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Abstract: This essay analyses the propagandistic nature of C. S. Lewis' *The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* in order to refute the misinterpretation that sets children's literature as naïve and plain. Framed in the context of the Cold War, this propaganda focuses on pro-Britain and anti-communist messages aimed at supporting the idea of Britain as a hegemonic power. Through a multidisciplinary approach involving Myth Criticism and Cultural Studies, this paper revises the concept of myth as a tool for propaganda. In doing so, it proposes a structure which has been termed "Meta-Meta-Mythic Structure." This includes three interconnected levels of Myth which sustain and advertise each other. These levels consist of a Modern Myth (Britain's hegemonic power), a Fallacious Myth (Britain as paladin of democracy and freedom), and Classical Myths (the biblical myth and the hero's journey). The analysis of Lewis' novel deals with the projection of the classical myths as conveyors of the fallacy, reaching the child-reader's unconscious and conditioning their perception and understanding of the world. As a result, the dissolution of propaganda through the Meta-Meta-Mythic Structure will be proven effective.

Keywords: C. S. Lewis, *The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, children's literature, Myth, propaganda, Cold War.

Maya CARAVELLA CASTILLO

**The Chronicles of Propaganda: Hegemony, the Paladin,
and the Christian-Hero's Journey.**

0. Introduction

This paper analyses the propagandistic elements in C. S. Lewis' *The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* (abbreviated *LWW*). Published in 1950 and framed by the Cold War, instances of pro-Britain and anti-communist propaganda are explored in an attempt to cast light over the misinterpretation of children's literature as simplistic and naïve. That its content is ideology-free is generally taken for granted. In this regard, the author deals with this literary genre – and with the aforementioned work – to reveal it as a powerful and effective conveyor of the dominant ideology that, as it will be demonstrated, is meant to perpetuate the idea of Britain as a hegemonic power, precisely at a time when it was being challenged.

The paper begins with a brief overview of the historical context which surrounds the novel: British decay in opposition to the rise of the USSR, and the former's response through a positive promotion of self-image. Such overview will be followed by an examination of the concept of propaganda as a means of transmission of an ideology. This ideology is considered to have been created inside an abstraction which is a deviation from reality. This essay refers to this deviation as a Modern Myth that is inherently ideological. The Modern Myth is then analysed as the object of a process of Meta-Mythification. This requires different Myths working simultaneously in order to create a complex web which facilitates the dilution of the already mentioned ideology and therefore its perpetuation. The complex relationship among myths is summarized in a structure which this essay terms "Meta-Meta-Mythic Structure."

The applications of this schema may vary regarding the object of study. In this case, a historical episode – the role of Britain in the Cold War – is taken to explain the reasons that led the country to take sides in the conflict. By spreading propaganda through the crafting of myths, political actions were justified and promoted. The paper's structure is divided into three levels, according to the definitions professor Losada has recently developed in depth:

1. Modern Myth – Britain is a hegemonic power. There is an inaccurate representation of reality sustaining British understanding of the world. It can be considered the main reason why the UK got involved in the Cold War, since the unsustainability of this idea became apparent after WWII.

2. Fallacious Myth – Britain is the paladin of freedom and democracy. In order to justify confrontation with a previous ally, Bevin's government spread the image of Britain as a superpower.

3. Classical Myth – based on three ideas: a) Britain is Christian and therefore "good." Communism is the Devil and therefore "bad", b) the figure of Christ's sacrifice is associated with Britain's own struggle to protect the well-being of the country and the hope of regeneration, c) Britain sets out on a heroic journey to save the world from a fatal enemy.

This sequence is applied to the analysis of the cultural life of Britain in an attempt to understand how propaganda was used to spread the Fallacious Myth. The validity of the Meta-Meta-Mythic Structure would be correct if the Classical Myth is properly assimilated beyond its

superficial meaning — establishing unconscious associations so as to contrive a certain understanding of the world, thus assimilating the fallacy as truthful. Consequently, the Modern Myth would be protected and reinforced, rendering the propagandistic campaign successful.

In terms of methodology, the revision and reading here articulated blend Myth Criticism and Cultural Studies. On the one hand, this essay will attend to José Manuel Losada's definition of myth criticism, which suggests that it is meant to reach the transcendental level behind myths by taking into consideration their sociocultural and ethical dimensions, presupposing moral values and conducts related to the dominant actor(s) (12). Accordingly, to unmask "what appears as natural as a social construction which favours a particular class or group in society" (Watkins 35) will be the main task of the cultural critic. In order to explore the propagandistic nature of literary texts, myths will be considered as a conveyor of ideology, requiring both approaches to analyse them. The effectiveness of this method will be tested on Lewis' novel, extracting the Classical Myth – in this case the biblical myth and the hero's journey – in parallel to the contemporary fallacy.

The term "Meta-Meta-Mythic Structure" has been coined in this paper taking into consideration Levi-Strauss' "The Structural Analysis of Myth," where he analyses myths as the sum of different constituents, considering that myths could be equally built from and influenced by other myths, and vice versa (431). The different levels are borrowed from Losada's definitions of Myth, Modern Myth, and Fallacious Myth. In order to justify these ideas, this essay refers to the "Theory of Hegemonic Stability" and Grunberg's approach of it as a Myth – which includes biblical associations with hegemony – and Campbell's "monomyth," as discussed in his work *The Hero of a Thousand Faces*.

1. Historical context: Falling and Rising Hegemonies and the Development of Propaganda

In 1945 World War II came to an end and Western hegemony was challenged. Britain was in ruins, facing severe economic crisis, and in need of restrictive financial policies to rebuild the country and resist the growing expansion of the USSR in Eastern Europe. These circumstances caused Britain's international positioning to be questioned.

This rising of the USSR and the spread of communism was becoming "increasingly obvious" (Ovendale 234). The control of the Mediterranean was one of the key goals of the Soviet Union, and undermining Britain became a valuable side effect – with no access to the markets, the territory would be likely to fail in its recovery. Aware of the imminent threat, the British Government had to take measures to prevent the growing influence of the USSR over Europe. This, together with the acknowledgment of their "worsening economy and declining position as a world and imperial government" (Defty 32) led them to focus all their efforts in the "projection of British power and achievements through propaganda" (32).

In 1947, the Prime Minister Clement Attlee claimed that "to successfully repel communism" they ought to go beyond a mere discredit campaign and "add a positive appeal to Christian and Democratic principles" (Rubin 80). This required the projection of a healthy, vigorous image of the world order they wanted to maintain, one which highlighted the "self-confidence, discipline, morale and community spirit" of their own people, acting as "champions of a

dynamic faith and way of life" (Defty 46–47). Such positioning would lead the Parliamentary Under-Secretary, Christopher Mayhew, to present the so-called "Third Force": a propagandistic policy of comparison against communism, once more relating to Christian values and strengthening the idea of a positive rival ideology (69). Thus, rather than a campaign founded on the Soviet flaw, they would praise and celebrate the United Kingdom as its antipode. Instead of the expectable 'capitalism vs communism,' the Cold War became one of proposing Christianity as the only optimal option to "reconcile the rights of the individual with the demands of society and bring happiness and peace to humanity" (229) before "Soviet's anti-God religion," which meant "the entire subjugation of the individual to the State" (230).

2. The Meta-Meta-Mythic Structure: Definition, Application to the Analysis of the Cold War and its Influence in the Making of *The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*.

In order to analyse the propagandistic elements of *The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* (hereon LWW), this essay looks for the mythological footprints which, as far as this essay is concerned, were used as an ideological tool by the system.

To begin with, it is important to set a correspondence between propaganda and myths. This essay will work with four categories of myth: first, the Myth – purposely capitalized – functions as an umbrella term that involves the other three. Widely commented on and criticized, their meaning will be extracted by recalling different authorities such as Levi-Strauss identification of the Myth with a translation of reality, referring to it as a part of language which he relates to the formula *traduttore, traditore* (430). Accordingly, Professor José Manuel Losada, in *Nuevas formas del mito*, explains: "deformación de una realidad, percepción deformadora y ambigua de un grupo determinado sobre una realidad" (195) – meaning that myths in themselves are distortions of reality originated by the biased and ambiguous perception of a group. Myths are also analysed in light of their social role, stating that they are "the unifying language of the collective unconscious" (Payne 38). Finally, Michael Payne establishes that this unifying language would derive into a unity of thought founded on the monomyth; as a result, readers would be responsible for transferring the mythical "harmonious vision of the world" (43) to the real one.

All this considered, the concept of Myth might be outlined as a shared human representation of the world which, dependant of human subjective perception, lacks accuracy. Let us now examine it alongside an excerpt of the definition of propaganda in the *Britannica Encyclopaedia*: "a more or less systematic effort to manipulate other people's beliefs, attitudes, or actions by means of symbols." Besides, it establishes that it has "a specific goal or set of goals" that are achieved through the deliberate selection of "facts, arguments, and display of symbols" ("Propaganda").

With these ideas in mind, it could be said that a Myth can be an argument and, in this case, a symbol for propaganda. Owing to their capacity to condition the unconscious and determine the perception of the world, myths can serve these manipulative purposes. Nevertheless, this process of giving shape to common thought involves a complex system of Myth that can support and justify each other, integrating inter-connections. I have termed this

a Meta-Meta-Mythic Structure, here illustrated through LWW in the context of British participation in the Cold War.

2.1. The Meta-Meta-Mythification of the Cold War

Before delving into its structure, as mentioned above, this essay identifies three types of Myth, attending to Losada's specifications in *Nuevas formas del mito*:

a) Modern Myth: Losada explores the concept of modern myths as a result of their socio-cultural context. He considers them integrated within history and able to explain contemporary times, while legitimizing political regimes and conveying a set of moral values for a given group (12). In this sense, he states the inconvenience of analysing independently myths and the ideological deviations of modern times: "No es posible desarrollar esta tipología de manera ingenuamente aséptica, es decir, sin explorar simultáneamente las desviaciones ideológicas que los tiempos modernos proyectan sobre los mitos" (189). In his essay "Tipología de los mitos modernos", Losada recalls the definition of Myth as a deviation of reality, asserting the social and historical influence as the main source of such deviation in the case of the Modern Myth. This process drives Myth-consumers to life in "la *doxa* del mito" (196), building an image of the mystified world that they themselves have created in their subconscious: myths are not reality but a blurred version of it (199).

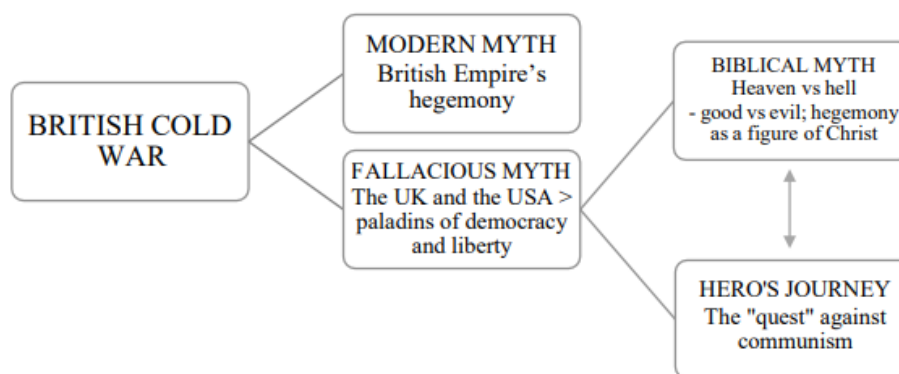
b) Fallacious Myth. Nowadays, there is an abundance of Myths identified with falsity and lying (206) caused by what Losada refers to as a "catarsis metafórica" or metaphorical catharsis; that is, a lexicalization or semantic translation which the word 'myth' has suffered due to its overuse.

c) Classical Myth. A definition which may be attached specifically to the Classical Myth is found in Losada's "Nociones de terminología mitocrítica." The term Myth, which this paper relates to the Classical Myth, is addressed as a structurally simple pre-textual story of an extraordinary episode with an archetypal and animated subject. This episode lacks historical testimony and is associated to a conflictive (requires a test), functional (conveys a social structure), and etiological nature (refers to a particular or universal cosmogony) (24).

Considering the above, we may now go deeper into the subject matter of this section: the Meta-Meta-Mythic Structure. In "The Structural Study of Myth," Levi-Strauss comments on his technique for the analysis of myths. The anthropologist states that when looking for the meaning of each myth, it is important to take into account the relation among its constituents (431). These constituents are divided in two categories: on the one hand, those units shared with language such as phonemes, morphemes, and semantemes; on the other hand, those considered to "belong to a higher order, a more complex one," which Strauss names "*gross constituent units*" (431). He declares: "The true constituent units of a myth are not isolated relations but bundles of such relations, and it is only as bundles that these relations can be put to use and combined so as to produce a meaning" (431). Bearing this in mind, this essay considers the possibility that Myth could not only be the sum of minimal constituents but, at the same time, it could be a part – or the whole – of other myths. If the meta-linguistic function allows the modification of the linguistic aspects of the Myth and therefore the reader's perception of the world, the Meta Meta-Mythic function would work similarly: the Myth inside the Myth which explains it. This is the third dimension – the Meta-Meta-Mythic Structure I propose.

The present paper applies this structure to the analysis of narrative fiction in relation to Britain's role in the Cold War, considered necessary to protect and maintain the image of the country as a hegemonic power. This idea of British imperial hegemony is established as a Modern Myth. To ensure it, the participation in the conflict is justified, and the country is considered to rely on the development of a Fallacious Myth: the United Kingdom as paladin of liberty and democracy. Finally, it is established that this fallacy is equally supported by two traditional Myths: the biblical myth and the hero's journey, which are interconnected. These Classical Myths are equally used as propaganda, providing a heroic and benevolent image through close examples which the public knows and receives through culture. As a result, the fallacy becomes fixed in people's unconscious, transforming their understanding of reality, and eventually perpetuating the Myth of British hegemony.

The following ideogram has been developed to illustrate this idea:



Having provided a general overview of how this Myth Structure is employed in the mid-20th-century conflict, each level shall be farther explained, giving reasons why each historical reference is related to the corresponding Myth.

2.1.1. British Hegemony: A Modern Myth

In his work, *Imagined Communities*, Benedict Anderson formalizes "nation" as an imagined concept. According to him: "It is *imagined* because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, ... yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion" (5). To such a superficial degree, the British Nation could be conceived as a Modern Myth. Yet to round off such impression, this essay intends to fathom Losada's emphasis on the deviated nature of the Modern Myth which, according to him, is neither accurate nor objective (198–199) but an imaginary deviation (202–203). As far as this paper is concerned, there are several 'deviations' which might be recalled when referring to the Myth of British hegemony.

A paradox in history may be considered a proof of the deviated nature of reality, for if a fact were unquestionably true and not a product of human perceptive knowledge, there would be no room for contradictions. In *The Break-Up of Britain*, Tom Nairn lists some of these paradoxes which may challenge the immense, self-appointed power of the British Empire. In comparison to later empires, Nairn highlights that neither in its industry like Germany, nor in the militaristic capability like Italy, France and Portugal, the United Kingdom was especially

notorious (22). Equally, he notes that “the pioneer modern-liberal-constitutional state never itself became modern” (22). Whereas Europe started an open war against absolutism in favour of capitalism, the UK presented the weakest of the efforts (30), remaining halfway between feudalism and modernity—the British Parliament remained divided into two: the House of Lords (directly chosen by the monarch), and the House of Commons (elected through the vote). Furthermore, such apparent modernity is contradicted even in the spread of values: for instance, even though enlightened ideology became incompatible with the traditional state, the English middle class remained passive about a potential social revolution and therefore values such as “high social mobility, individualism, [and] egalitarian openness” (31) were discarded in favour of an archaic system. All this considered, Nairn concludes that “in reality” the British state was the product of the conservative and dominating capitalist class: a “mythology [which] has been an important ideological arm of the state itself” (14).

It is noteworthy that any Dickensian novel could serve as an example of the decadent reality of the United Kingdom and the British Empire in the 19th century, which has paradoxically gone down in history as one of the greatest political eras in the country’s history, to the point of being recalled with some sort of nostalgia, which is usually associated with golden ages in political Myths (Grunberg 468). The key point here lies in what has been largely commented about Modern Myths: the Victorian Age, framed within an imperial context, became part of the race for colonization among European countries. In order to justify the economic waste that occupation involved while settling their international role as a worthy competitor against significantly more powerful empires, the British government had to manipulate reality, making use of a “vast amount of popular fiction and journalism” to sustain it (Seaman 379). Consequently, the hegemonic power of the United Kingdom was advertised and praised by fixing an ambiguous and misleading image of the world (Losada 203).

Already a part of the collective imagination, the Myth of British hegemony impacted farther political theories which have been analysed for years. In her criticism of the “Theory of the Hegemonic Stability,” Grunberg warns about the influence that many writers working on the theory have received from a “complex web of images and narratives, at once coherent and multifaceted” (450). She insists on understanding it as a [Modern] “myth” – as the title of her essay “The Myth of Hegemonic Stability” suggests; built up from other “relevant myth, beliefs, and archetypes” (459). Other authors such as Kindleberger, Gilpin and Krasner agreed on their understanding of the UK as a “hegemon that provided stability and encouraged liberalization in the international economy” (Webb and Krasner 183).

According to this theory, as Grunberg purports, the perpetuation of traditional regimes is portrayed as a necessity for the insurance of worldwide stability:

The Theory of Hegemonic Stability basically holds that cooperation, and a well-functioning world economy are dependent on a certain kind of political structure, a structure characterized by the dominance of a single actor. Dominance by a hegemonic power constitutes the optimal situation for ensuring and maintaining an open and stable world economy. (431)

Applied to the subject matter of this essay, this idea helped Britain to keep popular opinion on their side because any policy, however dubious, would be justified for the sake of the common good. Because British hegemony had to be protected at any cost, the country eventually got immersed in the Cold War.

2.1.2. Paladins of Democracy and Liberty: A Fallacious Myth

"The Myth of Hegemonic Stability" suggests that the "rise of an empire or the collapse of an actor is just a disruption of the natural order" (Grunberg 430). In this sense, the rising of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, an aggressively expansive power, represented a direct attack against British hegemony, compromising both its stability in relation to its international position, and its credibility: according to Jennifer Lily's work, "Dismantling Communism," one of the uttermost dangers of communism was its influence on the process of socialization (65). Hence, if Soviet ideology reached citizens' unconscious, the whole system of the Modern Myth would fall apart, for their acknowledgement of Britain would radically change.

Measures had to be taken to ensure the permanence of the Modern Myth. The victory bells ringing still echoed in British ears when Churchill announced the new enemy to be defeated from the mid-40s onwards. However, a morally and economically devastated United Kingdom could not endure a new armed conflict – thus the Third Force Propaganda campaign began. As previously discussed, the propagandistic policy was determined to stop the inroads of communism through the praise of British values. Appropriating the defence of freedom and democracy, the United Kingdom – hand in hand with the United States – became the self-appointed paladin of Europe. The fallacious nature of this statement may seem evident; this essay, however, will consider two fundamental factors to uphold this assertion.

On the one hand, the mere existence of 'propaganda' itself contradicts the idea of 'democracy.' After World War II, many governmental agencies directed to the manipulation of public information were dismantled, for they were deemed too close to totalitarian regimes. In his overview of the British anti-communist propagandistic campaigns, Andrew Defty reports:

State Department Officials considering that maintaining such a capability [propaganda apparatuses] would be contrary to the fundamental premise of our own Governmental system and would be honouring the totalitarians [USSR] by imitating them. (32)

Nonetheless, this consideration was soon overcome by the British government. The scholar goes on to add that "[F]aced with a worsening economy and declining position as a world imperial power, the Labour Government place considerable faith in the projection of British power and achievements through propaganda. (32)

At this point, there was a conscious effort to manipulate people's perception of the facts. Propaganda was moreover meant to "provide an illusion of strength and confidence in favour of the government (Defty 33). Additionally, the whole imperialist campaign in appraisal of the British Empire denies both claims regarding freedom and democracy. In their attempt to persuade citizens of the sins of the Soviet Union, Ernest Bevin depicted its advance as a "new kind of imperialism" which, in opposition to the cooperative nature of the British's, "threatened the welfare and way of life of other nations of Europe" (Bevin 79). Basing this argument on

the indirect power exerted over their colonies, the British Empire was praised to be a "less confrontational" form of domination (Lange 5). Still, it was a 'form of domination.' In fact, contemporary research on the empire has proven that although the colonies were ruled by indigenous administrations, it was the United Kingdom that selected them according to their disposition to cooperate with the metropolis (31). The fact that this information has been so blatantly overlooked confirms the titanic propagandistic effort that the British government made, so that the fallacy managed to substitute reality in people's unconscious.

2.1.3. Heaven vs. Hell, the Sacrificed State and the Quest Against Communism: a Classical Myth

The Modern Myth should not be considered independent from classical myths, since the former are constructed in parallel to the later (Losada 205). Thus, in dealing with the mythical dimension of the Cold War, it is important to refer to those explored in this essay. As it has been already mentioned, the myths employed to justify the British foreign campaign against communism are the biblical myth and the hero's journey. The Theory of Hegemonic Stability traces the influence that the Bible has had as "the great code of Western civilization" (Grunberg 464). In this sense, the hegemonic power associated to a "slain saviour" (466) is idealized and considered a figure of Christ which is willing to sacrifice itself for the sake of the weakest. Grunberg defines this character as "The picture of a powerful persona 'giving itself away' and becoming weaker through an outflow of resources (investment, credit, currency, technology, and military aid) to the benefit of others" (453).

Overall, Grunberg considers hegemonies as "agents of mediation and social cohesion" (457) that keep the unity and stability of the system (475). Therefore, they are granted the right to perform any action that is conceived to protect such equilibrium. In "Exploring the Myth of Hegemonic Stability," Grunberg defines a system of theorems with which she supports her idea of hegemony as mythical. In Theorem A (the benevolence argument), the author explores hegemonies as inherently benevolent (452). Such an idea results in two conclusions. On the one hand, any given decision shall be naturally positive, beneficial, and morally correct. On the other, any nation with a disparate system of government would be regarded as bad, corrupt and threatening. In the context of this essay, 'goodness' is related to Christianity, assembling the values of freedom and democracy which Britain insisted on representing while facing the Soviet Union as its antithesis. The 'Christian' island was the only optimal option to "reconcile the rights of the individual with the demands of society and bring happiness and peace to humanity" (Smith 229), in contrast with the "Soviet's anti-God religion" whose doctrine meant "the entire subjugation of the individual to the State" (229). Its anti-secularism was taken to threaten even the free will with which God had awarded His creation (230) and so the defeat of these evil forces was required for the sake of a supposed freedom. As a result, a metaphorical modern Crusade was undertaken.

Let us now turn to Campbell's monomyth, which explains in detail the stages the hero must overcome in his journey. The so-called "Call to Adventure" introduces the challenge or quest that the main character must go through (Campbell 34). In this regard, the hero has been chosen to perform this task and he must respond accordingly. The notion of having a moral obligation to participate in a conflict is found in Churchill's approach to the Soviet threat:

"It would be criminal madness to cast it adrift in this still agitated and un-united world" (Churchill, "The Sinews of Peace"). Through this speech, a national compromise against antagonistic forces was required and the mythic "quest" materialized.

The efficiency of the Meta-Meta-Mythic structure applied to propaganda is derived from Robyn McCallum and John Stephen when they state that: "The ideology implicit in quite simple texts, usually in the form of assumed social structures and habits of thought, can be a powerful vehicle for affirming that 'this is the way that things are' " (363). In this case, the ideology of British propaganda is diluted twice within other texts: first, from the fallacy to the Classical Myth, and then, from the Classical Myth to the literary text – *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*.

2.2. The Mythification of *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*.

With the Meta-Meta-Mythic Structure in mind, it could be stated that classical myths are a fundamental part of the British strategy to maintain the Modern Myth of their status as a hegemony. The latter works as a systemic tool which, if applied to literature, becomes a most effective conveyor to the people. Depending on its correct exercising of propaganda, people's exposure to it could be more or less successful.

It has been stated that this kind of ideological transmission would be effective as long as it remained implicit rather than explicit, leading to unconscious assimilation. Therefore, rather than outspoken campaigns against the USSR, the use of myths that subtly convey these meanings seems logical. Taking into account the capacity of Myth to construe the world, it could be said that literary texts, which are inherently mythological (Losada 23) have the same effect—especially among children, who enjoy a "privileged perception unattained by culture" (Sarland 48) and are, therefore, the most convenient receptors of propaganda. Their understanding of the world would be shaped according to a subliminal ideology and, while growing up, this would be reinforced and perpetuated.

First, in order to make children reject foreign ideologies, literature had to turn them into an enemy to be feared. *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* is a clear example of this: it only takes three chapters for the reader to realize that Narnia is subdued to a totalitarian state ruled by the illegitimate White Witch. Hence, Lewis creates a huge polarization between The Queen/Evil and Aslan-Pevensies/Good, which would be identified with the Soviet Union and Britain, respectively.

The "devilish" characteristics of the antagonist are easily observed. According to Mr. Beaver, the queen is daughter of Adam's first wife, Lilith (Lewis 42); and she impersonates several Deadly Sins such as Wrath and Pride: "She also was covered in white fur up to her throat and held a long straight golden wand in her right hand and wore a golden crown on her head" (15). What is more, she tempts Edmund with the forbidden fruit – Turkish Delight – which makes him fall from grace and symbolically forget the British values that, as a child, he was imbibing. This is seen in the following quote: "Edmund tried to remember that it is rude to speak with one's mouth full, but soon he forgot about this and thought only trying to shovel down as much Turkish Delight as he could" (Lewis 17). The youngest brother impersonates the fear that communism would "poison the minds of the people, particularly of innocent children" (Lilly 74) and be systematically used to fulfil "its selfish purposes" (32).

The queen's totalitarianism is easily extracted through different examples. First, Mr. Tumnus may impersonate a victim of Stalin's Great Purge, intended to eliminate traitors of communism. The faun is introduced as an agent of the regime who, for lack of freedom, is obliged to capture any Son of Adam or Daughter of Eve once they arrived in the land. Afraid of the consequences, the creature is willing to trap Lucy; remorse, however, leads him to help her escape through the wardrobe in spite of the spies who have Narnians in an absolute state of paranoia: "[T]he whole wood is full of her spies. Even some of the trees are on her side" (9). Unfortunately, Tumnus is arrested for "High Treason against her Imperial Majesty Jadis, ... also of comforting her said Majesty's enemies, harbouring spies and fraternizing with Humans" (30), and finally turned into stone which could be interpreted as a representation of the Gulag, where some prisoners were forced to mine.

Another example appears in the eleventh chapter, when the Queen finds a gathering party where a group of Narnians enjoy the evening with plenty of food. Full of rage, the Queen asks: "What is the meaning of all this gluttony, this waste, this self-indulgence," to finally turn them all into stone (Lewis 61). This episode may suggest an allusion to the American defence of capitalism, and therefore democracy and freedom: the western power assumed that spending money was synonymous of celebrating life and having "a barbeque in the backyard surrounded by friends, neighbours and kids" was a right which communist ideology may put at risk (63).

It is meaningful that the author deploys narrative resources which prevent the reader from totally detaching from reality. For instance, rather than land or kingdom, Narnia's inhabitants use the contemporary term "country" (Lewis 6, 19, 43, 44). Modern technology such as the lamppost, or Mrs. Beaver's kettle and sewing machine, is also featured; and finally, constant narrative comparisons between England and Narnia which include: "The noise was like an English fox-hunt only better" (93), "the Horse part of them was like huge English farm horse" (67). Through this, despite being transported to Narnia, neither the protagonists nor the child-reader leave Britain completely. The fact that Lucy keeps the door of the wardrobe open (2, 3) could be a symbolic representation of the connection between the two worlds.

Once the antagonist has been established, this essay will proceed to analyse the hero – or heroes. In the case of *LWW*, even though an unequivocal protagonist is found in the Pevensies – a group of four British siblings, still children, magically transported to Narnia – the role of Hero is transferred from Aslan to them once the conflict is over. Complementary characterizations of Britain, the lion may be interpreted as Old Britain, whereas the Pevensies could be seen as the project for a New Britain – the future queens and kings of Narnia.

Opposed to the "devilish" queen, Aslan is likewise easily identified with Jesus Christ for multiple reasons, the most important one would be his willingness to sacrifice himself for the kingdom's salvation. To free Edmund from his debt with the Witch, Aslan sacrifices himself. Parallel to Christ's Passion, chapter fourteen replicates the prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane that Jesus performs in company of some of the apostles, who follow him after the Last Supper (Matthew 14:32–52); similarly, Lucy and Susan follow Aslan when he goes into the forest to encounter Jadis. After being mocked and tortured – the lion is tied up and gets his "golden mane" (67) cut – Aslan is killed to consequently resurrect, putting an end to Evil in Narnia.

Aslan could be further said to embody Britain – more precisely Old Britain, meaning the British Empire. In relation to this, Mr. Beaver says: “He’s the Lord of the whole wood, but not often here, you understand. Never in my time or my father’s time” (41). Recalling colonialism, it seems that Aslan replicates the idea of the distant governor in the motherland. However, whenever needed, he answers the call.

What makes Aslan a Hero accords with Campbell’s definition of the character itself. The critic describes it as “a personage of exceptional gifts. Frequently he is honoured by his society” (Campbell 35). Nonetheless, the lion plays the role of the archetypical Mentor as well, he is the one “who provides the adventurer with amulets against the dragon forces he is about to pass” (63); that is, a supernatural aid which provides the hero with knowledge to overcome the Journey. In *LWW*, Aslan teaches Peter to manage an army: “[Y]ou must put your Centaurs in such and such a place or you must post scouts to see that she doesn’t do so-and-so” (Lewis 77). Through his actions, he becomes a role model of values such as sacrifice, honour, justice, and strength.

The Pevensies are identified with the main characters, yet their role as actual “heroes” is not so clear. The novel starts: “Once there were four children whose names were Peter, Susan, Edmund and Lucy. This story is about something that happened to them” (1). Sent away because of the air-forces – Lewis includes an explicit reference to the Operation Pied Piper – the siblings find themselves in a circumstance where lack of authority is found “perfectly splendid” (2). In the absence of their parents, the characters can explore and behave as they wish, free from strict rules and manners. Meeting the orphans, the reader is moreover exposed to the rejection of rules and a huge discomfort around adults: “Just as if any of us would want to waste half the morning trailing round with a crowd of strange grown-ups!” (26). For this reason, the Pevensies are not good role models. They are distanced from the “hero” label because: first, dealing with the influence of literature in children in *Understanding Children’s Literature*, Sarland infers: “[C]hildren’s books construct children both as characters and as readers,” proving that children identify with the protagonists in novels and build their identity and world based on them (Sarland 48). Usually, children prefer mimicking the Hero and thus the character must be exemplary.

The prophecy which Mr. Beaver introduces to the children continues as follows:

When Adam’s flesh and Adam’s bone
Sits at Cair Paravel in throne,
The evil time will be over and done. (Lewis 42)

The meaning of this prophecy is likely to be mistaken: this rhyme, although related to the end of the White Witch’s tyranny, refers to “evil” in its most general term. The children grow adults in Narnia and become Kings and Queens of the land. It is specified that: “At first much of their time was spent in seeking out the remnants of the White Witch’s army and destroying them, and indeed for a long time there would be news of evil things lurking in the wilder parts of the forest” (97).

According to this, it may be inferred that the Pevensies were meant to fulfil a greater task: the final defeat of evil. Therefore, in order to succeed, they need to go through a psychological

experience that offers them the necessary tools: the hero's journey. Such is the reason why, in the battle against the Queen, they are soldiers rather than commanders. However, after Aslan's sacrifice, Peter and Edmund are tested in the battlefield – they must guide the troops and prove their value by themselves. To win the battle, Edmund sacrifices himself and faces the Witch, despite the possibility of getting injured or even dying (95). He has learnt from Aslan's sacrifice, and it is now that he – and all his siblings – can become Kings and Queens. They have obtained the access to illumination and knowledge – the Elixir to restore the order and apply it to their original world (Campbell 228). They are heroes now.

After their journey, these children who rejected authority become authority – or adults. They have overcome the oppression of an 'undemocratic' government and, even though they recover their child-like appearance upon returning to England, their minds are already set to recognize tyranny and fight against it to achieve a final "world-historical, macrocosmic triumph" (35). A triumph that would be sought by the reader, too – in fact, Lucy, Peter, Edmund, and Susan are never named in the prophecy. Instead, they are included in the general term: Sons of Adam and Daughters of Eve, to which any boy or girl could relate.

In the end, the Pevensies participate in a battle which had little to do with them for the sake of sympathy towards a damaged land. They fight for the recovery of ancient Narnia, a memory of greater times which they never knew – an image, a Myth. Equally, if the propagandistic campaign succeeded, together with the proper association of goodness/Britain vs. evil/communism, children in the 1950s would develop a sense of duty towards their own country. Born in the postwar era, they were raised in a decadent world that was nurtured with nostalgia. Mirroring the Pevensies, they would become soldiers of the heroic state which fiercely battled against those who wanted to subject their country's way of life and values, while looking for an ideal: the Modern Myth which entailed wealth, stability, and security.

3. Conclusion

The premise on which this paper rests is that myths are inherently ideological. In this respect, McCallum and Stephens agree when defining ideology as a "system of beliefs which a society shares and uses to make sense of the world and which are therefore immanent in the texts produced for children," specifying its social function in "defining and sustaining group values" (360). And, as it has been said, they draw special attention to its implicit application, concluding that the more diluted the ideology, the more efficient its assimilation (360).

In addition to this, Sarland comments on the naïve nature which has been attached to children literature. Values such as family, friendship, heroism, integrity, honesty, freedom, or intelligence do not create any controversy nor objection – *LWW* is a popular example of it, usually understood as a fairy tale. Such unproblematic "liberal humanist discourse" belongs to those values which all good members of society are meant to learn in order to become a part of it while ensuring harmony and stability, and are therefore identified as "common sense" (Sarland 43–44). The subsequent quandary, though, is suggested by Sarland. The critic avers that language is a device construed by dominant ideological formations – i.e., capitalist discourse including class division, paternalism, sexism, and racism. If literature employs that same language, then children's books would enculturate the child into this discourse (52).

As far as this essay is concerned, children's literature may well be as complex as adult's literature. This has been discussed through the analysis of *The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, an example of the propagandistic dimension that literature may unwittingly contain, drawing a complex system of interrelations among different myths, all summed up in the Meta-Meta-Mythic Structure. In a nutshell, this overview provides an explanation of the reasons why the United Kingdom got involved in the Cold War. The structure is applied to explain the workings of propaganda, which was systematically employed to ensure Britain remained a relevant hegemony by transforming reality through the deformation of facts and the conscient construction of abstract ideals.

However, the dilemma of Britain derives exactly from this abstraction. Its weakness was exposed after World War II devastated the country. Centred on securing its hegemony, they relied on a Modern Myth which from had been a deviation of reality from the start – the British Empire as sufficiently strong to compete against other European colonial powers. This was enlarged into a greater Myth – the hegemonic power of the late 19th century. Because of the advances of communism, hegemony was threatened and so Third Force Propaganda started. It brought back the fallacious values which had already been exploited during colonialism, recovering their position as paladins of freedom and democracy. Accordingly, a symbiotic relationship among these first two levels of the structure appeared: to ensure the durability of the Modern Myth, the fallacy was created, at the same time as it appealed to the reader's feeling of nostalgia over a dubious and systematic construction.

To effectively apply propaganda, the cultural background knowledge of the British was targeted: hegemonic power was related to the Bible and the hero's journey. Regarding the former, this essay limits itself to the dichotomy good/evil, Heaven/Hell, Christianity/atheism to refer to the relation between "us" and the "Other," alongside the identification of the Britain with Christ, who willingly gave Himself away to bring salvation, a new life, and second opportunity to rise from their ashes avoiding the mistakes of the past. Having assimilated these values and morals, a wide majority of the country may have acquired the means to protect its well-being. Of course, the direct consequence was the perpetuation of the system.

This chain of Myths, after reaching the unconscious, is echoed in literature and dissolved in their plots until it is virtually invisible. Thus a series of associations are infused in the reader who, aware of their historical context, would use them as foundations for their daily organization of the world. As a result, culture would become a container of these ideological features, getting to potential readers who would suffer an equal experience, reinforcing the fallacy and, therefore, the Modern Myth.

LWW similarly disguises this ideology. First, it praises Christian values as opposed to atheism, which left the land of Narnia under the rule of a tyrannical regime. It then provides several parallelisms which add a third element of association: it is not only that Aslan is associated to Christianity and the White Queen to the Devil, but also that Aslan represents Britain and Jadis, the Soviet Union – reproducing the relations made by the Third Force. Finally, using children as main characters, the readers would easily identify with them, experiencing a parallel psychological Journey that would take them to acquire the proper knowledge to succeed: that is, the values of "self-confidence, discipline, morale and community spirit" (Defty 46) that were highlighted by Bevin's Government to eradicate the influence of communism –

which could otherwise demolish the preexisting knowledge of the world and therefore the image of a hegemonic United Kingdom would collapse.

The intention of this essay is by no means to ascribe any specific aim to the author of *The Chronicles*, C. S. Lewis. The idea of an *unconscious* assimilation is constantly highlighted for that matter. Born and raised during British late years of imperialism, Lewis was educated on the fallacy which preceded the Modern Myth discussed in this essay. He is a victim of the system's willing manipulation of reality for the sake of dominance and therefore the values, knowledge, and overall subconscious realm of the writer would be driven by it. Consequently, as an agent of culture, Lewis would transfer these ideas to *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, among other books. Its danger remains that the novel is specifically directed to children who are yet uncultured, open to absorb any information which may help construe the world. That being the case, this process most likely took place through the assimilation of the values of the dominant power, which would be reinforced and endlessly perpetuated.

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