

## “Philip K. Dick and C. S. Lewis: The Approach to Religion in Science Fiction and Fantasy”

The literary realms of science fiction and fantasy are characterized by their exploration of the limits of reality. Frank Sadler notes that this exploration of reality results in the creation of an alternate reality: “Science fiction makes the claim to treat a nonexistent reality, an imaginative reality which may have its origins in our own reality, but which, because it usually extrapolates a future not yet existent, cannot represent our reality but its own” (16). Since religion is a basic way of perceiving and explaining our own truths, the beliefs incorporated in religion often are expanded upon in order to create another form of reality for literary purposes. In the works of C. S. Lewis and Philip K. Dick, religion is a greater theme than in works by other authors because of the place religion occupied in their lives. Although the two held different convictions and underwent entirely different experiences, some elements of their religious experiences do indeed correlate with each other when they incorporate their beliefs into their literary works. They create a world where religion is fundamentally important. The protagonists created by the authors undergo an intense spiritual journey which becomes the focus of the novel. The works of these authors provide an insight into the place religion holds in the literary genres of science fiction and fantasy.

C. S. Lewis struggled with his stance on religion throughout his life, especially in his earlier years. He even considered himself an atheist for some time, and was disenchanted with the practices of Christianity: “he had begun to read the Bible and pray, but, strangely, prayer was one of the things that led him to atheism and, he says, might have driven him mad if pursued as he was attempting it” (Kilby 14). Instead of formal

prayer, his writing later became a more creative outlet for exploring his relationship with God. He became interested in the occult for a time, and always held a reverence for nature. His strong faith developed through a somewhat instantaneous conversion: "I was driven to Whipsade one sunny morning. When we set out I did not believe that Jesus Christ is the son of God, and when we reached the zoo I did" (Kilby 19). William James comments on this type of conversion and the effects the change has upon a person: "the persons who have passed through conversion, having once taken a stand for the religious life, tend to feel themselves identified with it, no matter how much their religious enthusiasm declines" (James 284). In accordance with James's theory, Lewis never did lose his religious identification or even his enthusiasm. His experiences before his conversion influenced his later religious works, for "he managed the difficult feat of successfully integrating his scholarship and religion" (Kilby 11). He also combined his love for nature and fantastical stories with his strong Christian faith in order to create such works of fantasy as The Chronicles of Narnia.

These seven books detail adventure stories in which children from mid-19<sup>th</sup> century England are called into Narnia. The books begin with the story of creation, which Polly and Digory witness. Years later, Susan, Peter, Lucy and Edmund end up in the elderly Digory's house and are able to enter Narnia through a wardrobe. Their cousin Eustace and his schoolmate Jill also visit Narnia in later stories. In this magical land of talking animals and strange creatures, the lion Aslan rules above them all. His name will be used interchangeably with the title of God in this discussion; the form of the lion is the one he takes in Narnia, for he claims he is known by another name in the world the

children originally come from. He guides them in all their adventures and allows them entrance into paradise at the end of the world.

Philip K. Dick was one of those whom Barry Malzberg calls a first-rate science fiction writer: “the first-raters always – *always* – make their lives part of their Collected Works, they manage to bring their ‘reality fix’ into such order that it becomes inextricably bound with their vision” (Malzberg 11). Dick seems to have taken this infusion of autobiography into fiction to the extreme. In Dick’s own words, “People have told me that everything about me, every facet of my life, psyche, experiences, dreams and fears, are laid out explicitly in my writing, that from the corpus of my work I can be absolutely and precisely inferred. This is true” (Dick 221). In reading a version of Philip K. Dick’s religious experiences in works such as his personal letters and then reading a novel such as Radio Free Albemuth, one may easily become confused as to which one is reality and which is fiction, as was Dick’s intent. The biographical information about Phil (the character) coincides directly with his own background. He also constantly refers to works of fiction he has written within this particular piece of fiction as well. The odd religious experiences of Dick do indeed sound as if they are a figment of his imagination, created solely for his novels. But he really did believe he was a prophet of God who received communications from Him directly: “Soon, he started seeing this pink and other of what he called “phosphene” colors as he lay in bed, awaiting sleep. And then in his dreams. Along with them came words” (Barlow). The examples of mystical experiences he underwent could, and do, fill up a book. Every experience his character Nicholas undergoes is taken directly from Dick’s own experiences.

Radio Free Albemuth is at first somewhat difficult to comprehend, because the main character, Nicholas, does not know himself what is happening to him. He begins receiving messages and visions in the middle of the night. The being who communicates with him is named Valis, a term which can also be used interchangeably with God. Nicholas has many theories throughout the book about Valis, which he confides in to his friend Phil. He knows Valis is a benevolent being because he provides Nicholas with knowledge that saves the life of his infant son. Nicholas finally realizes that he is a member of an ancient race from beyond the stars who has lost contact with Valis, who now communicates with him through a satellite. He becomes part of a plot to overthrow the President of the United States, Feris F. Fremont, in accordance with Valis's instructions. Although he does not succeed and is murdered, his actions are part of a greater plan and he is promised eternal life by Valis.

As each of the writers had to undergo a journey in order to reach their religious convictions, the characters which they create also must undergo a type of spiritual as well as physical journey in order to strengthen their relationship with God. The physical journey is important in carrying out God's plan, and is in direct relationship with the spiritual journey. In Lewis's works, characters from modern day England must journey to the land of Narnia. Once they get there, they must also travel around these lands in order to achieve some sort of goal hinted at by Aslan. These travels make for a great sense of adventure, though they often are accompanied by many hardships. Aslan is always there to guide them through these difficulties, and a happy ending to the journey is generally achieved. As in a spiritual journey, Aslan's help is quite valuable. The two journeys occur at the same time. In Dick's novel, the title character Nicholas also makes a journey

that proves to be quite significant. He has a vivid dream about a place that he thinks to be Mexico but is not sure why he has been shown this scene. Like William James, Dick is apparently convinced of the power of dreams. Later on, he actually finds this place, which actually turns out to be in southern California, though the meaning as to why he has been shown this place is still in question. He decides to move there anyway: "Every building and street, every car that passed – they were precisely as I dreamed them. The people walking along, the street signs, even. Down to the smallest detail. Valis intends for me to move down there" (Dick 27). Nicholas recognizes that moving his family to the place Valis has shown him is a physical journey that is actually an important part of his spiritual journey and of Valis's plan for him. In both journeys, Aslan and Valis communicate with the traveler in some way in order to provide some guidance.

Advice may come to the main characters in the form of other characters who serve as guides on the journey. The children encounter countless characters in Narnia who are clearly sent to them by Aslan. For example, the very first character whom Lucy meets in The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe is Tumnus the fawn, who informs the Daughter of Eve of the true situation of the state of Narnia. She is then able to use this information to counteract her brother Edmund's story of the Witch as a benevolent character. She recognizes the threat the Witch poses and is able to save Peter and Susan from believing Edmund. Only with Aslan's influence would she have had the good fortune to escape the Witch on her first visit to Narnia. Her belief in Aslan is strengthened after the positive events and the death of Jadis. In the same way, Dick provides Nicholas with physical characters who only reinforce his belief in Valis as a truthful and benevolent being. He first receives a message about his partner. The name

Sadassa Silvia is communicated to him, as well as a visual picture: “I saw a snapshot: a girl with Afro-natural hair, a small worried face, and glasses” (123). When this same woman walks into his office a week later, Nicholas is not really surprised but his faith in Valis is confirmed in a sense. Sadassa has come to serve as his partner in carrying out Valis’s mission.

Dreams are not the only means by which guidance can occur. Divination can often be found in the stars. In Prince Caspian, as well as in The Last Battle, the stars provide signs of events to come, including the end of the world of Narnia. The centaurs are wise creatures who specialize in the study of the stars. Roonwit delivers the following message to the King: “Never in all my days have I seen such terrible things written in the skies as there have been nightly since this year began. The stars say nothing of the coming of Aslan, nor of peace, nor of joy. I know by my art that there have not been such disastrous conjunctions of the planets for five hundred years” (676). Dick also creates a scene where Nicholas communes with the stars in order to contemplate his relationship with Valis, who communicates with him through a satellite somewhere up in the night sky. His wife questions him: “‘What are you doing sitting out on the patio?’ Rachel asked me. ‘Listening,’ I said. ‘To what?’ ‘To the voices of the stars,’ I said, although more accurately I meant the voices from the stars. But it was as if the stars themselves spoke, as I sat there in the chilly dark...” (111). Rachel is unaware that any communication is occurring, but Nicholas and his cat Pinky share the same view of the night sky. The stars provide a primitive communication system which is still effective for those who know what they are looking for.

In contrast to Dick's work, Lewis has God appear in the form of Aslan the Lion to the children in Narnia. Nicholas is never allowed to see a physical manifestation of Valis in his world. Instead, he must rely solely on sometimes confusing signs, such as messages that come to him in the middle of the night while he is in a dreamlike state. He is then forced to come up with his own interpretations of what he has heard. In this case, the difference in audience seems to be the main reason for this distinction. For children, who mainly make up Lewis's audience, Aslan's message must be made clearer and having a physical character makes the religious situation much less complex. Dick, in writing from his own experiences, presents a confused message, for he was not sure of the meaning of his own religious experiences. Adults must evaluate what they are told, in religion as well as in everyday life. They hold a higher capacity to perform this intelligent analysis. As science fiction is a play on reality, this continual questioning resonates with the human incapacity to ever completely understanding their own situation.

Despite the difference in the intended audience, the benefits God can bestow upon his believers remain the same in both stories. The initial mention of Aslan's name provokes strong feelings in the children: "At the name of Aslan each one of the children felt something jump in its inside. Edmund felt a sensation of mysterious horror. Peter felt suddenly brave and adventurous. Susan felt as if some delicious smell or some delightful straining of music had just floated by her. And Lucy got the feeling you have when you wake up in the morning and realize that it is the beginning of the holidays or the beginning of summer" (141). Before they even know who Aslan is, they are able to sense his importance. Nicholas also has very vague ideas about Valis when he first begins receiving messages. But he already knows that this force is having a positive influence on

his life. Phil, though a non-believer at this time, notes the change in him: “Because of an imaginary voice, Nicholas had become a whole person, rather than the partial person he had been in Berkely. If he had remained in Berkeley he would have lived and died a partial person, never knowing completeness” (35). Even though Phil is skeptical of Nicholas’s convictions, the influence of Valis is obvious. In both stories, God has a positive effect on people, though he may not be completely understood.

The same positive influence continues into the afterlife. Again, a difference in audience comes to different representations of eternity. At the end of the world of Narnia, the children physically go to Aslan’s country and are able to describe some of the sites they see. Lewis does his best as narrator to describe paradise as he conceives the place to be. He tries to equate the experience with an ordinary one from our world: “You may have been in a room in which there was a window that looked out on a lovely bay of the sea or a green valley that wound away among mountains. And in the wall of that room opposite to the window there may have been a looking-glass. And as you turned away from the window you suddenly caught sight of that sea or that valley all over again, in the looking glass. And the sea in the mirror, or the valley in the mirror, were in one sense just the same as the real ones: yet at the same time they were somehow different – deeper, more wonderful, more like places in a story: in a story you have never heard but very much want to know” (760). The chronicles end with this vague description, but the reader is assured that the children and all their fellow travelers and believers in Aslan have come to rest in this place forever. In contrast, Phil is left only to speculate about where his friend Nicholas has gone. He has to explain his beliefs to his fellow prisoner, Leon, a former preacher, who remains skeptical. Phil claims: “‘They gained immortality,’ I said.

‘It was conferred on them, for what they did or even for what they tried to do and failed to do. They exist now, my friends do. They always will.’ ‘Even though you can’t see them.’ ‘Yes,’ I said. ‘Right.’” (Dick 209). Nicholas and Saddassa are never heard from again directly after their death, but Phil is still convinced that they have achieved the immortality that was promised to them by Valis. The promise made to these characters that they will live forever in Aslan’s country and gain immortality is an important part of their faith.

Yet even with all these positive portrayals of God, the stories are often ambivalent about His ultimate benevolence. In Narnia, a well repeated phrase which comes to be used against belief in Aslan is “He is not a tame lion.” His actions truly are never fully understood by the children. When they first meet him, they immediately feel this sense of ambiguity: “People who have not been in Narnia sometimes think that a thing cannot be good and terrible at the same time. If the children had ever through so, they were cured of it now. For when they tried to look at Aslan’s face they just caught a glimpse of the As golden mane and the great, royal, solemn, overwhelming eyes; and then they found they couldn’t look at him and went all trembly” (Lewis 168). As Kilby further articulates so well, “:There are no easy and slick explanations of Aslan’s conduct” (Kilby 36). Nicholas even undergoes some moments of despair despite his strong belief in Valis. “The satellite had passed from our world and, with it, the healing rays, like those of an invisible sun, felt by creatures but unseen and unacknowledged. The sun with healing in its wings” (Dick 180). Despite further evidence that Valis’s plan has been set in motion, he still misses the presence he felt and the messages he received in the middle of the night. God is never completely understood by any of the characters, just as the authors may never

have been able to know Him completely except through their own strong beliefs and experiences.

Kilby sums up the genre when he claims “A dominant idea in these stories is that of an earlier time when things were more a harmony and unity...Always there is the notion of an older and better world, and very often that world in Lewis is simply the Garden of Eden” (Kilby 144). Dick also writes of an ancient world in which communication with higher beings occurred much more often. He is now one of the few who has been chosen to receive these messages now: “The Fall of man, I further realized, represented a falling away from contact with this vast communications network and from the AI unit expressing the voice of Valis, which to the ancients would be the same as God. Originally, like the animal beside me, we had been integrated into this network and had been expressions of its identity and will operating through us. Something had gone wrong; the lights had gone out on Earth” (Dick 112). Interestingly enough, Nicholas equates this loss of communication as the “Fall of man” which correlates directly to the exile of Adam and Eve from the garden of Eden. In Narnia, the humans are often referred to as Sons and Daughters of Eve, in a constant reminder of this past which can never be returned to.

After this early time of peace, evil inevitably becomes introduced into the world. In Narnia, the first form evil takes is the Witch, also known as Jadis. She is brought to Narnia by Polly and Digory. But their actions have consequences which extend into the future. These evil acts are prophecied by Aslan: “‘You see, friends,’ he said, ‘that before the new, clean world I gave you is seven hours old, a force of evil has already entered it; walked and brought hither by this son of Adam’” (Lewis 80). The humans are held

responsible for this evil, just as Adam and Eve are responsible for the loss of paradise from the earth. In the second tale, the four children who are to become the High Kings and Queens of Narnia encounter the Witch who has brought perpetual winter without Christmas to the world. Although she is vanquished, evil remains within the land and returns in many different forms in the stories to come. In the world created by Philip K. Dick, evil comes to the world in the form of the government, which has come to take away all freedoms from the American people. Even before Nicholas has any paranormal experiences, the government is viewed as a threat. Two FBI agents come to his house in order to question him and his wife: “‘As you know,’ the agent with the greater double chin explained, ‘it is our job to protect the liberties of American citizens from totalitarian intrusion’” (Dick 90). Of course, this requires investigation into the private lives of Americans who may be remotely involved with political parties possibly associated with communism and the Soviet Union. And during this process, the liberties that are supposedly being protected are actually taken away.

These evil characters use human temptation in order to exert their ill will against God. The scene in which Jadis tempts Digory in the first story is a direct parallel to the temptation Adam and Eve experienced in the Bible. Under an apple tree, Jadis taunts him: “‘It is the apple of youth, the apple of life. I know, for I have tasted it; and I feel already such changes in myself that I know I shall never grow old or die. Eat it, Boy, eat it; and you and I will both live for ever and be king and queen of this whole world – or of your world, if we decide to go back there’” (93). This scene is also reminiscent of the temptation of Jesus by the devil. Jadis offers Digory ultimate power, and he rejects her just as Jesus rejected the devil. Dick’s character Nicholas is also tempted by the

government to join their endeavors and go directly against the orders he has from Valis. In his job at a prominent record company, he is in a position of power which they hope to manipulate: “If you will provide the government with a copy of the lyrics of each artist whom you come in contact with who shows pro-Communist sympathies, we will pay you a flat hundred dollars per artist. It’s our estimate that you would enhance your salary by up to two thousand dollars a month this way...” (54). Nicholas is completely convinced that he has to give in to the demands of the FAP in order to protect the wellbeing of himself and his family. Only Phil’s threats to foil his attempts of cooperation deter him from following this course of action. He sacrifices his worries for his family in order to follow what is right, which is what Valis would have wanted him to do. Family is often used as a way to play upon the emotions of the one being tempted, for the tempter knows that one may be selfless, but they care too much about others to cause any harm to come to them. God does not appear directly to guide the one who is being tempted. Some human agency is exercised, and both cases the temptation is overcome.

The world of science fiction is definitely a man’s world. Most science fiction and fantasy authors are men, and the two discussed in this paper are no exception. Lewis especially is known for his sexism, which can be shown in his non-fiction work The Four Loves. Thus, not surprisingly, evil characters are often women. Jadis is a powerful woman who craves ultimate authority. Of course, this authority is denied to her as no one can compete with Aslan. The scene in the garden of apple trees equates her directly with Eve, who is typically depicted in Christian literature as the cause of man’s expulsion from paradise. When the children first lay eyes on her, she is in a frozen state but her appearance still captures their interest: “The last figure of all was the most interesting – a

woman even more richly dressed than the others, very tall...with a look of such fierceness and pride that it took your breath away. Yet she was beautiful too” (34). Lewis seems to be almost afraid of women and the power they possess, while at the same time he is enchanted by them. Dick’s character Phil also possesses the same kind of ambivalence about women. He fears the FAP (Friends of the American People, an organization which serves to check up on Americans) girl, Vivian, who comes to question him but is strangely attracted to her at the same time. He tries to exploit this attraction for his own benefit by having sex with her: “Well, I said to myself as I padded down the hall to the bathroom to take a shower, I am now master – rather than victim – of the situation. This girl is not going to spy on me any longer. I have turned an enemy into something even better than a friend: a co-conspirator in sexuality” (71). As a male, Phil believes he has gained the position of power over Vivian by having sex with her. But of course, this act does not take away all her power and she proceeds to plant drugs in his house while he is in the shower. She is truly a subversive female, for she too plays the male game of using sex in order to achieve an ultimate and ulterior goal. The male characters in science fiction and fantasy are both appalled and attracted to this feminine power.

Even the way in which minor female characters are presented proves that women do not fully fit into the male oriented world of science fiction and fantasy. Not all of Lewis’s characters from England return to the world of Narnia. Susan, a former queen, is destined never to come back to Narnia, for she has become too pre-occupied with her own world: “She’s interested in nothing nowadays except nylons and lipstick and invitations...Her whole idea is to race on to the silliest time of one’s life as quick as she can and then stop there as long as she can” (741). She has forgotten about Aslan and

denies that she was ever in Narnia. Thus, she is not able to share in the joy of being with Aslan forever. Dick characterizes Nicholas's wife Rachel as an unbeliever who denies the existence of Valis. She discourages his attempts to communicate what is happening to him: "Nicholas, if he tried to discuss Valis in front of her, was immediately subjected to sneers that beggared description. You would have thought that he had become a Jehovah's Witness, another area of boundless contempt on his overeducated wife's part...Something that set him apart from reasonable man entirely" (25). Note that Dick uses the term "overeducated" as a negative characteristic of Rachel. She is later brought back into a more traditional female role: "...after she had little Johnny she didn't care where they lived. She got fat and sloppy; her hair became a mess; she forgot all she had learned at school and instead watched daytime TV" (29). After this transformation, Rachel is portrayed much more positively and is more accepting of Nicholas's visions, though she is only able to experience them secondhand. However, Nicholas continues to confide in his friend Phil about his experiences rather than his own wife. He also becomes concerned with protecting his family, as he takes on the role of the patriarch. Both Susan and Rachel are removed from their former positions of power and neither ends up having a close relationship with God.

God is presented as loving in some instances, but his love is not unconditional. Judgment does take place, in science fiction and fantasy as well as in the Bible. Lewis has a mass judgment occur at the end of the world, with Aslan as the supreme judge. Their fate is decided instantly: "The creatures came rushing on, their eyes brighter and brighter as they drew nearer and nearer to the standing Stars. But as they came right up to Aslan one or other of two things happened to each of them. They all looked straight in his face,

I don't think they had any choice about that. And when some looked, the expression of their faces changed terribly – it was fear and hatred...And all the creatures who looked at Aslan in that way swerved to their right, his left, and disappeared into his huge black shadow...The children never saw them again. I don't know what became of them. But the others looked in the face of Aslan and loved him, though some of them were very frightened at the same time. And all these came in at the Door, in on Aslan's right" (751).

In this instance, Lewis acts as narrator in order to explain his beliefs about what happens on Judgment Day. He admits that he is unsure about what happens to those who do not love Aslan, but goes on to explain the joy that comes to those who do. His tale is intended to promote the joy of religion rather than dwell on the fate which comes to those who choose hatred instead of love. Nicholas also undergoes what he feels to be a final judgment after the satellite has been destroyed. As he lay sleeping, a presence enters his bedroom: "We are being judged, I realized. The light has come on without warning to expose us, and now the judge examines each of us. What will his decision be? The sense of death, my own death, was profound; I felt as if I were inanimate, made of wood, a carved and painted toy...we were all carved toys to the judge who gazed down at us, and he could lift any – and all- of us off our painted surface whenever he wished" (179).

Nicholas survives the gaze of the judge, but his cat Pinky is chosen to die instead. In this moment of judgment, the power of Valis is acknowledged to be so supreme. Nicholas's feeling of helplessness in the face of this power is the most overwhelming emotion conveyed in this scene. In the same way, Lewis notes that the creatures of Narnia were forced to look into Aslan's eyes; they had no choice in the matter. Everyone must undergo the judgment of God before the conclusion of their spiritual journey.

At the end of the world, an anti-Christ figure appears in each story, just as the Bible prophecies. In Narnia, the false Christ is the clueless Puzzle the donkey, who is manipulated by the evil ape Shift. The ape proclaims to all of Narnia that Puzzle, wearing a lion skin draped over him, is actually Aslan. By using Aslan's name, he is able to control all of the creatures of Narnia who believe in Aslan. Of course, the false Aslan acts in a way which is uncharacteristic of him: "He seems to have come back very angry this time... We must all have done something dreadfully wrong without knowing it. He must be punishing us for something. But I do think we might be told what it was!" (689). The children from England must fight the false Aslan. They do their best, but the world ends just the same, as Aslan intended. A character who is never actually seen but only mentioned takes on the role of the anti-Christ in Dick's work. Ferris F. Fremont takes on the presidency of the United States. Although this detail is never noted in the book, his initials can translate into "666" since "F" is the sixth letter in the alphabet. This number system is a sign of the anti-Christ in the Bible, and apparently in Dick's story as well. Fremont possess great power which influences all Americans: "we now dwelt in a very large prison, without walls, bounded by Canada, Mexico, and two oceans... Most people did not appear to notice. Since there were no literal bars or barbed wire, since they had committed no crimes, had not been arrested or taken to court, they did not grasp the change, the dread transformation, of the situation. It was the classic case of a man kidnapped while standing still" (64). The people who are directly affected by Fremont's actions are unaware of the liberties they have lost. They spy on each other and report to the authorities because they are told they are serving the greater good. But they are actually serving Fremont, who is a Communist himself. In Lewis's final story, the

creatures of Narnia also work hard and do what they are told by Shift, who is only exploiting their labor to gain wealth and prestige for himself. The people working for these false leaders are usually unaware of how they are contributing to a great evil, and thus the harmful actions continue.

At the end of the world, according to the Bible, early Christians are supposed to come back to life in order to help those on earth. The characters created by Lewis and Dick end up being these helpful guides, after they have completed their own spiritual journey. Nicholas realizes that he is a member of the old race who comes from beyond the stars: "I had, like the others, been asleep, but then I had woken up; or, rather, I had been awakened out of my sleep deliberately. The voice of a friend had called to me, as it moved among the rows of new corn, new life, and I had heard and recognized it" (161). As part of the select few, he is able to follow the plan Valis has set out for the world. Defeating Feris F. Fremont is only a small part of this plan, but Nicholas's cooperation is still important. The children from England can also be said to be early followers of Aslan who come back at the end of Narnia to provide help to others, perhaps in order to fulfill this Biblical prophecy. Digory and Polly were present in Narnia as the land was created and are also witnesses to its destruction: "'I saw it begin,' said the Lord Digory. 'I did not think I would live to see it die'" (753). The other children have seen Narnia evolve and have played integral parts in the history of the world. They were brought back by Aslan specifically to witness the ending of the world. Both Nicholas and the children are said to have been called by God and they must answer this call.

The most striking theme of science fiction and fantasy is the blur of reality that occurs. Lewis and Dick both choose to represent reality as a sort of dream. In The Silver

Chair, an evil witch tries to convince the children that the world of Narnia and Aslan do not exist. But their companion Puddleglum is able to articulate his view of reality and refute her completely: “We’re just babies making up a game, if you’re right. But four babies playing a game can make a play-world which licks your real world hollow. That’s why I’m going to stand by the play-world” (633). The easier option would have been to believe the witch and live in a false world, but Puddleglum is brave enough to search for true reality. Nicholas also realizes that the world he has been living in is a complete fabrication. People on earth have forgotten their origins and the true reality: “Perhaps most of us wanted to forget. Memory – to be aware of our true condition, our identity – was too painful. We would make this place our home and we would recall nothing else. It was easier that way” (161). Like Puddleglum, Nicholas is brave enough to look beyond what he has been told all his life and recognize the true reality. And of course, in both stories, the true reality lies with God.

Thus, both stories conclude with a positive ending that is much more clear than other science fiction and fantasy stories. The alternate worlds created in these stories collide with our own systems of beliefs and blurs our sense of reality. The elements held to be truth in our world are questioned thoroughly while God serves as a guide in this quest for knowledge. True reality is actually found in these stories, while other tales in the genre are much more inconclusive. Other authors may struggle with questions they can never answer. But because both Lewis and Dick have a firm belief in God, their explanation for reality is found in Him. The characters they create undergo an intense spiritual journey and are rewarded in the end by achieving knowledge of and a place in the true and only reality of God.

### Works Cited

- Barlow, Aaron. "Perception and Misperception and the Role of the Author: An Introduction To The Writing And Philosophy Of Philip K. Dick." <http://www.philipkdickfans.com/articles/barlow.htm>
- Dick, Philip K. Radio Free Albemuth. New York: Arbor House, 1985.
- James, William. The Varieties of Religious Experience. New York: The Modern Library, 2002.
- Kilby, Clyde S. The Christian World of C. S. Lewis. Grand Rapids: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1964.
- Lewis, C. S. The Chronicles of Narnia. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2001.
- Lewis, C. S. The Four Loves. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1960.
- Malzberg, Barry N. "Introduction: Philip K. Dick." Philip K. Dick. Eds. Martin Harry Greenberg and Joseph D. Olander. New York: Taplinger Publishing Company, 1983.