact. Tolkien articulated this as the highest form of art: fantasy combines imagination, artistic expression, and the quality of strangeness and wonder that distinguishes the secondary world from the primary one. Viktor Frankl's Logotherapy further affirms this function: fantasy as a psychotherapeutic technique assists subjects in confronting existence, dealing with values, and finding meaning beyond mere self-expression. Einstein's principle that imagination is more important than knowledge underpins this view — knowledge is limited, while imagination encircles the world.

Tzvetan Todorov's structural approach to fantasy is essential here: the fantastic arises when an event occurs in a familiar world that cannot be explained by its known laws, forcing the subject to choose between accepting a breach of reality or attributing the event to illusion. This unresolved hesitation is the defining condition of the fantastic, and it is within this space that the psychoanalytic journey of the subject unfolds. The Lacanian framework — structured around the Imaginary Order, the Symbolic Order, and the Order of the Real — provides the analytical architecture for the psychological reading of *The Lord of the Rings*, *The Chronicles of Narnia*, and *Harry Potter*.

The Imaginary Order

The mirror stage, as theorized by Lacan, marks a crucial transitional phase in the psychic journey of the subject — from reality to fantasy, from the biological to the symbolic, from the conscious to the unconscious. It is a drama of anticipation in which the fragmented subject encounters a unified image of itself and begins to construct an ego. In the chosen

fantasy narratives, each protagonist initially inhabits a state of insufficiency — helpless, uncoordinated, or displaced — and overcomes this by identifying with an "Imaginary other": Digory in *Uncle Kirke*, Lucy in *Tumnus*, Edmund in the *White Witch*, Frodo in *Bilbo Baggins*, and Harry in *Hagrid*. These mirror figures offer the subject a coherent image of itself, providing the ego with a pleasing sense of unity and direction.

In *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, Lucy's encounter with Tumnus enables her to overcome her sense of dislocation in Narnia. Edmund, entering Narnia alone, identifies his mirror image in Jadis — the White Witch — and is drawn into allegiance with her. In *Harry Potter*, the sudden arrival of Hagrid on Harry's eleventh birthday breaks him free from the Dursleys' world, and Harry clings to Hagrid as his mirror image, making inner transformation possible. In *The Lord of the Rings*, Frodo's sense of identity — his very "I" — emerges not from within but through his encounter with Bilbo Baggins, whose departure to Rivendell marks the limit of Frodo's world and sets the quest in motion. This identification with the Imaginary other is always temporary, however. The subject's captivation in the Imaginary creates a "distanciation" — a necessary alienation that makes the impossible possible, propelling the subject from insufficiency toward anticipation and eventually toward the Symbolic Order.

The Symbolic Order

The Symbolic Order governs reality through language and the network of signifiers. The subject's unconscious translates sensory experience into structure through the rules of this order, and the "big Other" — an overarching symbolic authority — shapes desire. In *The Chronicles of Narnia*, the name of Aslan functions as the supreme signifier: before the Pevensie children have ever seen him, the mere utterance of his name produces distinct and powerful responses in each of them — dread in Edmund, courage in Peter, delight in Susan, and joy in Lucy. Aslan breathes the world of Narnia into being through sound and word, making him the embodiment of the big Other. In *Harry Potter*, Harry is already inscribed in the symbolic order before he arrives at Hogwarts — he is famous, prophesied, and marked. The lightning-bolt scar on his forehead is a Lacanian signifier linking him to Voldemort, while

the Mirror of Erised reflects Harry's deepest desire and forces him into self-examination and symbolic self-knowledge.

The transformations of key characters are driven by their engagement with the big Other. Edmund's cruelty is shattered by the White Witch's savage treatment of innocent creatures; his encounter with the Other forces genuine moral change. Eustace Scrubb's self-absorption literally transforms him into a dragon — a physical manifestation of his inner state — from which only Aslan's painful and intimate intervention can free him. Neville Longbottom moves from a clumsy, overlooked boy to a figure of genuine courage through his symbolic relationship with Harry as his "big Other." In *The Lord of the Rings*, Frodo's identity is progressively built through the signifying chain of Bilbo, Gandalf, and Aragorn — each acting as a big Other who confers upon Frodo a symbolic mandate and founds his desire. Sam Gamgee, in turn, devotes himself entirely to Frodo as his own Other, his selfless service sustaining the quest. The subject's symbolic identification with an ideal element progressively removes it from captivity in the Imaginary, opening it to language, community, and the discourse of the Other.

The Order of the Real

Beyond the Imaginary and the Symbolic lies the Order of the Real — that which cannot be fully known, symbolized, or integrated. As Tony Myers states, the Real is the world before it is carved up by language; it is the residue that remains after symbolization and appears only as a gap or void within the Symbolic. For Lacan, this void — "das Ding" or the Thing — is the impossible object of desire, the core of subjectivity that can never be entirely filled. The subjects of the chosen narratives — Frodo, Harry, and the Pevensies — are all driven by the desire to fill this emptiness, yet their quests ultimately reveal that the void cannot be permanently resolved, only confronted.

Frodo's encounter with the Real is most poignant: having completed the Ring quest, he discovers that the adventurous rush of events has left an unfillable emptiness within him. "There is no real going back," he tells Gandalf. "I shall not be the same. I am

wounded with knife, sting, and tooth, and a long burden. Where shall I find rest?" Viktor Frankl's concept of the "existential vacuum" illuminates this moment — meaninglessness creates a void that superficial satisfaction cannot fill. Yet Frodo's journey also reveals the purpose that sustains meaning: his capacity for pure and incorruptible love distinguishes him as the ideal Ring-bearer and ultimate hero. Similarly, Harry Potter — despite becoming master of all three Deathly Hallows — deliberately relinquishes their power: "I was happier with mine," he says simply. His pure heart, forged through suffering, represents a power Voldemort can never possess. In *The Chronicles of Narnia*, Lucy's joy at reuniting with Aslan in the Last Battle, and her fear of being sent away, reflects the same confrontation with the Real — a longing for permanent belonging that the primary world cannot satisfy.

Žižek's formulation captures this dynamic precisely: fantasy masks and fills the void in the Other, but to truly traverse it, the subject must "go through the fantasy" — obtain distance from it, and recognize it for the structure it is. The Symbolic Order strives for homeostatic balance, but at its core remains an irreducible traumatic element — the Thing — that cannot be absorbed. The subjects of the fantasy narratives ultimately emerge from their psychic journeys having confronted this void, found meaning within it, and been transformed. As Frankl insists, humanity's primary search is not for pleasure or power, but for meaning — a meaning unique to each person, fulfillable only by themselves. Fantasy, in this sense, does not prescribe meaning, but describes the process through which meaning is discovered — guiding its subjects and its readers toward a richer, more conscious engagement with existence.

III. GLIMPSES OF THE OTHER WORLDS

"Fantasy, or Imagination, are the names given to the faculty of reproducing copies of originals once felt."
— William James

Fantasy serves as a model for understanding how the subconscious mind functions. The human nervous system responds to environmental and internal

stimuli, with the subconscious processing some 20,000,000 environmental signals per second compared to only 40 processed consciously. This vast subterranean processing gives fantasy its psychological power: it allows subjects to relocate — backward or forward in time — through the act of reading, entering an intermediate realm co-created by the active reader and the text. Though fantasy narratives contain supernatural elements, readers accept them in the moment of reading as real within that imaginative context. Sartre observed that when a writer successfully draws the reader into a world where the preposterous becomes normal behaviour, the reader is plunged immediately into the heart of the fantastic. This immersion is enabled by the Lacanian mirror stage — the subject's emergent sense of unified selfhood through identification with an image, with the Other, and through the signifiers that shape subjectivity. Fantasy's secondary worlds make this psychic transformation possible, shaped by invisible energies (as quantum physics suggests) that the mind projects onto the material world.

The Construction of Space

Every subject entering a secondary world brings a blank, undifferentiated awareness — akin to a newborn's *tabula rasa* — that gradually acquires spatial knowledge through sensory experience. William James argued that the infant's earliest experience is one of undivided vastness, from which defined objects and distances are slowly discriminated. In fantasy narratives, the subject undergoes the same process upon entering the secondary world. The space of the new world is apprehended first through sight, then through the other senses, producing an immediate sensual impression that gradually organises into recognisable structure.

In C. S. Lewis's *The Chronicles of Narnia*, portal devices — wardrobes, railway platforms, magic rings — carry characters from the primary world into Narnia's secondary space. Lucy Pevensie's first encounter with a snowy wood and a lamppost, followed by her meeting with Mr. Tumnus, illustrates how spatial orientation is built incrementally. Edmund's entry into Narnia reinforces this: the crisp snow underfoot, the pale blue sky, and the sound of

distant bells fuse visual, tactile, and auditory data into a single unified field of experience. Similarly, in J. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series, the magical intrusion into the Muggle world — owls flying in daylight, showers of shooting stars — signals the expansion of Harry's perceptual space before he ever crosses the threshold into Hogwarts. In immersive fantasies such as Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*, characters like Frodo inhabit the secondary world as their norm; nonetheless, the transition from the Shire's domestic tranquillity to the wider, darker expanses of Middle-Earth represents the same Lacanian mirror-stage expansion of selfhood through encounters with the other.

The Sense of Time

Alongside space, fantasy reconfigures the subject's experience of time. Einstein demonstrated that time is not absolute; its measure depends on who experiences it. William James distinguished between the "specious present" — the brief temporal window within which experience is felt as now — and the broader stream of consciousness that integrates memory of the past with anticipation of the future. Fantasy narratives exploit this fluidity. Time in *Narnia*, for instance, bears no predictable relationship to time on Earth: the Pevensies reign for years in *Narnia* and return to find that not a moment has passed in England. Conversely, when King Tirian calls for help across worlds, a week of Earth-time corresponds to mere seconds in *Narnia*.

Harry Potter's engagement with time is equally rich. The *Mirror of Erised* collapses present time into an obsessive past: gazing at reflections of his dead parents, Harry loses track of hours. Tom Riddle's diary in *The Chamber of Secrets* functions as a time-object preserving the past within the present, allowing Riddle's memories — and ultimately his soul — to exert living influence across decades. Hermione Granger's *Time-Turner* in *The Prisoner of Azkaban* literalises the fantasy of reversible time, enabling characters to act within the past without altering what has already happened. Tolkien handles temporal experience differently: the history of the Ring and of Middle-Earth is narrated retrospectively by Gandalf and Elrond, so that the weight of deep past presses upon Frodo's present choices. The

subjective shortening and lengthening of time — Bilbo's 111 years feeling brief in retrospect, Harry's months at Hogwarts rushing past — reflect James's principle that time filled with vivid experience seems short in passing but long in memory, while empty time drags in the moment and shrinks in retrospect.

The Two Hemispheres of the Subject

The psychic journey through the secondary world maps onto the dual functioning of the brain. The left hemisphere operates in a linear, logical, verbal mode — the domain of the Lacanian Imaginary, where the subject identifies with mirror images and follows rule-bound behaviour. The right hemisphere functions holistically and intuitively — the domain of the Symbolic, capable of moving through the signifying chain to reach the Real. Healthy subjectivity requires the collaborative integration of both modes.

Left-brain dominance, uncorrected by the right hemisphere's symbolic awareness, produces characters who become instruments of others' power rather than agents of their own becoming. Uncle Andrew in *The Magician's Nephew* exempts himself from moral rules on the authority of his own grandiosity. Professor Quirrell and Voldemort replace the distinction between good and evil with a pure calculus of power. Edmund Pevensie's desire for Turkish Delight blinds him to the White Witch's malice until reality breaks through — at which point his right hemisphere reasserts itself and he recognises his error. Gollum, warped by centuries of the Ring's possession, is the extreme case of left-brain domination: his identity has contracted to the single obsessive signifier "Precious," and he can exist only in service to the object that owns him. Draco Malfoy's inherited bigotries similarly lock him into a mirror-image of his father, reducing his range of response until experience forces him to reconsider.

Those who successfully integrate both hemispheres achieve genuine transformation. Peter Pevensie's acknowledgement of his own fault in Edmund's fall, Lucy's instinctive compassion, and Harry Potter's consistent refusal to replicate Voldemort's logic of domination all illustrate the right hemisphere's capacity for empathy, symbolic understanding, and

connection to a reality beyond the ego's hunger. Hermione Granger's ability to dismiss prejudice against giants and werewolves, and to act with self-discipline under temporal pressure, exemplifies the integration of analytical left-brain skill with right-brain moral imagination. Voldemort's failure, ultimately, is a failure of the right hemisphere: he can split his soul into Horcruxes and accumulate power, but he cannot understand the force — love, sacrifice, the willingness to die for another — that constitutes Harry's deepest resource and the Elder Wand's true allegiance.

The secondary world, in sum, is not merely a backdrop for adventure; it is a structured psychic space in which subjects confront the dimensions of space and time anew, discover the limits and possibilities of their own consciousness, and — through the mirror stage and its transcendence in the Symbolic order — move toward self-actualisation. As Tolkien wrote, fantasy does not blunt the appetite for truth; the clearer one's reason, the richer the fantasy it can sustain. It is through the other worlds that the subject comes to inhabit more fully the only world it ultimately possesses: the world within.

IV. APPREHENDING THE ARCHAIC BEINGS

Jung locates the source of all psychic life in a single, mysterious creative force that animates the universe and manifests in the individual as libido, or instinctive energy. This force does not operate through reason but through an innate drive toward growth, achievement, and compensation, the engine that Adler identifies behind every human striving. Because experimental method cannot reach the depth of this energy, Jung turns instead to the structures it leaves behind in the psyche: archetypes. An archetype is not an inherited idea but an inherited mode of functioning, comparable to the instinct that guides a bird to build its nest or an eel to find its breeding ground. It is biological before it is symbolic, and it surfaces in fantasy literature as the recurring pattern beneath each story's surface invention.

The Phenomenology of Self

Jung's 'self' designates the whole personality, conscious and unconscious together, a totality no

single symbol can exhaust though many partial images stand in for it. As the subject of a fantasy narrative passes from instinctive reaction into the symbolic order, the personal unconscious gives way to a deeper, collective layer composed of instincts and archetypes shared across humanity. The subject does not discover meaning by digging into a hidden past; following Lacan, meaning arrives from the future, through the working of the signifier, and truth emerges only retroactively, out of what first looked like misrecognition. The improbable events of a secondary world become significant in just this way, absorbing the reader's own unresolved feeling into a new symbolic frame.

Forms of Transformation

Change, never sameness, is the constant of these narratives. In the Chronicles of Narnia, transformation arrives indirectly through encounter with Aslan: the Calormene soldier Emeth, who has spent his life devoted to the god Tash, discovers on meeting the Lion that his sincerity, not his theology, was always the true object of his search; the boy Shasta is drawn unknowingly northward for years before recognizing, fog lifted, that Aslan has walked beside him the whole journey. In Harry Potter, transformation is ritualized: enrollment at Hogwarts functions as a symbolic death and rebirth available to any child with magical ability, pure-blood or Muggle-born alike, just as Eustace's release from his dragon form in *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader* is rendered as a baptismal bath. In *The Lord of the Rings*, the Rings of Power are themselves engines of transformation, less an embodiment of evil than instruments meant to remake their bearers. Across all three texts the cave, or its equivalent dark enclosure, recurs as the place of rebirth: Bilbo's escape through the lightless tunnels beneath the Misty Mountains, the Pevensies' entry into Narnia through the wardrobe, and Harry's encounter with Hagrid in the storm-battered Hut-on-the-Rock all stage the same descent into the unconscious before a change of personality can occur.

Identification of Self through Archetypes

The ego that emerges from this descent remains subordinate to the larger self, related to it as part to whole. The archetype of the spirit appears most

clearly as the wise old man: Gandalf furnishes the objective intervention Frodo's own will cannot supply, revealing the truth of the Ring and dispatching him toward Rivendell. Its opposite, the shadow, surfaces in Gollum's murder of Déagol for the Ring and again in Frodo's own failure of will at Mount Doom, proof that even an assimilated shadow can reassert itself under sufficient pressure. Aslan's lion form exemplifies the archetype of spirit expressed theriomorphically, through animal wisdom exceeding human understanding, while Narnia's onset of corruption is marked by the shadow figure of Shift the Ape. Numerical symbolism reinforces these patterns: Jung's quaternity, or fourness, as a figure of wholeness recurs in the four Pevensie monarchs of Cair Paravel, the four hobbits who found the Fellowship of the Ring, and the rule that no more than four students share a boat crossing to Hogwarts.

Representation of Self in Dream

Dreams give the unconscious its own riddling language. Harry's recurring dream of a flying motorcycle, his nightmare of a talking turban that tightens around his head like a crown, and his repeated visions of his parents' death by green light together trace a slow integration of personality, what Jungian analyst Marie-Louise von Franz describes as the mandala's ascending spiral toward wholeness. The paternal archetype surfaces concretely when Sirius is revealed as the donor of Harry's broomstick and when Harry's Patronus takes the form of a stag, his dead father's own animal shape, sustaining him through danger as a kind of inherited spiritual counsel.

Diminution and Enlargement of Personality

Where the self is dissolved rather than integrated, Jung speaks of a 'loss of soul.' Sméagol's long isolation under the Misty Mountains and his slow corruption into Gollum, and Tom Riddle's parallel descent into Lord Voldemort, driven by an inherited dread of death, both exemplify what Janet calls *abaissement du niveau mental*, the weakening of the ego under unconscious drainage of psychic energy. The opposite movement, enlargement, occurs when a personality absorbs vital content from outside itself: Bilbo's reluctant relinquishing of the Ring to Frodo, and Frodo's subsequent transformation from an

ordinary hobbit into the bearer capable of undertaking the quest to Mount Doom, show how an external signifier can elevate an otherwise modest character toward accomplishments beyond his apparent capacity.

Change of Internal Structure and Group Identification
Structural change appears when characters adopt a wholly new persona: the Pevensies become Kings and Queens of Narnia at the Narnians' insistence, and Harry inherits an ancestral, protective magic through his mother's sacrificial love, carried bodily as the scar on his forehead. A separate, collective form of transformation occurs when an individual merges into a group experience, as in the Narnian army assembled under Aslan, Dumbledore's Army, and the combined forces of Rohan and Gondor. Such groups can elevate an individual, as battle temporarily raises the unremarkable Giant Wimbleweather and the mouse Reepicheep into figures of consequence, but a large enough crowd risks sinking to the level of unconscious mob psychology, evident in the Calormenes' fevered devotion to the god Tash.

The Psychology of Individuation: Eight Functional Types

Jung's typology of extraversion and introversion, crossed with the four functions of thinking, feeling, sensation, and intuition, offers a framework for reading character across the three narratives. Peter exemplifies extraverted thinking, his judgment formed by external counsel, especially Professor Kirke's, and directed toward Narnia's collective good. Lucy and Jill represent extraverted feeling, subordinating private will to devotion to Aslan even when, as with Lucy's lapse into eavesdropping by magic, that devotion requires correction. Edmund's arc traces extraverted sensation, his early susceptibility to the White Witch's sensory seduction giving way to a hard-won loyalty proven in battle. Harry embodies extraverted intuition, his attention fixed on external signs and visions, from the Mirror of Erised to the prophetic content of his dreams, that orient him toward his eventual confrontation with Voldemort.

On the introverted side, Andrew Ketterley's solipsistic absorption in magic's personal utility,

indifferent to Narnia's living wonder around him, marks introverted thinking, as does Boromir's rigid conviction that the Ring should serve Gondor regardless of the Council's judgment. Susan's quiet withdrawal from Narnia into adult preoccupations and Luna Lovegood's unshaken inner conviction despite constant ridicule both exemplify introverted feeling, a depth of private feeling that the world rarely sees directly. Shift's self-styled identity as 'a Man' ruling over Narnia's animals and Peter Pettigrew's craven self-preservation in rat form both illustrate introverted sensation, an inner reaction so disproportionate to the outer stimulus that each loses any honest relation to it. Finally, Bilbo's enduring private fixation on adventure and on the Ring he no longer carries, and Digory's intuitive quest for the healing apple that links the Earthly wardrobe-tree back to Narnia, both exemplify introverted intuition, perception directed toward inner rather than outer objects.

Conclusion

Individuation, in Jung's sense, is the gradual integration of these one-sided tendencies into a more complete self, achieved only through encounter with the archetypes the unconscious supplies. Viktor Frankl's insistence that meaning is detected rather than invented offers a fitting close to this reading: the archetypes of the collective unconscious are not mere self-expression but something a person, or a reader, discovers already waiting. No prior knowledge of myth is required to take part in this discovery. Each of these fantasy texts extends the same invitation, asking the reader to submit, as their characters do, to the transformation the archaic beings make possible.

V. TRAVERSING THE FANTASY

Modern science increasingly converges with older spiritual intuitions that human beings are energy beings inhabiting a physical body, and quantum physics now treats invisible phenomena, thought and belief among them, as more determinative of the physical world than matter itself. Freedom, historically the privilege of a single sovereign while everyone else remained unfree, proves on Hegelian terms to bind even the ruler, since his authority exists only through his subjects' recognition of it. Self-

consciousness works the same way: knowledge of the self cannot arise in isolation but only through dialogue with something foreign, an Other, in a relation Hegel frames as desire and Lacan restates more starkly: the subject's desire is always the desire of the Other. Each character's psychic life in these three narratives is accordingly inseparable from a deeper, shared unconscious that Jung calls collective, the same substratum from which every character-type emerges and through which fantasy's strange worlds achieve coherence.

Permissive Society

Each secondary world, Middle-earth, Narnia, and Hogwarts, is governed by an internalized superego, an all-pervasive moral authority that, in Jung's terms, derives its compelling force from numinous primordial images rather than external coercion. The Ring, Narnia (embodied in Aslan), and the Horcrux serve as the central symbolic systems organizing meaning within each world. Aslan, the true king and creator of Narnia, is at once terrifying and good, a paradox the Pevensie children confront on first meeting him and that the Beavers explain by insisting he is not a tame lion; he appears in different proportions to different observers, growing larger in apparent stature as a character's own understanding matures. Sauron's One Ring, by contrast, embodies the symbolic system of evil, concentrating a portion of his own soul and intended to enslave the nine Men who received lesser Rings, transforming them into the spectral Nazgûl; only Gandalf refuses its temptation outright, recognizing that wielding it would corrupt even his own goodness. Voldemort's Horcrux serves an analogous function in Harry Potter, an object housing a deliberately split fragment of soul that inverts the wholeness Hogwarts otherwise cultivates in its students. Whatever its source, each world's superego dictates the moral terms by which its inhabitants act, in keeping with the principle that the severity of an inward authority is matched by the submissiveness it demands outwardly.

Delineating the Opposites

Jung's claim that psychic opposites generate the tension necessary for psychic energy frames the moral architecture of all three worlds. Good and evil

are not symmetrical: evil, as Ricoeur argues, is the darkening of an antecedent goodness rather than its independent rival. The One Ring's fire-forged nature dramatizes this ambivalence directly, scorching Isildur's hand on contact even as it later cools into apparent ordinariness; flame, as a symbol, carries both divine and demonic associations at once. Isildur and Déagol, the Ring's first bearers after Sauron, both die soon after taking possession of it, undone by a desire the Ring itself seems to intensify, while Bilbo and Frodo encounter it with comparatively innocent indifference, a difference of character that allows their wills to outlast, however narrowly, its corrupting pull. Gandalf and Saruman, both wise-old-man figures within the Order of Wizards, split into light and shadow versions of a single archetype, Saruman's vast learning curdling into pride and a covert desire to possess the Ring for himself. Among the Fellowship, Legolas's quiet competence and Boromir's eventual lapse, his attempt to seize the Ring from Frodo followed by immediate remorse after he is mortally wounded, dramatize the same tension between disciplined and undisciplined desire. In Narnia, Digory Kirke and Polly Plummer witness creation itself: Aslan sings Narnia into being, his voice waking trees, beasts, and waters into consciousness, while Uncle Andrew, unwilling to credit what he sees, hears only roaring and growling, deaf to the same revelation that delights the children. Jadis and Digory's parallel temptation in the garden of the Tree of Youth, in which Jadis steals its fruit for herself while Digory obeys Aslan's instruction instead, replays the same divide between a selfish and a submissive relation to the numinous object. Later Narnian history continues the pattern: the usurping Telmarine king Miraz, the Calormene cult of the demonic Tash, and the lone loyal dwarf Poggin amid his disillusioned kin each restate the tension between corrupted and incorruptible response to authority.

In Harry Potter, Tom Riddle, embittered by his Muggle father's abandonment, murders his own family and remakes himself as Voldemort, an anagram concealing the name he has discarded; his hatred of Muggles and obsession with blood purity drive him toward Horcrux-making, an act readable as an unconscious compensation for an unbearable fear of death. Neville Longbottom's arc runs the opposite

direction: humiliated and underestimated through his school years, he draws courage from Harry's example and ultimately destroys Voldemort's last Horcrux, evidence that the unconscious can summon nobility as readily as cruelty. Dumbledore, whose capacity for love his obituary praises, stands as a Great Mother figure offering Riddle repeated chances at redemption, while Quirinus Quirrell's confession of having traded belief in good and evil for power alone shows how completely a host can be possessed by what it serves.

Psychology and Alchemy

Jung reads alchemy not as failed chemistry but as a symbolic language for transmuting base instinct into something more complete, a process whose goal alchemists called the lapis, or philosopher's stone. The Ring, Narnia, and the Horcrux all occupy this position within their respective worlds, objects that unite opposites and give the unconscious external, workable form. Each is simultaneously a potential instrument of catastrophe and the medium through which certain characters internalize meaning, becoming, in Jung's phrase, living philosophical stones themselves.

Water recurs throughout the three narratives as the alchemical and Jungian symbol of the unconscious and of the Great Mother, the element through which characters are figuratively returned to the womb before rebirth. Bilbo's plunge into the dark, water-bound tunnels beneath the Misty Mountains where he finds the Ring, Isildur's death in a river after the Ring slips from his hand, and Déagol's discovery of the same Ring while half-pulled underwater by a fish all stage the descent into water as a passage that can kill as readily as transform. The Pevensies' arrival in a Narnia frozen by the White Witch, whose slow thaw under their presence marks the world's rebirth, Eustace's plunge through a painted seascape onto the deck of the Dawn Treader, and the Dursleys' storm-battered island hut on the eve of Harry's eleventh birthday repeat the same pattern of a watery threshold crossed into a transformed state of being.

The individuation each narrative dramatizes is, in Jung's vocabulary, the gradual integration of ego and shadow into a more complete self, a process several

characters undergo only by first risking identification with the shadow itself. Edmund and Eustace in Narnia, Neville in Harry Potter, and Samwise Gamgee in *The Lord of the Rings* each pass through such a risk before recognizing, and disowning, their own darker impulses. The same opposition recurs collectively: the Nazgûl and Orcs, the White Witch's forces and the Calormene empire, and Voldemort's Death Eaters each constitute a collective shadow whose inflated, god-like self-image licenses domination of others. Against this, Aslan's voluntary death at the Stone Table, Gandalf's death and rebirth as Gandalf the White after his fall in Moria, and the protective sacrifice of Harry's mother all function as a redemptive countermovement, an offering whose cost makes possible the eventual reversal of each world's darkest hour.

This recurring structure, in which the lapis (Ring, Narnia, Horcrux) becomes the single site where good and evil are at once concentrated and divided, echoes a far older theological pattern: a figure who descends into the depths to overturn death from within, present alike in the Christian account of Christ's harrowing of hell and in the Quranic image of God leading the faithful out of darkness into light. Across all three narratives, the unconscious psychic event that escapes ordinary conscious awareness finds its most concentrated symbol in these unifying objects, through which each story returns its characters, and its readers, to the same elemental contest between darkness and the light that proceeds from it.

VI. SUMMATION

Literature has long served as a repository of psychological insight, even though only a small number of readers approach it with the intent of tracing that insight to its source. Georges Poulet observed that the act of reading allows a text to take on a life of its own, becoming, for the duration of the encounter, a mind aware of itself. Approached this way, literature functions almost as a disciplined inquiry into the human psyche, with psychological theory supplying the framework against which the text can be tested. Freud's account of childhood play is instructive here: a child who outgrows play does not abandon the pleasure it provided but redirects it

into daydream and fantasy. Jung extended this insight into adulthood, arguing that the second half of life turns attention inward, prompting individuals to search for or construct meaning. Paulo Coelho's warning about abandoned dreams, which fester and eventually turn a person's cruelty against both others and the self, belongs to this same lineage of thought. Fantasy literature occupies a distinctive place within this tradition because it does not merely describe the workings of the mind but offers readers a way of applying that understanding to their own lives, often without their being aware of it. The objection that fantasy is simply another name for dream, and therefore resistant to literary judgment, misses the way fantastic elements operate: layered with multiple meanings, they engage the psyche playfully, and it is precisely through that play that fantasy converts narrative material into something psychologically meaningful, slipping past the mind's usual defenses to achieve indirect expression and release.

Underlying this entire project is the conviction that human beings possess an inbuilt sense of purpose together with the capacity to deliberate, believe, and choose. Lacan's account of the self as a construction sustained by the symbolic order, the shared system of communication and the rules that govern it, is central to understanding how this capacity operates. Identification, in Lacan's terms, takes two forms: an imaginary identification with the image we find likeable in ourselves, and a symbolic identification with the vantage point from which we imagine ourselves being observed and judged worthy of love. Fantasy, understood this way, is less an escape from reality than a kind of cognitive architecture, a structure of imagination so fundamental that even technological invention depends on it; the tablet computer, for instance, can be read as the fulfilment of an old fantasy of scrying or crystal-gazing, in keeping with Tommaso Campanella's remark that technology looks like magic until it is understood, after which it is absorbed into ordinary science.

No single theory of literature has ever achieved lasting consensus, and it is in the space left by that absence that competing psychological frameworks have flourished. Jung's observation that the unconscious, once given voice, tends to disclose its

most intimate contents in the smallest details, points to why symbol and pattern recur so persistently across narratives. The tension between a universally shared psychic inheritance and the irreducible particularity of each individual is itself a Jungian theme, and it bears directly on how fictional characters should be read: not as inventions detached from human reality but as expressions of it, made possible by the same biological capacity for language and symbolic communication that Chomsky located in an innate, unchangeable foundation of the mind.

Fantasy narratives, in this light, become instruments through which readers come to understand themselves and others, working out their relationship to reality while remaining, for the duration of the reading, essentially unconscious participants in that process. The same impulse that drove philosophers to question the very possibility of certain knowledge, culminating in Descartes' methodical doubt, is what ultimately secured the mind's existence as the one thing immune to that doubt. Myths and symbols carry an evocative force that ordinary discursive argument cannot match, because they give direct access to primordial feelings, some shared across cultures and some intensely personal, and a failure to take such symbolism seriously, whether in the Judaeo-Christian image of God, the Oedipal pattern, or Jungian archetypes, leaves out factors that shape human life well beyond the reach of rational analysis.

Psychoanalysis itself has never settled into a single fixed theory; each generation of analysts has revised earlier formulations in light of new clinical experience, prompting Jack Novick's remark that psychoanalysis ceases to be itself the moment it stops questioning its own assumptions. Fantasy literature shares this same restless commitment to human freedom, since it takes the well-being and growth of the individual as its central concern, leaving no domain of being untouched by its address. Lacan's tripartite division of psychic experience, the Imaginary, the Symbolic, and the Real, provides a way of mapping the territory of fantasy literature, from the restricted register of self-awareness, through engagement with the collective Symbolic Order that makes subjectivity possible in the first place, toward the elusive and ultimately unreachable Real.

This framework clarifies the moral architecture of the three narratives at the centre of this study. No character, however self-aware, can step entirely outside the symbolic order that produced it, yet some characters, Lucy and Peter Pevensie in *The Chronicles of Narnia*, Harry Potter and Hermione Granger in the *Harry Potter* series, Frodo Baggins and Samwise Gamgee in *The Lord of the Rings*, manage extraordinary acts of goodness despite this constraint. The law governing such characters is alignment with a benevolent ordering will; the law governing their opposites, Sauron, the White Witch, and Voldemort, is the attempt to make themselves the centre of the universe, an ambition that produces only strife and insecurity because it is fundamentally unsustainable. Narnia turns on children from our world being drawn into conflicts that only the lion Aslan can ultimately resolve; Harry Potter follows its protagonist through escalating confrontations with the dark wizard Voldemort; and *The Lord of the Rings* follows the Fellowship's attempt to destroy the Ring forged by Sauron in the fires of Mount Doom, the only means of ending his threat to Middle-earth.

Even characters with some history of complicity in evil, Gandalf, Puddleglum and his companions in Narnia, Neville Longbottom in the Potter books, are capable of redirecting their energies toward constructive ends once their attention turns to helping others take responsibility for their own beliefs. Frodo, the Pevensie children, and Harry each reach a settled stability not by avoiding contradiction but by working through their own uncertainties and reversals, a pattern that recurs across the chosen races in these worlds: Frodo and Gollum among the Hobbits, Digory Kirke and his uncle Andrew Ketterley among the human visitors to Narnia, Neville Longbottom and Draco Malfoy among Hogwarts' pure-blood wizards. In each pairing, the secondary world functions less as an escape from reality than as an interpretive mirror of it, and the deciding factor between the two paths is whether a character remains honest with themselves, since conscience, understood as a check on unrestrained desire, channels the ego either with or against the prevailing direction of the symbolic order. The parable of the sower, in which seed falls on path, rock, thorn, and good soil with correspondingly

different results, captures this variability of reception with unusual precision.

Where characters fail to reconcile what they profess with what they feel, the failure is rarely a matter of deliberate deceit. Edmund Pevensie's early betrayal under the White Witch's influence and Frodo's claiming of the Ring at Mount Doom both stem from an involuntary gap between conviction and impulse, a gap Caroline Leaf's work on epigenetics helps to explain: habitual thought patterns physically alter the brain's wiring and condition future thought, word, and action. In both cases, resolution comes only through the intervention of others, the other Pevensie children for Edmund, Samwise Gamgee for Frodo, echoing the biblical injunction to choose life over death, blessing over curse. A related pattern appears in characters whose inherited convictions calcify into pride: Draco Malfoy's contempt for those of impure blood is modelled directly on his father Lucius, the Calormenes' ritual deference to their Tisroc borders on superstition, and Prince Rabadash's arrogance is severe enough that Aslan transforms him into a donkey before restoring him on the condition that he abandon it. Jung's account of projection, by which unconscious material is displaced onto external persons or situations and can be reintegrated once its origin is recognised, offers one way of reading Rabadash's strange cure.

Taken together, the three narratives dramatise life as a continuing dialectic between good and evil, played out within a psyche structured by the Imaginary, the Symbolic, and the Real. Because human beings retain the freedom to imagine, they retain the capacity to create, and because that capacity is rooted in the unconscious, it carries within it the potential for both good and evil alike. Fantasy narrative earns its place in this study precisely because it is synthesised with the unconscious rather than merely describing it from the outside, and it is this synthesis that keeps the genre open to interpretation, offering, across each retelling, a renewed lesson in the transformative reach of the unconscious mind.

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