

The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe

There is a contrast between Narnia (nation) and Narnia (world), how does this affect their status?

For 100 years, the White Witch ruled a human-free Narnia, despite the existence of other human kingdoms – a state of Cold War? It says later that Aslan has other countries to attend to when he leaves Narnia in peace. Does he mean worlds or nations? And does he lead them in the same way?

Indeed, 2 is the opposite of 4, because humans have been wiped out in 2 and the mythic beasts in 4.

The White Witch is regal but definitively feminine. She is capable of utilising soft power. Sometimes that power is Turkish crack. The description of Turkish Delight, or as my Greek Cypriot friend calls it, Greek Delight, is very similar to crack cocaine or heroin.

Peter and Susan first try to lead as surrogate parents but don't do a great job of it.

BUT Peter is very quick to bring Lucy onside when it's clear she's right he's wrong.

The White Witch is a proud character who is concerned with outward appearance.

Even the name of Aslan has power, it brings fear to his enemies and inspiration to his friends. He is quickly named by Mr. Beaver as King, Lord, Lion and Son.

Aslan is a very temporal Lord. They don't speak of him in especially Spiritual terms.

Key: 'He isn't safe. But he's good.'

The White Witch is described as a cross between a Demon (specifically as descending from Lilith), a Jinn and a Giantess. Of course 1 suggests she's an Alien.

Edmund's thoughts on ruling Narnia are infrastructure, industrialisation and neutralising the rival leadership of Peter.

The Witch is quick to use violence against Edmund who is a loyal follower.

Aslan – good and terrible, with overwhelming eyes.

Peter takes responsibility for what has happened. He is a natural fighter.

The Witch is part of the system of magical law in Narnia – which is inscribed on both the Emperor's Sceptre and the Stone Table – analogous to the Tablets of Law, which in Christianity are suggested to have a version in Heaven as well as Earth (which I wasn't sure about, but similar to the Islam thing with the Koran). The Trunk of the World Ash Tree, a Viking concept, is

the third place it is written. Or at least, was. Blood must be shed for traitors. So is loyalty the highest law in Narnia? And how far is the Witch's ambit in prosecuting this – she identifies more with an Accuser archetype than some devilish depictions, even as an angel of death. To kill Edmund is the will of the Emperor, that is probably acceptable, but that the Witch should undertake it is strange.

Aslan is swift to train Peter in war, that is the key element of leadership which he passes on.

Aslan, as a messiah, must go to death that seems defeat and proves triumph. The resurrected Aslan is bigger. He is described as simultaneously a kitten and a thunderstorm.

Peter is martial enough to go hand-to-hand with the White Witch. Edmund isn't, but he is cunning enough to focus on disabling her wand at the cost of himself.

Prince Caspian

Edmund has the capacity to sense magic.

Peter figures out where there are in time very quickly.

The Telmarines took over Narnia like Normans from the West. How soon after the Golden Age? About a thousand years. Halfway between we hear of the beautiful human queen Swanwhite – did they just get an Archenland fellow? They successfully conquered because of a dearth of humans. It's almost biological competition. A different take on the anti-industrialism of Tolkien? There was no successful mythical resistance. Caspian I, the invader, started a genocide/ethnic cleansing of the mythical creatures.

What makes Caspian X the worthy prince is twofold. One, a human must lead Narnia, that's the rules. Two, he has faith in a time of faithlessness. He doesn't get overtaken by what I'd characterise as repression and propaganda more than scepticism – the Telmarines are superstitious, not materialistic.

Even in his youth, Prince Caspian leads the disparate Old Narnians. There are mistakes that come from the diversity – it is similar, again, to different cultures. Dwarves, talking animals, Greek legends the main groupings.

Each of the Four Children knows how to use their specific skills to inspire Trumpkin, who is a cynic.

Peter has at this point failed to learn Rule One of Narnia Club, which is Lucy is always right.

Aslan says that he doesn't do things the same way twice.

He asks a lot of Lucy. As they draw near to him, they are altered towards their Narnian (true?) forms. Later it says 'a kind of greatness hung upon [Edmund]' and that he would be unrecognisable on Earth.

He makes Bacchanalia safe but not sanitised.

He acts in his own timescale. In the meantime, his followers are to act in their own way.

Peter has the power to delay the battle. He knows the lordly way to address another king, to use rank (and to quote Hamlet). It is a political, PR message. They choose what to send and who to send it.

'Miraz is no very great captain' – he has failed to keep his 'supporting' lords onside, and they believe they can rule in his stead. Miraz is easily manipulated by their reverse psychology.

'There is death in the strange knight's face'

Peter can appease the groups, perhaps better than Caspian. Then again, he had a lifetime of practice.

Aslan recalls a fearsome army.

Peter can focus on victory over glory in the duel.

Aslan's gathering is a resurgence of chaotic joy, freeing children from teachers and teachers from children. It is anti-rules, anti-oppression, anti-boredom and lassitude.

Aslan's test to see if Caspian is ready to lead Narnia? He asks 'do you feel ready?' and Caspian says 'no'. Right answer.

The mice who freed Aslan became talking mice. The descendants of these mice were those led by Reepicheep, and they loved him so much they would cut off their tails so he had no shame.

At the feast after the Second Battle of Beruna, Aslan and the Moon gazed at each other all night.

Telmarines were descended from South Sea Islanders and Pirates, and filled up an empty land.

Voyage of the Dawn Treader

Diggory is keeping an eye on Peter, but somehow lost his house.

Lewis cross-references That Hideous Strength by saying that the Four are the Once and Future Kings of Narnia, and that Arthur should return to Britain as soon as possible.

Caspian, older and wiser, knows how to handle the arrival of Edmund and Lucy. He even has their gifts.

Caspian jousts well but is a bit shallow in his rejection of the Duchess of Galma.

Bern is noble but limited.

Caspian will stop corruption even if not strictly necessary. Yet this small act sets up tension with Calormen that might even lead to The Last Battle.

Reepicheep, via the medium of Chess, shows he is brave but not a great strategist. He thinks too small.

'It cannot be told in his words because after September 11 he forgot about keeping his diary for a long time.'

The Pevensies and Caspian would never leave Eustace behind despite him being a something or other.

The dragon is the representation of Eustace's internal state, and dragons feed on other dragons. Thus to not be dragonish is to be co-operative, not predatory.

Lucy is brave, she will even kiss a dragon with boiling tears.

Reepicheep is able to see that Eustace is becoming humble and not his enemy, and will do what he can to comfort him with Ecclesiastes-style tales.

No moon, but moonlight around Aslan. Inspires great fear even in Dragon! Eustace 'And I knew I'd have to do what it told me,' speaks without speaking, leads him deep into the mountains. He takes him to a garden atop a mountain, where there is a well. Aslan tells him to undress, and tries to claw off his skin – i.e. to change his own nature. But he recognises that only Aslan can do it:

'The very first tear he made was so very deep that I thought it had gone right into my heart... it hurt worse than anything I had ever felt.' He casts him into the water and it hurts but then it heals. He becomes a boy again. Aslan clothes him in new clothes.

This passage seems to me to resemble Lewis's journey the most closely.

Edmund to Eustace: 'You were only an ass. I was a traitor.'

Reepicheep can get over his bloodlust for long enough to figure out how to stop the Sea Serpent.

Edmund can use an authoritative voice.

But both him and Caspian are suckered by Goldwater, and it takes the hugest appearance of Aslan to scare them out of their avarice.

The Chief Voice of the Dufflepuds has their unquestioning support, even when he does stupid things. They seem like a Swiftian satire on consensus management, they agree always, but on fatuous things.

Lucy is tempted to do something rather alien to her, and not threaded through the book as it is in the recent film, to become a Helen of Troy figure who destroys all of Narnia and then her own family. She succumbs to know what her friends think of her, and it hurts.

Aslan plays by his own rules, and not in a maverick sense.

To rule by wisdom is better than to rule by magic.

'I call all times soon' 'you can't keep him'

At Dark Island Aslan takes another form for the first time: An albatross

The King's loyalty to his subjects, to serve them, must come before even the noblest adventures.

At the end of the world Lamb!Aslan invites them to breakfast.

He is transdimensional or at least incarnated in various parallel universes.

The Silver Chair

Eustace and Jill are the first to go intentionally to Narnia, by invoking Aslan. But Aslan was calling them first, and that is the only to call upon him.

He invites her to drink from the only stream. He has swallowed Emperors and Realms.

He gives J four signs before sending her off, that she must remember. Why does he bring them to his country and not Narnia itself?

They fail at Aslan's instructions (no surprises). But they won't fail outright.

What is Aslan doing in Terebinthia that draws Caspian away?

The Green Witch sends them to Harfang, and she again is a soft power enchantress, still softer than the White.

They encounter one of the signs, the inscription in the earth, and Jill doesn't recognise it despite Puddleglum's prompting. This leads them into great danger.

Aslan smells sweet, consistently. Polymodal goodness. He speaks to Jill of the letters in the earth in a dream.

"Aslan's instructions always work: There are no exceptions."

Not only are they at risk of being eaten, their failure to follow the signs leads to cannibalism.

The only comfort in the Deep Realm is that they are now following the signs.

Rilian is a distortion of princeliness. He tries to convince them that the sign 'Under Me' was an accident. Puddleglum does not believe in accidents, when it comes to Aslan.

The Black Knight supposedly changes into a serpent after becoming murderously angry, and supposedly only the Green Witch can help him. Furthermore, part of breaking the curse involves him and the gnomes conquering an Overland.

'Aslan didn't tell Pole what would happen. He only told her what to do. That fellow will be the death of us once he's up, I shouldn't wonder. But that doesn't let us off following the sign.'

Rilian acts pretty diplomatically to the woman who had enslaved him.

The Green Witch uses incense and a mandolin to enslave. She tries to erase the very ideas that oppose her. Just like the White Witch, she quickly gets angry. She has a contingency plan that

destroys the entire Deep Realm just out of spite.

The seemingly evil Earthman were oppressed by her also. They were called out of the paradisiacal land of Bism.

The Northern Witches desire Narnia.

Aslan does not scold, they did his work. Caspian is in his country, he asks Eustace to drive a thorn into his paw, which resurrects him. They greet one another passionately.

The Horse and His Boy

They are surrounded by lions which brings them together.

The gods of Calormen (at least one of which is real) are more impressive than agreeable.

The Kings of Narnia know how to surround themselves with wise counsellors.

New Aslan-form: Cat mode. He roars away the jackals and comforts Shasta as a cat.

The Tisroc is a very very powerful man, his empire dwarfs that owned by Narnia and Archenland combined, though they are at naval parity. He believes in the value of commerce and the free market. They knew how dangerous the Witch was, and therefore how much more dangerous Aslan-backed the Four are. He makes dry quips similar to Vespasian about the cult grown around him. He creates a no-lose situation – either Rabadash his eldest is killed and ceases to be a risk, or he gains Archenland and possibly Narnia.

Aslan turns up again to motivate them. He claws Aravis's back.

When Shasta finally speaks to Aslan, rather than fleeing, he is compelled to tell him everything. Aslan explains how he made sure Shasta was at the right place at the right time. He refuses to explain why he scratched Aravis because that's her business.

"Who are you?" "Myself. Myself. Myself."

Shasta falls down at his feet, and after a while, he swirls away. As Shasta wonders if it was a dream, his footprint remains.

Lucy is more warlike than Susan. BUT she doesn't compromise her femininity. Martial $\neq$ male.

Shasta sees how precariously his path was and how Aslan's guidance protected him.

'Is he a lion?' 'No, of course not.' Bree considers Aslan to be a non-corporeal God, whereas his big deal is incarnation. 'More beautiful and more alarming than any lion that had ever seen' 'I am a true beast.' Bree was a gnostic.

The scratches on Aravis were the wounds received by the one she tricked to make her escape.

'Never taunt a man save when he is stronger than you.'

Rabadash refuses to accept the mercy of the Kings, and is thus turned into an Ass. He is granted that he will be turned back if he goes to the Temple of Tash, whom he invoked. His reign that followed was peaceable because he could not stray far from Tashbaan and he kept the

Tarkaans under close watch.

The Magician's Nephew

Lewis suggests that both Sherlock Holmes and the Treasure Seekers (one of Lewis's main inspirations – indeed, Calormen is supposed to be an homage to The Story of The Amulet) are around in his fictional Earth. A great deal of syncretism within the books – the origin of the rings is Atlantean, and the material was brought into our world at its beginning. The material is from the Wood between the Worlds. The structure, in space (multiverse linked by the Wood) and time (recurrence of travellers entering dawning worlds), is part of Aslan's plan.

To get to Jadis, there was a lone decline and fall in the goodness of Charn's rulers. Her near ancestors were murderous tyrants who punished rebellious thoughts. She used the Deplorable Word more from spite than necessity – she waited until she could look her sister in the eye.

Creation by a song – very similar to the Ainulindalë in the Silmarillion. As each part of the world is created, it joins in the song.

The Witch feels only the urge to destroy in response to the song. She tries to kill Aslan the first chance she gets.

Thought and speech fall on the gathered animals like fire.

The first event is a joke, of which Aslan approves.

Aslan cannot be bargained with. He makes plans. He loves justice. You can deafen yourself to his voice. Aslan can move between the worlds at will.

The witch flees to the North – the Green must come from her. Her daughter, her spawn.

The Last Battle

Shift – cleverest, ugliest, and had lived to the far West for a very long time. He manipulates and uses Puzzle. It's quite crude manipulation really, some passive aggression and talking down. And he doesn't care at all for Puzzle's wellbeing. Actually, this fits very well with Lewis's theory of evil – that evil is petty. The devil himself, in Perelandra, is really quite immature.

It's not clear how much Shift plans his deception. He notices it when Puzzle is wearing the skin, but he must have thought it when he first saw the lion. In those late times, Shift does note that Aslan has not been seen. And he supposedly wants to set Narnia to rights.

Young King Tirian does not like the pomp that surrounds royalty. He values peace and friendship. Him and Jewel have both had time to be 'in the wars'. The signs point to Aslan's return – even a Calormene merchant has said him to be there. The Stars have told a Centaur, however, of ill omen and the False Aslan. The stars, being sentient, are somewhat different from our stars. The King is, as so many are, a bit rash.

In a way, Aslan's unpredictability is his weakness – the Narnians believe it might be him and they might be mistaken in their misgivings.

Again, there's a Tolkienian similarity here – the Lantern Waste has been industrialised. The first crime of the False Aslan has been felling holy trees.

The False Aslan is called a 'black sun'

Shift is ridiculous in his attempts at glory. He is controlling access to Aslan very closely. (At this point it seems like it's a reference to the Soviet Union – selling the people into Calormene slavery and taking the money to use for the greater good in Aslan's treasury. He is Orwellian in his redefinition of freedom).

Tash receives human sacrifice. Indeed, this is considered the great contrast – Aslan pours out his blood, Tash receives poured out blood. So to suggest they are one and the same isn't really liberalism or universalism. It's madness. And this is what breaks many Narnians from their doubt. They will believe a lot of lies about Aslan but not this one.

Tirian cries the same prayer that the animals are saying to the False Aslan. But he remembers that Aslan and children of Earth come together to save Narnia. He prays that even his life he would lay down to bring them, and this carries him, a spectre, to Earth. Only he and Caspian have seen Earth of all the Narnians.

The Professor had a feeling they were needed. One imagines he has been planning and thinking for a long time. They retrieved the rings but Eustace and Jill never used them.

The False Aslan is quickly rescued from his oppression. But it is not enough to reveal him – the Dwarves have been too much abused. And to say 'he is not a tame lion' is no longer helpful.

Everyone is betraying each other – Ginger and Rishda, both atheists of their own sort, want to get rid of Shift.

Tash is a skeletal four-armed vulture, that floats. Life is crushed around it.

It is almost inquisitorial – Jewel was to be executed for not saying that the False Aslan was true.

The children are only summoned by Aslan for times of trouble. Narnia's history is primarily peaceful.

The most cunning of cats, Ginger, is turned animal by Tash.

Emeth, the kindest of Calormen, desires to see the face of his God, and argues with those cynically using both gods. He disappears, but is not killed.

Shift is cast in, and consumed by Tash. Rishda realises he has made a huge mistake.

Unity has broken – the dwarves are killing anyone they can. Rilian certainly shows courage by well using limited resources against impossible odds.

Tash speaks formally: 'Thou hast called me into Narnia, Rishda Tarkaan. Here I am. What hast thou to say?'

And Peter says to him: 'Begone Monster, and take your lawful prey to your own place.' This configures with the Witch, who had the right to traitors.

Eustace and Jill are the final spiritual King and Queen, despite never ruling in Narnia. Diggory and Polly had long been considered Lords and Ladies under Frank and Helen.

[Susan: It is always possible to fall away. But this is not the end of earth, only Narnia. (Lewis himself says she might follow her own path). What has primacy? The train-crash or the end of Narnia? The worlds are interconnected – does not a tragedy in one echo into the others? It's never said by Aslan why, only Jill, the least experienced calls her vain, and Eustace damns her for his first mistake, and the mistake of Edmund, disbelief/self-delusion. Polly suggests it is immaturity, insecurity. She had positive beauty and sexuality in 2 and 3.

'It's all a fake, of course, the figures in the popular art are falsely drawn; the real women in bathing suits or tights are actually pinched in and propped up to make them appear firmer and more slender and more boyish than nature allows a full grown woman to be. ("Screwtape Letters" XX)'

'For a time, Susan had to live with Harold and Alberta Scrubb, her uncle and aunt.' (One fanfic makes a very good point)]

The door is very Holman Hunt, the Light of the World.

The Stable is the TARDIS. Also Bethlehem.

The Dwarves do not see the heavenly country, only the stable. Pullman inverts this with the world of the dead.

Aslan cannot break a mind-prison, for the dwarves as well as Andrew.

The end: Time, once met by Eustace and Jill, is awoken. The trumpet sounds, the stars fall. But the stars are not like meteor-fall as described in Revelation, but called home. Dinosaur Beasts (cf. Revelation – angels) summon all sentient creatures, including some very strange ones from the West. They are judged – did they hate him or love him? The haters were stripped of their speech and went into his shadow, which lay on the dead land. (Annihilationist). Those who loved him came through the door. They included many many sorts, including a dwarf who shot one of the horses earlier (i.e. wanting no Aslan, no Tash). The Dragons wrack Narnia, then die (time running fast). Then a tsunami, then the sun, a red giant, consumes the moon, then Time crushes it. It's probably the heat death.

Emeth encounters Aslan, and Aslan states that he and Tash are so opposite that no goodness can serve Tash nor evil Aslan. This is a bit more Zoroastrian. Emeth's seeking and devotion brought him what he desired, but not in the way he expected.

The new Aslan's country – the Third Heaven/the New Jerusalem/ and indeed, the New Earth – Narnia recreated – or, in fact, truly found – it is Platonic. The Form of Narnia.

They meet the many heroes and friends at the Edenlike place. The ending, with concentric worlds of heaven, and the beginning of the indescribable, seems an homage to the end of Paradiso. I should know, I homaged it myself.

The story which grows ever better may well be the story that Lucy reads to refresh in 5, and Aslan promises to tell her every day of the rest of her life.