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BIBLICAL AND FAIRY-TALE MOTIFS IN THE NOVEL *THE MAGICIAN'S NEPHEW* BY CLIVE STAPLES LEWIS

БІБЛІЙНІ І КАЗКОВІ МОТИВИ У РОМАНІ "НЕБІЖ ЧАКЛУНА" КЛАЙВА СТЕПЛЗА ЛЬЮЇСА

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Abstract. This article is devoted to the study of biblical and fairy-tale motifs in C.S. Lewis's novel *The Magician's Nephew* – the sixth book by order of publication, but the first in the internal chronology of *The Chronicles of Narnia* cycle. The paper examines the historical and biographical circumstances behind the creation of the cycle, including the influence of Lewis's experience as guardian of children evacuated during the Second World War and the role of his childhood imaginary world of Boxen in shaping the image of Narnia.

The specifics of the novel's magic system are analysed: types of magic, magical artefacts (the wand, the rings) as well as the debate over the chronological versus original publication order in which the books of the series should be read. Central to the study is the analysis of biblical motifs: the creation of the world through the word (Aslan's song), the figure of Aslan as an allegory of Jesus Christ, the theme of sacrifice, the struggle between good and evil, and the symbolism of a new beginning. Particular attention is given to Michael Ward's "planetary" hypothesis, according to which each book of the cycle corresponds to one of the seven heavenly bodies of medieval cosmology, with *The Magician's Nephew* linked to Venus.

In parallel, the article examines the fairy-tale elements of the novel – the magic rings as a means of passage between worlds, characters borrowed from pagan mythology, the hero and heroine archetypes (Digory and Polly), and the function of magical creatures and objects in conveying moral lessons. A comparative analysis of the function of magical artefacts in Lewis's work and in J. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* cycle is conducted, which reveals the specificity of the author's approach to depicting magical objects. Particular attention is given to the novel's system of characters such as Polly, Digory, Aslan, the Witch, and the magical creatures summarised in a table of their corresponding moral lessons.

It is demonstrated that the organic fusion of Christian symbolism with traditional fairy-tale motifs is a defining feature of Lewis's poetics, allowing the author to convey complex religious and philosophical ideas in a form accessible to young readers without resorting to direct preaching. The

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methodological basis of the study comprises the comparative-historical method, the method of motif analysis, and elements of symbolic-allegorical textual interpretation. The scientific novelty of the work lies in its comprehensive examination of the biblical and fairy-tale layers of the novel in their organic unity, providing grounds for classifying *The Magician's Nephew* as an example of Christian fantasy for children. The findings of the study may be applied in the teaching of foreign literature and in further research on children's fantasy and Christian allegory.

Keywords: children's literature, Clive Staples Lewis, *The Magician's Nephew*, *The Chronicles of Narnia*, Christian fantasy, biblical motifs, fairy-tale motifs, magical artefacts.

INTRODUCTION

The Chronicles of Narnia by Clive Staples Lewis is a cycle of seven fantasy novels for children, often referred to as a heptalogy. The popularity of the series has grown considerably thanks to film adaptations, stage productions, and even a trilogy of video games, even though the books themselves were written more than seventy years ago (1950–1956).

Lewis's work has received varied critical assessment. In particular, Anna Marie Hecht notes in her study that some critics regard Lewis's writing as an expression of a "striving for clarity", relying on "vivid metaphors" and "unambiguous logic" that allow the author to compress a large amount of material into a concise form. Other scholars, by contrast, place Lewis alongside other major writers of his era who continue to be studied, arguing that "only anti-religious bias can deny Lewis's place among the most valuable British writers of the twentieth century" (Hacht & Dwayane, 2009, p. 964–967).

The Chronicles of Narnia is a classic example of Christian literature for children, a tradition that began to take shape in England in the nineteenth century. Typical features of Victorian children's narrative include a close interweaving of moral instruction with entertainment, the use of "fairy-tale time" as part of real time, the presence of a narrator-author who may appear among the characters, transition into another world through mysterious means, manipulation of time and space, and a focus on events centred around home, family, and the domestic hearth (Pastushuk, 2007, p. 94).

The Chronicles can be viewed as an important example of children's literature created for a young audience. Written by C. S. Lewis, the cycle belongs to the fantasy genre and offers children a world in which fairy-tale events and characters are interwoven with moral and religious themes which is a defining feature of such literature in general. Children's literature, which reached wide popularity at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century, is considered to have experienced its "golden age" during this period. It emerged from oral folk tradition including fairy tales, fables, and folk narratives passed down to children to cultivate positive human qualities. Children's literature, or literature for young readers, performed an educational function, conveying religious messages, moral lessons, and

the importance of duty in human life. Many children's tales were initially aimed at adults; only later did literature for young readers become an independent category, forming on the basis of works adapted for children (Attebery, 1992).

At the start of the twentieth century, fantasy came to be regarded as an integral part of children's literature. Many of the novels that remain immensely popular with readers worldwide were created during this period. Fmong them it is worth noting Antoine de Saint-Exupery's *The Little Prince*, J. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series, and, of course, C. S. Lewis's *The Chronicles of Narnia*. The spread of fantasy within children's literature gradually began to attract adult readers as well (Jackson, 2008).

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

The purpose of the presented article is to identify and analyse the biblical and fairy-tale motifs present in C. S. Lewis's novel *The Magician's Nephew*, the sixth book (and chronologically the first) of *The Chronicles of Narnia*. The study seeks to determine how Christian religious symbolism is organically interwoven with traditional fairy-tale elements: magical objects, mythological creatures, and archetypal heroes within a single narrative structure, and to establish how this synthesis shapes the novel's status as a work of Christian fantasy for children.

The specific tasks of the research are:

- to trace the historical and biographical circumstances under which *The Chronicles of Narnia* were conceived and written;
- to characterise the magic system operating within the world of Narnia;
- to identify the principal biblical motifs present in *The Magician's Nephew* (creation through the word, the figure of Aslan, the struggle between good and evil, the symbolism of a new beginning);
- to identify the principal fairy-tale motifs and images (magic rings, mythological creatures, the archetypes of the hero and heroine) and to examine their function within the novel;
- to summarise how these two layers (biblical and fairy-tale) interact to produce the novel's distinctive character as Christian fantasy.

METHODOLOGY AND DATA

The research is based on a qualitative literary analysis of C. S. Lewis's novel *The Magician's Nephew* (Lewis, 1966) as the primary source, considered within the broader context of *The Chronicles of Narnia* cycle. The study draws on the comparative-historical method (to trace the chronology and publication history of the series), the method of motif analysis (to isolate recurring biblical and fairy-tale motifs in the text), and elements of symbolic and allegorical interpretation (to establish correspondences between the novel's imagery and Christian doctrine).

The theoretical and critical basis of the article includes works of literary scholarship devoted to Lewis and to children's fantasy more broadly, among them studies by A. M. Hacht and D. Hayes (2009), H. Pastushuk (2007), B. Attebery (1992), R. Jackson (2008), E. Kessler (2023), D. Jackman (2018), A. Lindsley (2010), J. Karpytska (2019), J. Houston (1988), Ye. Kanchura (2017), C. Kilby (1965), O. Holovko and M. Zinchenko (2013), T. Zhadanova (2007; 2010), R. Mathews (2002), and W. Hooper (2016), as well as Lewis's own essays and correspondence (Lewis, 1969; Lewis, 2009). Michael Ward's (2008) study on the "planetary" structure of the Narnia cycle is also used as an important interpretive framework. Direct citations from the primary text are drawn from the 1966 edition of the novel and are used strictly for the purposes of illustration and academic analysis.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The genesis of the Narnia cycle

To understand the interplay of biblical and fairy-tale motifs in the novel, it is necessary to consider the circumstances in which the books were written. During the Second World War, Lewis took in several children evacuated from their homes because of the Nazi air raids on London. Having no children of his own, he decided that the best way to entertain his young guests was to tell them stories. A very short fragment of one such story has survived, in which four children (two girls and two boys) are evacuated, separated from their parents, and sent to live with a strange old professor. This fragment is almost identical to the opening of *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* and mirrors the real-life situation of Lewis's own wartime guests: by children's standards, Lewis himself was indeed "a very old professor", and no doubt somewhat intimidating to his young lodgers. Since the author appears to have deliberately imitated real life in his art, it is plausible that his original intention in writing the Chronicles was to entertain the young evacuees with a fantastical version of their own experience.

Lewis chose to begin his narrative in rural England, in the house of an old professor. It was meant to be a children's story, and Lewis drew on what had captivated him in his own childhood: "I had a persistent longing … for [fairy-tale] literature" (Lewis, 1969). His book became a tale of magic and fantastic adventure. As Lewis explained, "In a house like this, nobody is going to notice anything you do" (Lewis, 1969). To build his fairy-tale country, he relied on the details of a richly furnished childhood imagination. The gateway to the new world for the children opens through an old wardrobe: "Then they all got up and went into the only spare room, and the first thing they found in it was a large wardrobe" (Lewis, 2006).

Yet a shabby old house belonging to an equally shabby old professor could not, on its own, generate much magical adventure that is why Lewis felt compelled to expand the setting. From early childhood he had been engrossed in creating an

imaginary country of his own *Animal-Land*, which later developed into the more elaborate state of Boxen. His childhood imagination was meticulously detailed as he mapped out steamship routes and railway timetables for his invented country. Although Narnia has neither steamships nor railways, the country beyond the wardrobe reflects the same attentiveness to detail found in Lewis's earlier creations. His fairy-tale country soon acquired its own history, geography, myths, legends, and prophecies. The loving attention Lewis devoted to the minutiae of Narnian life suggests that he intended not merely to write a children's story but to participate in the powerful act that his friend Professor Tolkien called "sub-creation" (Lindsley, 2010).

One of the most characteristic features of the young Lewis's Boxen was its population of anthropomorphic, talking animals in clothes. These creatures quickly found their way into Narnia in the form of such memorable characters as the mouse-swordsman Reepicheep, the sceptical horse Bree, and, of course, the great Lion Aslan. The use of animals as central characters was not simply an extension of Lewis's boyhood fantasies but a deliberate authorial choice: through animal characters Lewis could convey subtle shades of human personality without overtaxing the comprehension of his young readers. What is a better way to convey royal majesty and glory than to make Aslan "the king of beasts"?

Magic system, publication order, and the "planetary" hypothesis

Michael Ward has proposed what is generally regarded as the most persuasive theory linking the Narnia books to Lewis's Space Trilogy, interpreting each novel as an allegory of one of the seven heavenly bodies of medieval cosmology (Ward, 2008). According to this reading, *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* corresponds to Jupiter and the mood of joy; *Prince Caspian* is governed by the influence of Mars, expressed through the themes of war, swords, and armour; *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader* is dominated by the Sun, symbolised by gold and light; *The Silver Chair* is saturated with imagery of the Moon, water, silver, and night; *The Horse and His Boy* is thought to correspond to Mercury; *The Magician's Nephew* is linked to Venus, reflecting themes of love, creativity, and fertility; and *The Last Battle* is associated with Saturn through its themes of time, ageing, and death.

The first defining feature of children's fantasy is the presence of a magical territory with its own particular properties, and Narnia meets this criterion fully: it is a magical land inhabited by mythical creatures, talking animals, and trees that take part in battles, containing magical artefacts and spells with both positive and negative consequences. Those who possess magic in Narnia fall into two groups, namely those born with such power, like the White Witch Jadis and Aslan, and those who acquire it through learning, like the sorcerer Uncle Andrew; the latter, as a rule, tend to fall out of favour with the former.

Magic in Lewis's world is bound to the particular world in which it operates. This is especially evident when the Witch Jadis, having arrived in London, loses all her magical powers, since they functioned only within the fantasy world. The reader observes that magic may take two forms: it may create something new such as Turkish delight or it may bestow new properties on existing objects, as with the magic water that turns any substance into gold. Magic can also transform people into other beings, as when Eustace, falling asleep on a dragon's hoard with greedy thoughts, is turned into a dragon – an episode with a clearly didactic aim, warning young readers of the dangers of greed. Special attention is due to the magic of the great Lion Aslan, who works wonders without any auxiliary objects, purely through thought, song, or breath reviving enchanted statues and awakening the plant world.

Beyond living beings, several magical artefacts appear in the cycle – the White Witch's wand, the lamp-post, and the magic rings, among others. Unlike J. K. Rowling, for who the wand is an indispensable conduit of magic, Lewis gives no detailed description of this artefact; in Narnia it is merely an auxiliary tool, since its bearer can work magic without it. The magic rings, by contrast, are artefacts capable of transporting anyone to another world by mere touch. That was an idea for which Lewis is thought to have drawn inspiration from his colleague J. R. R. Tolkien. They appear as ordinary yellow and green rings: the yellow ring transports its wearer to the Wood between the Worlds, from which numerous portals to other worlds can be reached, while the green ring leads back to whichever world's portal was used in the Wood.

The composition and publication order of the cycle

The seven books of *The Chronicles of Narnia* have been continuously in print since 1956, with over 100 million copies sold in 47 languages, including Braille editions (Karpytska, 2019). In chronological (internal) order, the cycle consists of the following books (Tab 1).

Table 1. Chronological (internal) Order of the Books in the Cycle

№	Title	Year of publication
1	*The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*	1950
2	*Prince Caspian*	1951
3	*The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*	1952
4	*The Silver Chair*	1953
5	*The Horse and His Boy*	1954
6	*The Magician's Nephew*	1955
7	*The Last Battle*	1956

The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe, the first book written and published, is generally regarded by both scholars and fans as the best introduction to Narnia.

According to Dr Paul F. Ford, author of *A Companion to Narnia*, "most scholars disagree with the decision to renumber the books" and consider it least faithful to Lewis's deepest intentions. Dr Charlie W. Starr, writing on the official C. S. Lewis website, likewise states that "Lewis scholars almost universally agree" that the original published order is superior, suggesting that *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* is initially more engaging than *The Magician's Nephew*, that certain lines in the former make no sense unless it is read first, and that *The Magician's Nephew* carries greater mythic power when read as a prequel. Both orderings have been printed over the years; early HarperCollins editions stated that the books had been "renumbered in accordance with the wishes of the author, C. S. Lewis", while later editions explained instead that although *The Magician's Nephew* was written some years after Lewis began the series, he wished it to be read as the first book.

Lewis himself, however, in a letter of 1957 to an eleven-year-old reader named Laurence Krieg, who wished to reread the books in chronological order against his mother's wishes, wrote: "I think I agree with your order for reading the books more than with your mother's. The series was not planned beforehand as she thinks. When I wrote *The Lion*, I did not know I was going to write any more. Then I wrote *Prince Caspian* as a sequel and still didn't think there would be any more, and when I had done *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader* I felt quite sure it would be the last. But I found I was wrong. So perhaps it does not matter very much in which order anyone reads them" (Lewis, 2009). American editions traditionally used the order of publication, while British editions were numbered chronologically; the chronological order became the worldwide standard after HarperCollins took over the series' publication in 1994.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Biblical and Christian motifs in *The Magician's Nephew*

The Magician's Nephew, the first book of the cycle in internal chronology, introduces readers to the mysterious world of Narnia, inhabited by fantastic creatures and talking animals endowed with many human faculties. The book follows Polly and Digory, the "magician's nephew' of the title who, despite early misunderstandings and quarrels, become friends and eventually, through the magic rings of Digory's Uncle Andrew, are transported into the magical dimension of Narnia.

The novel is a vivid example of Christian fantasy, in which religious ideas and symbolism are interwoven with the conventions of the fantasy genre. The narrative begins with Aslan creating Narnia through song, an act that illustrates the Christian conception of the world's creation through the divine word. The novel contains many parallels with the Bible, particularly in its presentation of Aslan as both creator and saviour. The following biblical motifs stand out as most prominent:

1. *Creation through the word*. The founding of Narnia through Aslan's song parallels the biblical account of creation in the Book of Genesis, where God creates the world through speech: "And God said, Let there be light: and there was light" (The Holy Bible: King James Version, 2026, Genesis 1:3). In *The Magician's Nephew*, Aslan's singing brings the world of Narnia into being, reflecting the Christian understanding that divine power and creativity are expressed through word and sound.

2. *Aslan as a figure of Jesus Christ*. Aslan is presented not only as creator but as saviour and embodiment of goodness. His role as redeemer and his origin point toward parallels with Christ: just as Christ is regarded as the Son of God, Aslan possesses a divine nature and fulfils the role of both creator and saviour of the world.

3. *Aslan and moral instruction*. Aslan does not merely create Narnia; he governs it, establishes its moral laws, and ensures justice reflecting the Christian conception of God as a just ruler who watches over the world and guides it along the right path.

4. *Mythological elements and religious symbols*. As a great lion, Aslan is a symbol of strength, wisdom, and self-sacrifice, echoing the image of Christ as the Lion of the Tribe of Judah (The Holy Bible: King James Version, 2026, Revelation 5:5); his sacrifice and resurrection (elsewhere in the cycle) parallel the Christian themes of Christ's death and resurrection.

5. *Victory over evil.* From beginning to end, the struggle between good and evil forms the central theme of the novel, with Aslan as the force of good opposing the forces of evil – again echoing the biblical theme of conflict between divine and demonic powers.

6. *The symbolism of a new beginning*. In creating Narnia, Aslan does not merely bring a new world into existence but opens up the possibility of a genuinely new beginning, carrying symbolic weight for the Christian conception of new creation and restoration through Christ's sacrifice and salvation.

7. *Aslan as the embodiment of the divine word*. Aslan sings the world into existence, a metaphor for the divine word that carries within it not only the act of creation but a plan of salvation and restoration reflecting the concept of the Logos in Christian theology, the divine principle of order and reason in the world (Kilby, 1965).

The religious symbolism and Christian allusions in Lewis's work have drawn the attention of both readers and scholars, for although the author did not set out to preach Christianity directly, his tales are saturated with religious subtext. Lewis built a world in which numerous parallels to the Christian faith can be found. Above all, the figure of Aslan, the great lion at the centre of the series, represents an image of Christ: like Christ, Aslan sacrifices himself for the salvation of others and symbolises resurrection. This can be observed most explicitly in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, where Aslan voluntarily gives himself up in Edmund's place, a direct allusion to the crucifixion of Jesus Christ.

Lewis frequently employs allegory to convey Christian ideas across the series: *Prince Caspian* illustrates faith in an unseen Christ and trust in unfamiliar beliefs, symbolising faith in an invisible God; *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader* contains allusions to baptism and spiritual purification; *The Silver Chair* reflects the concept of obeying God's commandments even when their meaning remains partly obscure; *The Horse and His Boy* portrays the gradual discovery of Christ's teaching through the characters' experience; and *The Last Battle* embodies the concepts of the Second Coming and the Last Judgment.

Lewis maintained that this narrative structure, with its biblical archetypes, did not arise from an intention to preach but grew naturally out of his own worldview: he began with images such as a faun with an umbrella, a magnificent lion. Later the Christian element did emerge of its own accord (Lewis, 2009). He advised young writers not simply to write for children in order to entertain or please them, but to treat children's literature as the best possible vehicle for conveying their ideas – just as a composer might write a Dead March not for a specific public funeral, however, to express musical ideas that require precisely that form (Houston, 2016). For Lewis, unlike the nineteenth-century Romantics, imagination did not surpass reason as an organ of truth but was rather a precondition for understanding it: "Imagination … is not the organ of truth… It is the organ of meaning… I am a rationalist. For me reason is the natural organ of truth; but imagination is the organ of meaning" (Lewis, 2009).

Fairy-tale motifs and images in *The Magician's Nephew*

Despite its considerable commercial success worldwide, in Ukraine *The Chronicles of Narnia* remained accessible until relatively recently mainly through russian translations, which limited readers' access to the original English text. Lewis's choice of the fairy-tale-novel genre allowed him to draw on mythological plots and figures, endowing them with symbolic meaning; characters borrowed from pagan mythology (fauns, centaurs, dwarves, dryads, and others) interact naturally with the other characters within the logic of the fantasy world (Holovko, 2013).

Magic rings. The magic rings are a classic element of fairy-tale literature, allowing the heroes to travel between different worlds. In *The Magician's Nephew* they function as a magical key to new realities, symbolising passage across the boundary of the known world (London) into the mysterious, magical world of Narnia underscoring the idea that certain objects or forces can open doors to new worlds and possibilities (Zhadanova, 2007). The rings allow Polly and Digory to move between London and Narnia, opening the way to unexplored adventures. This is not merely a physical crossing, however, a symbolic passage into a new phase of life and experience as the rings function as metaphors for personal growth and the discovery of new possibilities. As a literary motif, magic rings have a long tradition in fairy-tale and fantasy literature, typically used to trace a hero's journey through different realities, allowing the reader to observe personal growth and development. Each new

world reached through the rings represents a fresh trial and an opportunity for the heroes to learn something new about themselves and the world around them – physical or moral testing that leads to deeper understanding and growth. The rings also help to visualise the contrast between the real world and the magical universe of Narnia, serving as a means of escaping the everyday and being drawn into an enchanted world, and demonstrating how the heroes can overcome the limitations of ordinary life to discover new horizons (Mathews, 2002).

The conflict between good and evil. This conflict is the central fairy-tale motif that runs through the plot and shapes its moral lessons, illustrating the eternal struggle between light and darkness. Aslan, the mighty magical lion, embodies goodness in the novel particularly nobility, wisdom, and strength. He is the source of Narnia's creation and its defender against the forces of evil, bringing not only justice but light and hope into darkness. The Witch, who seeks to seize Narnia and impose the rule of darkness and corruption, is the central symbol of evil, her intentions, actions, and magic reflecting every negative quality set against the power of good. This moral dimension of the conflict is neither simple nor straightforward: it involves not only physical confrontation but moral choices and trials that Polly and Digory must face as they determine their own paths and development (Hooper, 2016). Alongside physical battles and magical duels, the heroes confront moral dilemmas that test their values and convictions , for instance, choices between personal interest and the common good, loyalty and devotion which become important aspects of the struggle against darkness. Aslan and the Witch also function as symbols of universal principles: Aslan embodies light, truth, and wisdom, while the Witch represents darkness, falsehood, and cruelty, so that their conflict can be read as an allegory of the broader struggle between good and evil in the world.

Archetypes of the hero. Polly and Digory represent classic hero archetypes of fairy-tale literature. Polly, with her intelligence and kindness, embodies the archetype of the heroine whose initial naivety and purity gradually mature into courage and resolve; her capacity for compassion and friendship allows her to take part in great journeys and to overcome trials. Digory, the magician's nephew of the title, is the archetype of a hero who faces great trials and grows through overcoming them – a boy with personal difficulties and inner conflicts who, through his adventures and trials, learns important life lessons, developing from an ordinary boy into a hero who displays courage and wisdom.

Other fairy-tale images. The magical wooden horse in the novel is a symbol of the power of nature and of enchantment, embodying the union of nature and magic as it comes to life. It may also symbolise hope and the new possibilities that open before the heroes. The various magical creatures of Narnia embody different aspects of good and evil: "The Witch was a bad witch, but she was very powerful" (Lewis, 1966). Good and wise creatures, such as forest spirits or fauns, support the heroes, while evil creatures, such as monsters or the Witch's allies, create obstacles along their path. Aslan possesses all the qualities and traits of a lion such as reason, nobility,

magnanimity, valour, justice, pride, triumph, vigilance, and courage without any trace of arrogance, as Lewis writes: "'Of course', said Aslan. 'And now! … Those who are good with their noses must come in front with us lions to smell out where the battle is…' 'Did you hear what he said? Us Lions. That means him and me. Us Lions. That's what I like about Aslan. No side, no stand-off-ishness. Us Lions. That meant him and me'" (Lewis, 1966).

The magic rings, which allow the heroes to move between worlds, are powerful symbols of transition and the opening of new possibilities, serving as metaphors for personal growth and movement between different stages of the heroes' development, and are accompanied throughout by an atmosphere of mystery and magic. The magic in the novel not only lends a fairy-tale atmosphere but functions as a tool for solving problems and overcoming obstacles, often carrying allegorical weight, as in the line addressed to a faithful character: "Well done, last of the Kings of Narnia, who stood firm at the darkest hour" (Lewis, 1966) – a line that has been read as echoing the words addressed to the disciple Peter. The heroes' journeys are central to the fairy-tale narrative and to their development, symbolising a path toward self-knowledge and transformation as they pass through different worlds and face challenges that help them discover new facets of their character and deeper truths about themselves and the world.

Nature in the novel symbolises not only the physical environment but moral and spiritual dimensions as well: a healthy, flourishing forest can symbolise peace and harmony, while dark and gloomy places may reflect conflict and threat. The fairy-tale and fantastic elements of the novel are underscored by the presence of mythical creatures inhabiting the invented world: "Out of the trees wild people stepped forth, gods and goddesses of the wood; with them came Fauns and Satyrs and Dwarfs" (Lewis, 1966, p. 70), as well as magical objects: "They got a trowel and buried all the magic rings, including their own ones, in a circle round it" (Lewis, 1966, p. 108). The main characters, their roles, the magical elements associated with them, and the moral lessons conveyed through their experiences are summarised in Table 2.

Table 2. Characters and moral lessons in C. S. Lewis's *The Magician's Nephew*

Character	**Role**	**Magical element**	**Moral lesson**
Polly	Heroine	Ring	The importance of friendship
Digory	Hero	Narnia (world)	Courage and readiness to change
Aslan	Symbol of good	Magical powers	Faith, self-sacrifice
The Witch	Antagonist	Spells	The consequences of evil and selfishness
Magical creatures	Supporting characters	Enchanted objects	The meaning of choice and responsibility

Thus, in *The Magician's Nephew*, fairy-tale motifs and images play a key role in shaping both plot and character development. The use of magical elements such as the rings creates not only a means of travel between worlds but also a symbol of personal growth and new discovery. The conflict between good and evil, embodied in Aslan and the Witch, conveys moral lessons that remain relevant to readers of all ages, while the archetypal figures of Polly and Digory trace a path of self-discovery, and the magical creatures of Narnia embody the many facets of good and evil, adding further depth to the story.

CONCLUSIONS

C. S. Lewis's *The Magician's Nephew*, part of *The Chronicles of Narnia* cycle, is a striking example of Christian fantasy in which religious ideas and symbolism are organically interwoven with fairy-tale motifs. Lewis draws on the conventions of fantasy (the magical creation of a world, invented creatures, epic adventure) in order to convey profound Christian themes and moral lessons, while at the same time relying on the structures and images of traditional fairy tale to make those themes accessible and engaging for a young readership.

Aslan, the great lion at the centre of the novel, may be read as a symbol of Christ, embodying ideas of salvation, self-sacrifice, and moral authority; his role as creator and saviour reflects the Christian conception of God as divine ruler and redeemer, while the song through which he brings Narnia into being parallels the biblical account of creation through the divine word, underscoring the importance of speech as an instrument of divine power and creativity. At the same time, the novel's fairy-tale apparatus: the magic rings that open passage between worlds, the archetypal figures of Polly and Digory, the array of mythical creatures, and the clear-cut opposition between Aslan and the Witch provides the narrative scaffolding through which these Christian ideas about justice, kindness, self-sacrifice, and moral growth are conveyed.

The synthesis of these two layers is what gives *The Magician's Nephew* its distinctive character: fantasy elements serve not merely to entertain young readers but to transmit complex religious and moral ideas, with the moral triumph of good over evil, the symbolism of a new beginning, and the transformation of the characters all reflecting Christian conceptions of salvation and renewal. The novel is thus not only an engaging children's tale but a work of considerable spiritual depth, in which Lewis, through fairy-tale motifs and imagery, successfully integrates Christian themes into a fantastical universe offering readers of every age the opportunity to reflect more deeply on universal moral and religious questions.

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Близнюк, Т., & Круль, Л. (2025). Біблійні і казкові мотиви у романі "Небіж чаклуна" Клайва Степлза Льюїса. *Дитяча література: інтердисциплінарний дискурс*, 3 (2), 122 – 135.

Статтю присвячено дослідженню біблійних і казкових мотивів у романі Клайва Стейплза Льюїса "Небіж чаклуна" – шостій за порядком видання, але першій за внутрішньою хронологією книзі циклу "Хроніки Нарнії". У роботі розглянуто історичні та біографічні обставини створення циклу, зокрема вплив досвіду Льюїса як опікуна евакуйованих під час Другої світової війни дітей та роль його дитячого уявного світу Боксен у формуванні образу Нарнії. Проаналізовано специфіку магічної системи твору – типи магії, магічні артефакти (жезл, персні), а також дискусію щодо хронологічного й видавничого порядку читання книг серії. Центральне місце в дослідженні посідає аналіз біблійних мотивів: створення світу словом (піснею Аслана), образ Аслана як алегорії Ісуса Христа, тема жертовності, боротьби добра і зла та символіка нового початку. Окрему увагу приділено запропонованій Майклом Уордом "планетарній" гіпотезі, згідно з якою кожна книга циклу співвідноситься з одним із семи небесних тіл середньовічної космології, а "Небіж чаклуна" пов'язується з Венерою.

Паралельно розглянуто казкові елементи роману – магічні персні як засіб переходу між світами, персонажів, запозичених із язичницької міфології, архетипи героя і героїні (Дігорі та Поллі), а також функцію чарівних істот і предметів у розкритті моральних уроків. У статті проведено порівняльний аналіз функції магічних артефактів у Льюїса та в циклі про Гаррі Поттера Дж. Роулінг, що дозволяє виявити специфіку авторського підходу до зображення чарівних предметів. Особливу увагу приділено системі персонажів роману – Поллі, Дігорі, Аслану, Чаклунці та чарівним істотам, – узагальненій у вигляді таблиці відповідних моральних уроків.

Доведено, що органічне поєднання християнської символіки з традиційними казковими мотивами є визначальною рисою поетики К. С. Льюїса, яка дозволяє авторові доносити складні релігійно-філософські ідеї в доступній для дитячої аудиторії формі, не вдаючись до прямої проповіді. Методологічну основу дослідження становлять порівняльно-історичний метод, метод аналізу мотивів і проблематики твору та елементи символічно-алегоричної інтерпретації тексту. Наукова новизна роботи полягає у комплексному розгляді біблійного та казкового пластів роману в їх органічній єдності, що дає підстави кваліфікувати "Небіж чаклуна" як зразок християнського фентезі для дітей.

Ключові слова: дитяча література, Клайв Стейплз Льюїс, "Небіж чаклуна", "Хроніки Нарнії", християнське фентезі, біблійні мотиви, казкові мотиви, магічні артефакти.

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