

'CHILD AND SERPENT, STAR AND STONE - ALL ONE'
THE DUALITY OF GOD AND NATURE IN
CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

by

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DEDICATION

For Mother, Father, Harm, Nicky and Hannes. And for Vivienne, who wanted to read it.

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'Bird and beast and stone and star - we are all one -' murmured the Hamadryad,
softly folding his hood about him as he himself swayed between the children.
'Child and serpent, star and stone - all one.'

- P.L. Travers

The roaring of lions, the howling of wolves, the raging of the stormy sea, and the
destructive sword are portions of eternity too great for the eye of man.

- William Blake

... and which one in all this fury of wild-fowl pities the fish?
No one certainly. Justice and mercy
Are human dreams, they do not concern the birds nor the fish nor eternal God.
However - look again before you go.
The wings and wild hungers, the wave-worn skerries, the bright quick minnows
Living in terror to die in torment -
Man's fate and theirs - and the island rocks and immense ocean beyond, and
Lobos
Darkening above the bay: they are beautiful?
That is their quality: not mercy, not mind, not goodness, but the beauty of God.

- Robinson Jeffers

I am the Lord and there is none else.
I form the light, and create darkness:
I make peace, and create evil:
I the Lord do all these things.

- The Book of Isaiah

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PROLOGUE

Nursery Meadows and Sinister Forests

The children of Blake dance in their thousands
Over nursery meadows and through sinister forests,
Beyond the spikes of cities, over the breasts of mountains,
The children of Blake dance in their thousands.
They dance beyond logic, they dance beyond science,
They are dancers, they are only dancers,
And every atom of their minds and hearts and their deep
skins
And every atom of their bowels and genitals and
imagination
Dance to the music of William Blake.

- Adrian Mitchell

The spiritual children of Blake, their thoughts and creations, are the subject matter of this study. The literature discussed here has been written for them, by them and about them - regardless of their age or any other attributes save the Romantic sensibility that dances beyond logic and science and wonders at the wild world around it. Invoking Blake in the prologue to this study seems apt since, as far as it concerns the child, it deals not with any actual child reader of so-called children's literature, but with the Romantic realm of childhood. Carpenter and Prichard (1984:66) note that Blake's *Songs of Innocence* is 'a book not so much written for children ... as portraying the world through childlike visionary eyes.' In his introduction to this collection, Blake ([1789] 1958:26) acknowledges the inspiration of the Romantic child and its connection with nature: 'Piping down the valleys wild, / Piping songs of pleasant glee, / On a could I saw a child,' and the child bids the poet to write down his songs 'in a book that all may read':

And I made a rural pen,
And I stain'd the water clear,
And I wrote my happy songs
Every child may joy to hear.

The Romantic spirit of Blake epitomizes the ideas discussed in this study, ideas expressed in writings informed and inspired by the Romantic child and his world. (Blake's significance is further explored in Chapter IV). To the Romantic mind the amalgam of associated notions termed 'the child' holds a spiritual treasure unknown to many and lost by most. Wordsworth, in his 'Ode: Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood' ([1807] 1977:525-6) expresses some of the most important of these sentiments in asserting that

...trailing clouds of glory do we come
From God, who is our home:
Heaven lies about us in our infancy!

Shades of the prison-house begins to close
Upon the growing Boy,
But He beholds the light, and whence it flows,
He sees it in his joy;
The youth, who daily farther from the east
Must travel, still is Nature's Priest,
And by the vision splendid
Is on his way attended;
At length the man perceives it die away,
And fades into the light of common day. (ll.65 -78)

In Romantic conception, the child partakes of a profound communion with nature, an experience which is lost to the grown man (In Chapter II it will be shown that this experience does not only involve the nature of the external world but also that of the inner self. The true hero knows, that what is without is within and that he therefore has to know himself). Kenneth Grahame (1894:106) in an essay entitled 'Orion', from his collection, *Pagan Papers*, agrees that the

original Waft from the Garden asserts itself most rigorously in the Child. This it is that thrusts the small boy under the naked heavens, to enact a sorry and shivering Crusoe on an islet in the duck-pond. This it is that sends the little girl footing it after the gypsy's van ... hearing naught save the faint, far bugle summons to the pre-historic little savage that thrills and answers in the tingling blood of her; seeing only a troop of dusky, dull-eyed guides along that shining highway to the dim land east o' the sun and west o' the moon: where freedom is, and you can wander and breathe, and at night tame street lamps there are none - only the hunter's fires, and the eyes of lions, and the mysterious stars.

With typical late Victorian nostalgia Grahame (1894: 104-5) laments the passing of the age of the 'Hunter', ousted by that of the 'Plough', that which rules by 'clearing forest and draining fen; policing the valleys with barbed wires and Sunday schools, with the chains that are forged of peace, the irking fetters of plenty'. The Romantic child thus embodies a single link with an idyllic past and an unchanging nature. Its guides move beyond a dominant society that changes,

'progresses' and discards and neglected wisdom, society accessible to the eternal Romantic child, the poet and the noble savage. Grahame (1894:106), too, stresses that the man loses the child's gift, that 'in later years it is stifled and gagged - buried deep, a green turf at the head of it, and on its heart a stone; but it lives, it breathes, it lurks, it will up and out when 'tis looked for least.' For Grahame, like Blake, whose *Songs of Innocence* were written in the early years of the industrial revolution, wrote within the context of a changing world, a world rejecting valuable knowledge at its peril.

If it is true that the child is the keeper of riches treasured less and less with passing time, the passage of man through history seems to mirror the process. In the same way that the child has a gift for poetry and natural wisdom that becomes less dear to him as he grows up until it is lost, humanity once valued the gifts of poetry, myth and story, which now, having 'advanced' in technological innovation and scientific knowledge, it slights. For since the industrial revolution, Western 'civilization' has discarded to a large degree the poetry which C.L.Wrenn (1967:35) feels to be called for by 'religion, magic, the natural rhythms of work and of the seasons'. David Buchan (in Coyle *et al.*, 1991:977-8), who contends that tradition should be seen to fall into the two stages of 'preindustrial' and 'postindustrial', explains that

in the wake of widespread education, the nineteenth century saw tradition undergo quite substantial alteration, and a major feature of this process was the devolution of traditional material and practice from adults to children. Folk drama customs, for example, moved down from men to youths to children; the traditional rhymes that once gave colour and fibre to discourse in the adult community came, after a similar shift, to be known as 'nursery rhymes'. The most complex of the narrative genres, the *Zaubermärchen* or wonder tales, became relegated to 'nursery tales' or, outside tradition, were prettified and rewritten into children's fairy-tales.

The process described by Buchan, together with the Romantic notions around the child and childhood already mentioned provide insight into the fact that 'children's literature' has kept alive a true tradition of wisdom, lore and poetic mystery apparent in the kind of writing discussed in this study. The 'children's literature' of this study could be defined as works inspired by and written in the spirit of Romantic childhood, a spirit that involves the all-important element of wonder. The element of wonder is prerequisite for the childlike ability to 'see the world whole', which, in the specific context of this study, means to recognize the mysterious nature of the world in its beauty as well as its terror. That 'children's literature' has come to be a repository harbouring what is of infinite value to the Romantic spirit - the poet, the true hero, the sage - justifies a study of literature that is called 'children's' with little or no mention of any 'real' children, or the experience of actual child readers of the literature in question, since 'children's literature' is regarded in this context as a 'genre' that, by its very nature, allows the writer to move within a sphere hardly possible in other forms of writing. As is to be seen, this form lends itself to the expression of a sensibility that does not doubt or question in unbelief, but wonders at and accepts a world of mystery. Ours is an age in which, to quote Robert Graves (1961:14), 'the prime emblems of poetry are dishonoured. In which serpent, lion and eagle belong to the circus-tent; ox, salmon and bear to the cannery; racehorse and greyhound to the betting ring; and the sacred grove to the saw-mill' and 'in which money will buy almost anything but truth, and almost anyone but the truth-possessed poet.' But the literature of eternal childhood - such as exemplified by the works discussed in this study - offers a sanctuary for that which is poetically valuable, both beautiful and terrible.

It seems clear why a certain indignation should be expressed by some writers against any conception of 'children's literature' as something simple - 'for children'. 'How could I possibly think of writing for children?' asks P.L. Travers (in Cott, 1981:205), author of the books about Mary Poppins, the 'cosmic

nanny' discussed in Chapter II, as well as of numerous writings on myth, tradition and related subjects. She echoes the Romantic sentiments of childhood in continuing that 'it's ridiculous. They know so much more than we do.' In an essay significantly entitled 'On Not Writing for Children', Travers (1975: 15) states her 'conviction ... that very few people write for children.' Travers justly questions the validity of any such field as 'children's literature' and suspects that 'it has ... been created less by writers than by publishers and booksellers - and perhaps indeed by people who teach Children's Literature' (1975:16). She makes a deft assertion in this connection by pointing out that the word 'children' 'covers, as with grownups, every kind of being that exists' (1975: 16). Indeed, Travers (1975:20-1) believes that 'if you are honest you have, in fact, no idea where childhood ends and maturity begins. It is all endless and all one.' Numerous writers subscribe to these sentiments, so that Robert Bator (1983:21) concludes that 'their common cry, "I write for myself", may be shorthand for "I write for the child within me and therefore for all children." ' 'I do not write for children,' states George MacDonald (in Carpenter & Prichard, 1984:329) 'but for the childlike, whether of five or fifty, or seventy-five.' (The complexity of thought in MacDonald's novel *At the Back of the North Wind* - especially as expressed in the dual nature of the death- angel-like Lady North Wind - is briefly considered in Chapter II). Travers (1975:21) agrees that 'childlikeness - ah, that's a different matter. It is a quality that can be found in child and grown-up alike. It has nothing to do with age.' The primal and most important aspect of the childlike is the element of wonder, which involves the recognition of the mystery at the heart of the world, and therefore an acceptance of everything that constitutes its unfathomable whole, whether beautiful or terrible, light or dark. The Romantic child dances beyond logic and the reach of reason, through nursery meadows and sinister forests.

That the evasiveness of the literature of Romantic childhood should be particularly apparent with regard to literary theory is only to be expected. It is a

literature that can be dealt with only on its own terms. Of 'children's literature' Peter Hunt (1992:2) believes that 'as a body of texts, as well as a body of criticism, it does not fit into the dominant system's hierarchy or classifications, and consequently, like colonial or feminist literatures, it has presented an irritant to established thinking'. However, as children's literature has in recent decades asserted itself as a field of academic inquiry, it has also been subjected to forms of analysis once reserved for 'mainstream literature'. Although this thesis does not follow any one specific critical approach, some of the general approaches which Hunt (in Bator, 1983:121) identifies in broad outline can be discerned in it.

The 'contextual' approach involves the study of a text within the framework of its historical and social background as well as biographical knowledge about the writer. The historical and social background is an important consideration in discussing the dynamic pastorasism of Blake and also the nostalgic paganism of Kenneth Grahame, since they both worked within rapidly changing contexts and kinds of spiritual upheaval (Chapter I). Biographical knowledge about Richard Adams is a crucial starting point in Chapter III, grounding the argument for de la Mare's influence on his work. The 'generic' approach, which includes the investigation of literary traditions, is of value in Chapter IV where the interplay of ideas around the pastoral tradition informs the argument. Of the 'objective critical methods' mentioned by Hunt, the 'formalistic' approach – relating to 'structuralism' – and the 'exponential' approach, dealing with themes, symbols, motifs, imagery, and other literary patterns, would seem to combine in identifying parallel chapters in the Mary Poppins books and within those, common motifs and symbols such as the cosmic dance and the teachers of wisdom (Chapter II). The treatment of the cosmic dance and numerous other instances in this study could be said to relate to 'archetypal' criticism described by Marilyn Kaye (in Bator, 1983:142) as being 'based on the premise that certain themes or motifs in literature have a universal symbolic nature based in myth and ritual'. An aspect of 'sociological' criticism

might be detected in the awareness, in Chapter V, of the disparity between the idealized 'noble savage' and the sad historical plight of Native peoples in America and elsewhere. As 'sociological' criticism relies on the assumption that a work of literature contains what Kaye (in Bator, 1983:143) calls 'common acceptable sociocultural elements', it bears some significance in considering the representation of the cultural 'other', especially in a post-colonial context.

These approaches can all come into play intuitively while studying literary works, but the response which the texts discussed in this study seem to elicit in me has a close affinity with archetypal criticism. Also termed 'mythic' criticism, the archetypal approach deals with timeless and universally significant ideas that seem even to cut across cultures, such as the restoration of an afflicted world through the sacrifice of a hero. (This idea surfaces in a significant way in Chapter V). It is an aim of this study to indicate the poetic validity of the Romantic spirit by emphasizing its universal coherence and relevance, and in this context the archetypal is a congenial approach. In connection with mythic interests, Reinbert Tabbert (in Ewers *et al.*, 1994:50) mentions the notion that '*in erfolgreichen Kinderbüchern der private Wunschtraum eines Autors mit dem Wunschtraum eines Kollektivs zusammenfällt*' [in successful children's books the private dream of an author coincides with the dream of a collective]. It stands to reason that the book yields its greatest gift if the reader partakes of its dream – which the 'implied reader' presumably does. This is why it has been asserted earlier that the dreams of Romantic childhood are to be approached only on their own terms; only then do they shed their wisdom. 'Through and out on the other side – it's the way they get to be wise...'. These are the wise shadows of Travers's dream in *Mary Poppins in the Park*. This is what the reader's mind is like, dreaming through the book – through and out on the other side. Talking to Jonathan Cott about the shadows, Travers remarks: 'You're really teaching me my book'. But Cott (1981:228) replies: 'Your book taught me about your book'.

The collective dream in which Romantic childhood had, if not its origin (for it has a timeless, archetypal quality), its ultimate and lasting manifestation is what Judith Plotz (in Nikolajeva, 1995:5) identifies as the child 'idolatry' of the nineteenth century. She regards this 'idolatry' as

the consequence of the romantic transvaluation of childhood which imputed (and newly perceived in) children a set of qualities that designated the Child ...the idol of an age from which a transcendent God was disappearing. These Romantically promulgated qualities, which promote childhood even as they demote adulthood, are related to two convictions: childhood is Nature-in-Man, and the child's is the most representative, most creatively unifying human mind. (in Nikolajeva, 1995:6)

In this light, it can perhaps be suggested that the presence of the divine that pervades the works discussed in this study is not a random or even independent force, but stands in direct relation to the spiritual presence of the child-god in the book. The principle of unity embodied in the child-god is of utmost importance in the argument of the study and involves the 'unitary psychological and cognitive powers' Plotz (in Nikolajeva, 1995:7) cite as assigned to the Child in the Romantic transvaluation: 'idealism, holism, animism, faith, and psychological self-sufficiency - all modes of putting the world and the self at one'. These 'powers' all feature to some degree in my discussion of texts in Romantic terms, particularly in ideas around the hero, who as child-god follows the wise teachings of nature - knows himself and knows that he has everything within himself, as true hero he travels to the unknowing and back again to restore, as man-god, his fallen world. This quest is an arduous one, running through mythic space of both shadow and light, and its hero is no actual child but the Romantic child-god; to regard this in any other light is often, perhaps, to misread a literary archetype.

A striking example of the various jumbled misconceptions concerning children's literature is the case of *Platero y Yo* (Platero and I), a collection of prose poems by the Spanish author Juan Ramón Jiménez. In 1913, knowing that he was working on this, the journal *La Lectura* approached the author with a request that some of the 'most idyllic' pieces be made available to them in advance for their Juvenile Library. Jiménez ([1916] 1959:9-10) later added a 'Little Prologue' to the complete version containing an '*ADVERTENCIA A LOS HOMBRES QUE LEAN ESTE LIBRO PARA NIÑOS*' (Warning to those who read this book for children):

Este breve libro, en donde la alegría y la pena son gemelas, cual las orejas de Platero, estaba escrito para . ¡qué sé yo para quién! ... para quien escribimos los poetas líricos ... Ahora que va a los niños, no le quito ni le pongo una coma. ¡Que bien!

'Dondequiera que haya niños - dice Novalis -, existe una edad de oro. ' Pues por esa edad de oro, que es como una isla espiritual caída del cielo, anda el corazón del poeta, y se encuentra allí tan a su gusto, que su mejor deseo sería no tener que abandonarla nunca.

...

Yo nunca he escrito ni escribiré nada para niños

[This short book, in which joy and sorrow are twins, like Platero's ears, was written for ... How would I know for whom! ... for whom we poets write poems .. Now that it goes to the children, I don't take away nor add a comma. Well done!

'Wherever there are children - says Novalis - there exists a golden age.' So towards this golden age, that is like a spiritual island fallen from the sky, moves the heart of the poet, and loves it there so well that its greatest wish would be never to abandon it... I have never written, nor ever will write anything for children]¹

Thus Jiménez denies ever intending to write a book 'for children'; he embraces, however, the world of Romantic childhood, and acknowledges its inspiration. He subtly criticizes the notion that this world - this 'island' - should

¹ Unless otherwise indicated, this and subsequent translations are mine.

of necessity be an 'idyllic' one: his book is informed by happiness *and* grief. The poet's notion of the golden age as a 'spiritual island' allows us to equate it with the 'childlikeness' mentioned earlier, an essential inner quality. Since it is not clear why this book by Jiménez should be regarded as reading especially fit for a juvenile library, one can conclude that the reason might concern a misplaced sense of the 'idyllic' in a work informed by a poet's relationship with an animal - Platero is a donkey - and the natural world around him. For as Ricardo Gullón (Jiménez, 1959: iii) notes in his introduction to the book, one '*puede ver a Platero como símbolo de la naturaleza con quien el autor dialoga*' [could see Platero as a symbol of nature with whom the author is in dialogue]. The presence of his animal companion guides the poet to an understanding of the world around him that is rooted in wonder, and an acceptance of both the shadow and the light.

For the world of the childlike is not a pastoral idyll, but one of light as well as shadow and Jiménez celebrates this world in all its aspects. In Chapter LXXI, called 'Tormenta' (Storm) he describes a morning when '*el terrible cielo bajo ahoga el amanecer. (No hay por dónde escapar.) ... ¡Angelus! Un Angelus duro y abandonado, solloza entre el tronido. ¿El último Angelus del mundo?*' (Jiménez, 1959:132) [the low, terrible sky smothers the dawn. (There is nowhere to escape.) ... Angelus! A hard and abandoned angelus sobs in the thunder. The last angelus of the world?]. Death is spiritually honoured for its role in the cycle of life, for after the death of his companion, the poet knows that '*tú, Platero, feliz en tu prado de rosas eternas, me verás detenerme ante los lirios amarillos - que ha brotado tu descompuesto corazón*' (1959:243) [you, Platero, happy in your meadow of eternal roses, will see me linger at the yellow irises - that have sprouted from your decomposed heart].

From the way in which the poet approaches death here - the metaphor of the decomposed heart, in particular, demands a specialized insight, one that is able to deal with a troubling image as part of a greater poetic truth - one can gather how problematic the phrase 'children's literature' could be if it is taken to signify 'literature for child readers'. As should be clear from what has been said

about Jiménez, the statement by Travers, and subsequent examples throughout the study, this description is not widely applicable. But since the works concerned in this study are of the kind defended by Jiménez and Travers, the term should be understood in this context as referring to 'literature of the childlike'.

Nevertheless, although it often seems baffling that certain books are categorized as 'children's literature', some plausible reasons for this categorization are germane to this study: because 'children's literature' has become a repository for traditional material, writing dealing with any of the interests of traditional material - myth, fantasy and animals (especially talking ones) - continues to find its way there. This causes many writers to work within the tradition of 'children's literature' in order to produce a specific and special kind of writing: when, in the words of C.S. Lewis (1963:460), 'a children's story is the best art form for something you have to say.' To this idea of the 'congeniality' of the 'genre' of children's literature contribute, of course, the Romantic notions around the child and childhood - a communion with nature, a sense of wonder and awareness of the ineffable. Considering the immense wealth of the children's literature tradition, it seems no wonder that numerous writers refuse to be regarded as writing 'for children', in the limited sense of the word, as their writing celebrates and expounds the 'childlike' of Romantic conception. Because, as Ursula Le Guin (1987:11) points out,

for the people Civilization calls 'primitive', 'savage', or 'underdeveloped', including young children, the continuity, interdependence, and community of all life, all forms of being on earth, is a lived fact, made conscious in narrative (myth, ritual, fiction). This continuity of existence, neither benevolent nor cruel itself, is fundamental to whatever morality may be built upon it. Only Civilization builds its morality by denying its foundation.

For this reason civilization has dismissed so many of its treasures as being 'for children'. But for this reason, too, the house of 'children's literature' is full of and filled with ever more riches. For, as Le Guin (1987:12) notes further,

Women and unruly men will tell their daughters and sons what the fox said to the ox, what Raven told South Wind. And the cat will say, 'I am the cat that walks by himself, and all places are alike to me!' And the Man, infuriated by this failure to acknowledge Hierarchy, will throw his boots and his little stone ax (that makes three) at the Cat. Only when the Man listens, and attends, O Best Beloved, and hears, and understands, will the Cat return to the Cat's true silence.

A central theme of this study is the unity of all things, the 'continuity of existence', which is recognized and celebrated in Romantic childhood. This unity, however, far from being idyllic, 'is not a simple harmony,' Le Guin (1987:12) agrees; 'the Peaceable Kingdom, where lion and lamb lie down, is an endearing vision not of this world. It denies wilderness. And voices cry in the Wilderness.' 'Wilderness' is the concern of this study, in all its aspects of beauty and terror - for it is not simple, but dual. It is a place where light casts shadows, where some must die for others to live, where there is neither end nor beginning.

These ideas are present, in various ways, in the literature to be discussed, but are strengthened in all cases or even intensified, by the evocation of the numinous, manifestations of the divine presence, the ultimate embodiment of cosmic unity. This is the kind of divinity recognized by a child from whose letter to herself Travers (1975:17) quotes in support of not writing for children: 'The Lord is the Father of all things and Mary Poppins is the Mother of all things and they are married, or have been married, and they are both a miracle. Now,' asks Travers, with reason, 'could I dare, could I presume to write for such a child?' This child, who shows us that the Romantic child is not just an idea, is our wide-eyed guide and takes us by the hand and leads us 'along that shining highway to

the dim land east o' the sun and west o' the moon where freedom is ... and the eyes of lions, and the mysterious stars' (Grahame, 1894:106).

Now I lay me down to sleep
with bear and rabbit, bird and sheep.
If I should dream before I wake,
may I dream of William Blake.

Nancy Willard
from 'The Tiger Asks Blake for a Bedtime Story'



Illustration by Alice & Martin Provensen for
Willard's *A Visit to William Blake's Inn* (Willard,
1981:33)

CHAPTER I

'That All Things Be Mysterious' Introductory Thoughts on Nature and the Divine

... at the same time that we are earnest to explore and learn all things, we require that all things be mysterious and unexplorable, that land and sea be infinitely wild, unsurveyed and unfathomed by us because unfathomable

- Henry David Thoreau

God and nature seem to be inextricably involved in the human mind. In nature we recognize a dimension alien to us in the sense that it lies largely beyond human grasp and understanding. Yet, we know that we form part of it and that it presents to us the only tangible revelation of the divine that is above us. Thus, our conception of the one colours our vision of the other. 'I am the light that is over all things,' says Jesus in one of the gnostic texts, the *Gospel of Thomas*, 'I am all: From me all has come forth, and to me all has reached. Split a piece of wood; I am there. Lift up the stone, and you will find me there' (Meyer, 1992:55). In an almost pantheistic way one is assured of a divine mystery pervading all, a greater reality behind everyday. And it is this reality that causes nature to seem 'mysterious and unexplorable, ...infinitely wild, unsurveyed and unfathomed...because unfathomable', as Thoreau ([1854] 1995:250) writes towards the end of *Walden*: We draw on this mystery in our desire for spiritual fulfilment, in turn infusing nature with our conceptions of the numinous. But our minds are limited and easily troubled when contemplating nature's infinite and untempered wildness – for it is both beautiful and terrible. An intuition of the divine thus makes us accept and stand in awe of the unfathomable in nature.

Central to the understanding of the mysticism of nature and its inherent pantheist quality is what Jackie Wullschläger (1995:167), in her study of Victorian children's literature and specifically *The Wind in the Willows* by Kenneth Grahame, calls 'paganism'. As the term 'paganism' is often applied rather loosely to anything from the pre-Christian heathen to the modern irreligious, something needs to be said to clarify its significance here. Along the lines suggested by Wullschläger, paganism will be regarded here as a sense of spirituality derived from communion with nature and the transcendent experience this can afford. 'Pantheism' might serve as an apter, though still vague, term embracing these notions. For this reason, the terms 'paganism' and 'pantheism' will be used to refer generally to the same range of ideas. Blunden (1949:61) mentions a 'fear of paganism' as repressing our intuition about nature, 'that joy of intuition which

alone can give reasonable hope of "some more azure sky". ' In her theological treatise, *God's World, God's Body*, Grace M. Jantzen (1984:145) argues against a perceived fear of pantheism and asserts that 'all reality is God's reality, that there can be nothing without God or utterly apart from him or independent of him' (1984:149). She continues that, seen in this light, 'pantheism is not an alternative to Christian theology but an ingredient in it' (Jantzen, 1984:149.). Thus, although it is true that Grahame's paganism, as Wullschläger describes it in her study of *The Wind in the Willows*, constitutes an escape from, among other things, the specific form of Victorian Christianity, the transcendence and spirituality sought by the former retains what is true and pure in the latter. One might attribute this to the notion that pantheism or paganism in the specific sense given by Wullschläger is an 'intuition' (of the numinous), 'an idea that has refused to die' (Jantzen, 1984:145). Let us now consider the seminal passage from *The Wind in the Willows* to which Wullschläger's discussion refers.

Chapter 7 of *The Wind in the Willows* is significantly titled 'The Piper at the Gates of Dawn', suggesting the entrance into another, higher dimension. Here the mystical encounter of the Rat and the Mole with Pan on the island in the stream, the 'holy place' of Rat's 'song-dream' (Grahame, [1908] 1984:104-5), is recounted:

... the Mole felt a great Awe fall upon him, an awe that turned his muscles to water, bowed his head, and rooted his feet to the ground. It was no panic terror - indeed he felt wonderfully at peace and happy - but it was an awe that smote and held him and, without seeing, he knew it could only mean that some august Presence was very, very near.

In language of strong religious sentiment we are told about 'the call and the summons' to look into the face of the divine, a call that Mole knows 'he might not refuse, were Death himself waiting to strike him instantly, once he had looked with mortal eye on things rightly kept hidden.' Then,

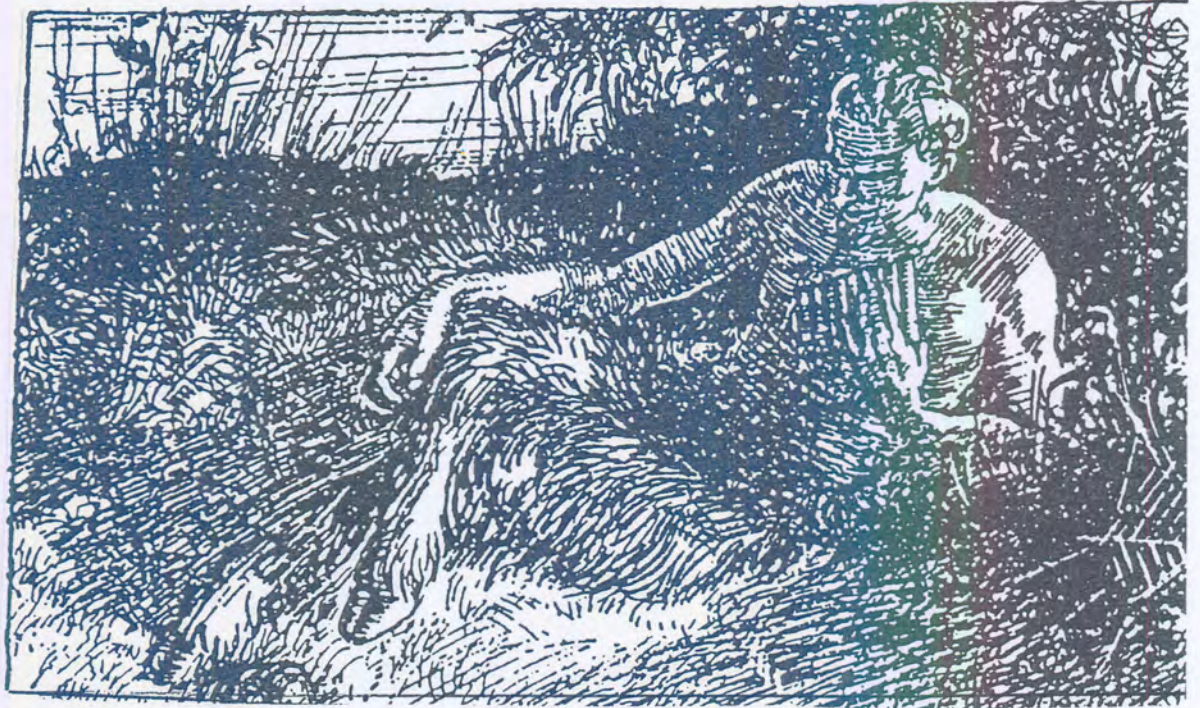
while Nature, flushed with fullness of incredible colour, seemed to hold her breath for the event, he looked in the very eyes of the Friend and Helper; saw the backward sweep of the curved horns, gleaming in the growing daylight; saw the stern, hooked nose between the kindly eyes that were looking down on them humorously, while the bearded mouth broke into a half-smile at the corners; saw the rippling muscles on the arm that lay across the broad chest, the long supple hand still holding the pan-pipes only just fallen away from the parted lips; saw the splendid curves of the shaggy limbs disposed in majestic ease on the sward ..All this he saw, for one moment breathless and intense, vivid on the morning sky; and still, as he looked, he lived; and still, as he lived, he wondered.

'Rat!' he found breath to whisper, shaking. 'Are you afraid?' 'Afraid?' murmured the Rat, his eyes shining with unutterable love. 'Afraid! Of Him? O, never, never! And yet - and yet - O, Mole, I am afraid!'

Then the two animals, crouching to the earth, bowed their heads and did worship.

Wullschläger (1995:166-7) regards 'the piper Pan [... as] a pagan version of the "Friend and Helper" of Victorian Christianity' and argues that 'the highly charged rhetoric, the Christian imagery and tone transferred to a secular context, the hazy sense of half-understanding, of magic and mystery, the worship of nature which is implicated in the spiritual experience, all are typical ingredients of Edwardian writing.' Within this specific context it is significant that she goes on to explain that 'in a society where Christian observance was no longer *de rigueur*, where theological passions and idealism were spent, the old religious forms and images were called in to service new spiritual experiments. Any mystic experience ... aroused interest and paganism became the most popular of the secular adaptations' (1995:167).

But it will be seen that Wullschläger's assessment of 'paganism', as well as the passage from Grahame, has wider applications. She admits that 'the pagan obsession has been evident in literature since the Romantics' (Wullschläger, 1995:167). Thus, this 'pagan sensibility' in Grahame is a Romantic trait, as can be perceived in almost all of the literature considered in this study; it is infused with



'The Piper at the Gates of Dawn' of Grahame's *The Wind in the Willows*, by E.H. Shepard (in Wullschläger, 1995)

Edwardian nostalgia, but is not restricted to this. In fact, Romanticism is a persisting artistic spirit not limited to time; it recognizes, reveres and celebrates the dualistic wildness of nature in all its aspects, not least because of the mysticism inherent in man's limited 'half-understanding' of it.

Of the quoted passage from *The Wind in the Willows*, about the animals and the god, Wytenbroek (1995:434) says that it 'is actually a coalescing, a summing up of the spiritual principles of natural harmony that inform all the other chapters.' Although Wytenbroek (1995:434) and Wullschläger (1995:166) both point to the fact that the chapter in question, 'The Piper at the Gates of Dawn', as well as the other 'mystical' chapter, 'Wayfarers All', have been regarded as 'anachronistic' within the work as a whole, they both agree that these chapters spiritually inform the novel in a most significant way. The fact that a book such as *The Wind in the Willows* should contain such spiritual wealth attests to the notion that the decline of tradition and religion seems to correlate with the decline of the natural world from the industrial revolution onwards and that these discarded relics of a bygone time, or rather certain aspects of them, have found a sanctuary in the timeless realm of Romantic childhood. Wullschläger (1995:146 & 152), discussing the circumstances of the composition of Grahame's novel, asserts that the 'hazy desire for spirituality' marking this novel, the 'worship of nature and a fascination for Pan, the god of nature who was half-boy, half-beast' serve as 'an anchor against changing ways and a disappearing rural tradition, and as a symbol of spiritual possibility in an increasingly secular age.'

Fantasy writing does seem to lend itself to the exploration, or at least the suggestion, of spirituality and mysticism foreign to dominant cultures. It should be apparent that the circumstances faced by Grahame and his contemporaries do not differ substantially from those of the technological era and that Romanticism remains a freeing spirit for obvious reasons. Romanticism itself emerged as a reaction by the spiritual, mystic, and natural against the merely and ignorantly rational. The act of what Tolkien (1988:36) calls 'sub-creation' allows an author to

put forth shadows of a perceived, but ungrasped reality and to comment on it seeking to portray certain aspects of it by placing it within an illuminating context, a new story, a new mythology. This dissertation will explore a number of works of children's literature, which present a fantastical world or a created world - such as the natural worlds of *Watership Down* or *The Wind in the Willows* - in which the numinous or divine serves as an informing spiritual principle.

In the passage quoted from 'The Piper at the Gates of Dawn' an all-pervading sense of wonder and mystery in the face of nature and its awe-inspiring divinity is apparent. Of Mole's experience in the presence of the god it is written: 'as he looked, he lived; and still, as he lived, he wondered.' George S. Hendry (1980:40), in *Theology of Nature*, points to the importance of 'the element of wonder' in 'the child's vision of reality' esteemed by Romantic sensibility. Opposing this 'is the habit of analysis ... [which] is an activity of the intelligence, which seeks to know things by breaking them into their component parts, whereas wonder is a passive attitude of sensitivity, or receptivity, in which things disclose themselves to us without our seeking.' This appraisal of 'wonder' finely captures the spirit of Mole and Rat's mystical experience, as they have revealed unto them 'things rightly kept hidden' and accept this with unquestioning and childlike awe, accepting mystery on its own terms. Hendry (1980:42) states that wonder 'consists in the capacity to see things whole', which makes any 'mystical experience, if not ineffable altogether, ... exceedingly hard to describe. The describable is the specific, and the mystical experience is of a kind that transcends specifics.' For mystery involves the apprehension of things above and outside of human understanding, which includes nature in many of its aspects and, more specifically, as relating to the divine mind or spirit perceived behind or within it. And 'presence' is, according to Gabriel Marcel (in Hendry, 1980:45), a distinctive feature of mystery, as it is of the traditional Romantic perception of nature. Hendry (1980:45) quotes from Wordsworth's 'Lines Composed a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey' to illustrate this mystic conception of 'presence':

...I have felt
A presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man.

In the passage from *The Wind in the Willows* an instinctive and awful sense of 'some august Presence' precedes the mystical appearance of the divine. Consciousness of this presence seems always to be a dual experience: Rat is not afraid and yet he *is* afraid; Wordsworth is 'disturbed' by the 'joy' of it. Such approaches to nature are the concern of this study, though it is difficult to define them too rigidly. The divine presence may be represented or incarnated in various ways in literature, but few certainties are ours and we have to content ourselves with the one truth we know of - that of mystery. For 'when you come to think of it,' asks P.L. Travers (1989:117), 'what else but mystery is there to talk about?' She refers to her novel *Friend Monkey*, in which the boy Edward 'suddenly wakes up in the family cabin on the ship that is carrying them from London to the South Seas. "Where is God?" he demands.' When Edward does not understand his mother's explanation of the omnipresence of God, his father tells him that it is a mystery. 'A mystery! What a relief! It was things that were not mysterious that Edward always worried about. Facts. Plain common facts appalled him. But a mystery could take care of itself. He fell asleep at once.' The Romantic child's ability to see 'the world whole', the acceptance of mystery, is apparent in this incident.²

² The childhood ability to see the world whole is mentioned in a short story ('The evening party') by Virginia Woolf (1985:92-3):

'Don't you remember in early childhood, when in play or talk, as one stepped across the puddle or reached the window on the landing, some imperceptible shock froze the universe to a solid ball of crystal which one held for a moment – I have some mystical belief that all time past and future too, the tears and powdered ashes of generations clotted to a ball; then we were absolute and entire; nothing then was excluded; that was certainty – happiness.'

Seeing the world whole implies accepting both the light it shines in and the shadow it casts. The dual elements of wonder and fear are both part of the mysterious encounter between mortal and divine. Edmund Burke (1854:88-89), in his treatise on the sublime and beautiful, after having asserted that 'the passion caused by the great and sublime in *nature*, when those causes operate most powerfully, is astonishment; and astonishment is that state of the soul, in which all its motions are suspended, with some degree of horror' and that 'terror is in all cases whatsoever, either more openly or latently, the ruling principle of the sublime,' directs attention to the close affinity between the conceptions of wonder and fear; the Greek language, in fact, offers one term to refer to both (Burke, 1854:88-89). Burke (1854:88-89) refers also to the Latin term *attonitus*, related to 'astonishment' and suggesting as much as 'thunder-struck'. Certainly, in the passage from *The Wind in the Willows* this confluence of wonder and fear is strikingly apparent. Mole is struck with 'an awe that smote and held him' and fears for his life, while Rat is afraid despite himself. The encounter with any form of divinity, especially within nature, must needs arouse emotions of wonder and fear in mortal beings, expressing their recognition and appreciation of something that remains ever incomprehensible to them. Indeed, in *The Wildness Pleases: The Origins of Romanticism*, Christopher Thacker (1983:77) points to the original use of the term 'sublime', 'most often as an attribute of the Divinity which was so great as to be beyond human expression or comprehension.' Within the Romantic context, 'the wildness of nature could be classed as sublime, since it too was a part of the Divinity, and had qualities of terrible greatness which were beyond description' (1983:77).

As the vision of the Mole and the Rat vanishes, they experience a 'dumb misery deepening as they slowly [realize] all they ha[ve] seen and all they ha[ve] lost.' But

a capricious little breeze, dancing up from the surface of the water, tossed the aspens, shook the dewy roses, blew lightly and caressingly in their faces, and with its soft touch came instant

oblivion. For this is last best gift that the kindly demi-god is careful to bestow on those to whom he has revealed himself in their helping: the gift of forgetfulness. Lest the awful remembrance should remain and grow, and overshadow mirth and pleasure, and the great haunting memory should spoil all the after-lives of little animals helped out of difficulties, in order that they should be happy and light-hearted as before. (Grahame, 1988:106)

The gift of the god, according to Wytenbroek (1995:433), consists in offering a transcendence which 'aids, ... touches ... [and] moves on, leaving their lives fundamentally unchanged so that they can explore and develop themselves rather than becoming lost in the god, or in their experience of him.' Wytenbroek (1995:433.) asserts that 'this is the ultimate view of natural mysticism - a mysticism that in fact encourages only more naturalness, changing nothing of the essential nature of those it touches.' This conception of 'natural mysticism' is significant to the discussion of Richard Adams's *Watership Down* in Chapter III). As for the gift of oblivion, in Chapter III it is noted how Tishnar, the mysterious goddess of Walter de la Mare's *The Three Mulla-Mulgars*, bestows no gift of forgetfulness and if an unfortunate creature should even dream of one of her Maidens, he will never find happiness more but pine away. The duality inherent within nature is shown, in Chapter III, to be suggestively represented by Tishnar and in the novel's treatment of the numinous in general.

The acceptance of this kind of both beauty and terror - a capability that requires a childlike sense of wonder - brings a vision of the world whole. And the unity of all things, an insight so central to the argument of this study, is an ancient knowledge. David Fideler (1993:59) reminds us that 'according to the Pythagoreans, the cosmos is made up of a dynamic harmony of opposites or complementary forces. In the same way that the year encompasses both winter and summer, night and day, so too is the universe a living harmony of opposing tendencies and forces'. Significantly, 'the starting point of Pythagorean science was to recognize the beauty of the universe' (1993:59). Recognizing the beauty of

the complete universe is the prerogative of the true hero. But first he has to learn that what is without is also within, and therefore go on a quest to find himself in order to attain wholeness. Mary Poppins, the cosmic nanny of the tradition of the great earth-mother, and Aslan, the archetypal sun-lion, symbolic of the sky-father, both teach the way of the hero. In Chapter II it is seen how C.S. Lewis's Aslan and P.L.Travers's Mary Poppins harbour within their own natures the dual aspect of beauty and terror and how they teach the unity of the complete universe through their doctrines of within/without correspondence, the holy in the common, and the dance of the breathing All.

The task of the true hero in a world seen whole is an arduous quest, often leading him to confront the intricate dynamics between the twin realms of life and death. It has been pointed out how these dual forces are incarnate in the goddess Tishnar of de la Mare's *The Three Mulla-Mulgars*. In Chapter III it will be seen how Richard Adams, having been profoundly influenced by de la Mare, presents, if possible, an even more troubled mythology. In *Watership Down*, he establishes the futility of attempting to fathom the divine, of probing that which is beyond mortal grasp. However, in *Watership Down* is also to be found a distinct plea for the supremacy of the natural, in its most simplistic and basic manifestations, along the lines suggested by Wytenbroek cited earlier. Survival, preserving the invaluable gift of life, is the primal and all-important requirement of the rabbits in this novel. Beyond the rabbits is the intricate relation between Frith, sun-god and life-giver, the awesome Black Rabbit of the Moon, and death. The metaphysical significance of this representation of the divinity and duality of nature is discussed in Chapter III with reference to the work of both Adams and de la Mare. The unresolved and never to be resolved duality of nature and the divine within it - seen from our finite and limited perspective - opens up ever more manifestations, ever more symbols of its mystery. The manifestations and symbols continue to be addressed by fantasy writers, usually not trying to give

explanations or provide resolutions, but intent upon revealing the existence of the mystery that is reality.

Something of the shadowy and dual nature of this reality can be gleaned from the following. De la Mare's Tishnar is strongly associated with the moon; Kath Filmer (1991:62), in an essay on Michael Ende's *The Unending Story* (*Die unendliche Geschichte*), comments on the Child Empress ('*Kindliche Kaiserin*') in this novel in a way that is equally true of Tishnar: 'Bastian names the Childlike Empress Moon Child ('*Mondenkind*'), a name laden with connotations of softness, light, gentleness and beauty. But a Moon Child is a creature as much of shadow as of light, so that the dualistic aspects of Fantasia are embodied in the Empress.' Towards the end of his novel *Der Spiegel im Spiegel: Ein Labyrinth* (*The Mirror within the Mirror: A Labyrinth*), one of Ende's (1984:326) characters speaks:

'Ach ja, immer die alten Geschichten,' antwortet sie müde, 'mit denen man versucht, das Gute von Bösen zu unterscheiden. Aber in der Erinnerung der Welt ist alles eins und notwendig.'

[*'O yes, always the old stories,' she replied tiredly, 'with which one tries to distinguish good from evil. But in the memory of the world all is one and needed.'*]

The conflict between what we call good and what we call evil is solved here by acceptance, the acceptance of mystery, which is beyond human understanding - a vision of the world whole.

The divergent emotions of wonder and fear can be seen to correlate with a duality manifested within nature. It is this kind of duality that moves Blake to put his awful question to the equally awful tiger: 'Did he who made the lamb make thee?' Before the Romantics, there was a tendency to see 'nature in the raw' as 'evidence of an angry God, irregular, broken, unlovely - and therefore to be tamed, and made part of an ordered, social scheme' (Thacker, 1983:4). Hendry (1980:54) refers to a 'persistence in popular piety of a dread of nature as a realm of sinister and malignant forces, which it was dangerous to inquire into.' The fact that nature is beautiful and terrible, 'sublime' thus, continues to excite meditation,

in various forms, on the god of nature, not least in children's literature, where things of spiritual import have often come to be harboured for various reasons.

In Chapter IV, dealing with children's poetry, this notion is further illustrated by establishing a perceived relation between the Romantic child, poetry, mysticism and tradition. Much poetry published or anthologized for children reveals a mystical quality and a Romantic appreciation of the complexity and fathomless intricacy of nature and the power behind it. A comparison is drawn between the pastoral sensibility and the Romantic reverence for the 'wildness' of nature. The former is argued to be 'man-centred', in the sense that the pastoral ideal represents an idyllic refuge untemperedly beautiful to human eyes and senses and therefore suited to man's comfort and convenience. The latter is called 'god-centred' in the very specific sense that it celebrates the wonder and fear of nature and recognizes those aspects, which render it incomprehensible and unfathomable to man, those aspects springing from an infinitely higher and greater mind. In much poetry this amounts to presenting a natural world to which man is alien, observing as an outsider, 'half-understanding' at best. However, it will be shown how these two sensibilities – that of the pastoral garden and that of the wilderness – are both valid and needed. In fact, they are united as a continuum in the being of the Romantic child, who illustrates in the spirit of Blake, that without contraries is no progression. It is the Romantic child, who comes from the pastoral garden, who is able to transcend the alienation from nature, experiencing a pantheistic communion with it, by entering into its mysticism, which involves accepting with wonder its beauty as well as its terror.

The continuity between the pastoral garden and the wilderness in the Romantic mind is seen from a different angle in Chapter V, where seemingly contradictory representations of the 'other' – notably the 'noble savage' – are seen to give way to a poetically valid truth. For the stereotype of the 'noble savage' becomes an archetype as it enters the realm of Romantic childhood. It is also

suggested in this chapter that the notions designated 'Romantic' have universal and archetypal validity, especially in the discussion of *Anpao* by Jamake Highwater. *Anpao*, drawn from Native American sources, is the son of the Sun and an earth woman – his father the universal life-giver and his mother the woman who chose death. Absorbing within his nature both of these aspects as well as the contrariness of his brother *Oapna* and the terror of the Moon, he personifies the ultimately significant unity within duality, that of the man-god. He quests for his true identity in the way of the true hero and dances back the Sun, Christ-like restoring the world to life, to wholeness. Son of the Sun, *Anpao*, the Dawn, leads the dance in a world of light and shadow.

The literature discussed in this dissertation invariably deals with nature in such a way as to reveal its inherent mysticism, related perhaps to the idea that nature's fathomlessness often appears to mortals as harbouring dual qualities; we tend to think, of course, in terms of binary oppositions, perhaps because our ability to see the world whole has been lost. Sub-creation often involves creating a figure, a symbol or a 'presence', which presents this mystery in recognizable form, so that its awful incomprehensibility might be admired and celebrated without any need for futile dissection. For what mortals long for is to see the world whole, to hold communion with that of which we once were and still are part, but from which we have sundered ourselves in numerous ways. The common attribute of the literary ideas in this study is that they assert a 'greater reality'. 'This mysticism is deeply spiritual but is completely natural, also. It reveals and augments what is already there in those who experience it. It does not alter them or demand of them. It simply reveals a greater reality both within the world at large and within them in particular' (Wytenbroek, 1995:434). 'This vision', says Wytenbroek (1995:434), 'is truly Romantic, truly pantheistic.' If the gift of the Mole and the Rat is to be achieved, it is to be achieved by the Romantic who recognizes the significance of Grace M. Jantzen's (1984:148) assertion that

'the universe cannot be utterly alien, impersonal and meaningless, but the personal and significant self-expression of God.'

... But something held him here at the water's edge, while his shadow lengthened along the sands and the cold evening wind began to rouse around him.

Perhaps into his mind had come something of the wonder of the sea, and a hint of all that it would one day mean to man. Though the first gods of his people still lay far in the future, he felt a dim sense of worship stir within him. He knew that he was now in the presence of something greater than all the powers and forces he had ever met.

- Arthur C. Clarke
From 'Transcience'

CHAPTER II

Of No Tame Lion and the Goddess Who Always Said No Incarnations of the Divine in Children's Fantasy

He is wild, you know. Not like a *tame* lion.

- C.S. Lewis

'No,' said Mary Poppins, who always said 'No.'

'Yes,' said Jane, who always knew everything ...

- P.L. Travers

The divine presence sensed within nature has been seen to give rise to, underlie and inform mystic experiences. To incarnate this divine presence as a single representative entity in the form of an animal or 'person', as some fantasy writers have done, entails the concentration of various ideas manifesting the numinous element within nature. For nature is to man the known unknown, that 'otherness' that is around us, within us in a sense, yet ultimately beyond. In many works of children's fantasy the dominant figure incarnating the numinous is a beast, such as Aslan in C.S. Lewis's *Chronicles of Narnia*, or a force of nature, such as North Wind in George MacDonald's *At the back of the North Wind*, or a person who embodies the wisdom of nature and teaches its wholeness and its magic, such as Mary Poppins in the stories by P.L. Travers. These works draw on the awe and the mystery of the natural world, for nature holds the dual qualities of beauty and terror that are inherent in encountering the divine presence.³ In the introduction to his anthropological study called *Man and Beast*, Roy Willis (1974:9) argues that

'the animal' is both within us, as part of our enduring biological heritage as human beings, and also, by definition, outside and beyond human society. The image of the symbolical animal is therefore necessarily a dualistic image, structurally homologous with the duality in human society and the human self between the real and the ultimate ideal, the ultimate and the longed for, even if subconsciously.

Yet another aspect of the duality of nature - and also 'human nature' - becomes apparent when considered in this light. The animal - like the Romantic

³ The duality of nature- inspired divinity in myth and fantasy is apparent in Tolkien's (1988:99) poem 'Mythopoeia' where he asserts that

Though all the crannies of the world we filled
with elves and goblins, though we dared to build
gods and their houses out of dark and light,
and sow the seed if dragons, 'twas our right
(used or misused). The right has not decayed.
We still make by the law in which we're made.

child, the true poet and the noble savage - becomes the medium for transcendence, the link with something lost or obscured. In Richard Adams's (1974:98) novel *Shardik*, a gigantic bear embodies 'the Power of God' under this name. The high priestess of this cult claims that 'by worshipping him thus we put a narrow, swaying bridge across the ravine that separates his savage nature from our own; and so in time become able to walk without stumbling through the fire of his presence.' For the presence of the divine is often a scorching experience and enveloped in darkness, because of our small knowledge and little understanding of it.

And 'there is a sense in which *darkness* has more of God than light has. He dwells in the thick darkness,' asserts F.W. Robertson ([1849] 1904:46) in the third of his *Ten Sermons* and he explains that 'moments of tender vague mystery often bring distinctly the feeling of His presence.' The importance of the notion of 'presence' in relation to 'mystery' has been illuminated in Chapter I of this study. Arrestingly, Robertson (1904:46) makes use of more expressions seminal to the argument of Chapter I in stating that 'God is approached more nearly in that which is *indefinite* than in that which is definite and distinct. He is felt in *awe* and *wonder* and *worship* rather than in clear *conception*' [my emphasis]. Robertson makes it clear that the divine is perceived in a special way through its unfathomable awe, its quality of mystery, its 'darker side', in this specific sense.

This chapter focuses on two characters from works of fantasy that appear to incarnate divine qualities in such a manner as to bring about transcendence by magic and sheer force of mystery, enforcing their 'teaching' - for such it will be seen to be - by the often terrifying awe of their presence. Robertson (1904:47) refers to God as 'the Being who had touched us with a withering hand and wrestled with us, yet whose presence, even when most *terrible*, was more *blessed* than His absence.' In a certain sense - and on another level, of course - this holds some truth for both the figures of the great lion Aslan of *The Chronicles of Narnia* by C.S. Lewis and the cosmic nanny Mary Poppins of P.L. Travers (in Cott,

1981:195), who calls herself 'a mere kitchen maid in the house of myth and poetry.' But the qualities in question are embodied in different ways by numerous 'presences' from 'the house of myth and poetry', to which fantasy also belongs and might be illustrated by referring to a few of these before returning to the wild lion and the goddess who always said 'no'.

Invoking duality in some form or another so as to create the required sense of awful mystery around and emanating from the numinous presence is a feature of most of the writing discussed in this study. Duality, in its various forms, functions on different levels, according to the conception of the numinous in a specific context. Aslan, in *The Chronicles of Narnia*, illustrates Lewis's (in Lindskoog, 1973:51) conviction that 'the lion, when he has ceased to be dangerous, will still be awful'. In his symbolic role as Christ-figure, the quarrel of this wild lion is with what Blake (1958:78) calls 'creeping Jesus', the conventional gentle Jesus, meek and mild. Aslan's 'wildness' places him beyond the understanding of humans, as the divine is beyond the understanding of mortals. Still, Aslan represents ultimate truth and good; Lewis rejects any conception of 'dualism' implying good and evil in all things (Lindskoog, 1973:40). Duality does serve more troubled conceptions too, however, such as that of the goddess Tishnar in Walter de la Mare's *The Three Mulla-Mulgars*, discussed in Chapter III. Conceptions of divinity are various and sometimes clouded, but the fantasies discussed in this study seem generally to echo what Dorothy Sayers (1970:102) says in *The Mind of the Maker*.

God, Creator of all things, creates Evil as well as Good, because the creation of a category of Good necessarily creates a category of Not-Good. From this point of view, those who say that God is 'beyond Good and Evil' are perfectly right: He transcends both, because both are included within His Being. But the Evil has no reality except in relation to His Good; and this is meant by saying that Evil is negation or deprivation of Good.⁴

⁴ In *A Glastonbury Romance*, John Cowper Powys ([1932] 1955:77) writes that the 'First Cause', the

The Child Empress of Michael Ende's *Die Unendliche Geschichte* seems to embody divinity within her own fantastic realm along the lines set out by Sayers. In Chapter I Filmer (1991:62) has been quoted asserting that the 'Moon Child is a creature as much of shadow as of light, so that the dualistic aspects of Fantastica are embodied in the Empress.' Without the Child Empress nothing in the realm of Fantasia [*Phantásien*] could exist, for

jedes Geschöpf, ob gut oder böse, ob schön oder häßlich, lustig oder ernst, töricht oder weise, alle, alle waren nur da durch ihr Dasein. Ohne sie konnte nichts bestehen, so wenig ein menschlicher Körper bestehen könnte, der kein Herz mehr hat (Ende, 1979:40) [each creature, whether good or evil, whether beautiful or ugly, merry or grave, foolish or wise, all, all were there only through her existence. Without her nothing could exist, as little as could exist a human body that had no heart anymore].

The duality embodied by the all-important Empress - and symbolised by her sign, that of the black and white serpents biting each other's tails and guarding the Fountain of the Water of Life, represented on the holy amulet 'Auryn' - is enforced throughout Ende's book by various characters in various ways. In the fifth chapter, for instance, the sphinxes guarding the southern oracle are described as having faces human in form, though not in expression:

Es war schwer zu entscheiden, ob dieses Gesicht lächelte oder unermessliche Trauer widerspiegelte oder auch völlige Gleichgültigkeit. Nachdem Atréju es eine Weile betrachtet hatte, schien es ihm allerdings von abgrundtiefer Bosheit und Grausamkeit erfüllt, doch gleich mußte er seinen Eindruck wieder berichtigen und fand nicht mehr als reine

'unknown Ultimate', the 'primal Cause of all Life', is 'divided against Itself in those ultimate regions of primal causation. Its primordial goodness warring forever against its primordial evil holds life up only by vast excess of energy and by oceans of lavish waste.' What Powys (1942:60) says about duality in *Mortal Strife* is also significant in terms of the idea - to be encountered later in this study - that the true hero has all within: 'It is the fact that they themselves are God. Their resistance to what they are suffering is the resistance of a Divine-Diabolic entity. God and Jesus, Lucifer and the Holy Spirit, are only south winds and north winds, voyaging tempests and starlit calms, within the circle of the individual soul.'

Heiterkeit darin (1979:98) [It was difficult to decide whether this face smiled or reflected fathomless sorrow or even absolute indifference. After Atréju had considered it for a while, it seemed to him indeed filled with profound Evil and cruelty, yet soon he had to amend this impression and found nothing more than pure serenity in it].

The Child Empress is good, yet it should be remembered that Charles Williams (1949:65) says in one of his novels (*Descent into Hell*) that 'Good ... contains terror.' Indeed, when she is prepared to risk, in the twelfth chapter, not only the end of Fantasia, but what is more, an endless repetition of foregoing events - thus '*das Ende ohne Ende*' [the end without end] - in order to save it, rejuvenate it, the Old Man of the Roaming Mountain [*'Der Alte vom Wandernden Berge'*], chronicler of events in Fantasia, declares: '*Wahrlich, du bist schrecklich*' [Truly, you are terrible] (Ende, 1979:211).

For the Child Empress conserves her realm of Fantasia with its good and evil creatures, against that which is truly evil - the Nothing [*'das Nichts'*]. The Empress can be cured of her illness, and thus save her realm, by receiving a name from a human child. The name-giver is in turn led to transcendence by discovering his true self - through a process of loss, or rather, a process of gaining by losing, as the new Fantasia comes to life out of his own wishes. All of this comments significantly on the nature of fantasy. Filmer (1991:61) speculates that the Empress 'symbolises, perhaps, the realm of the subconscious mind, where archetypal images and shapes are manifested and from which the imagination springs. And naming is surely an exercise of the imagination.' Thus, through the experience of creation and the presence of the Empress, transcendence and insight are achieved. Under the sway of the Empress, 'Fantasy offers sometimes uncomfortable and often quite painful encounters as readers see in metaphorical mirrors, which it is the business of fantasy to construct, images of themselves. Fantasy is a confrontationist literature, and its message is often uncompromisingly harsh' (Filmer, 1991:63). Bastian Balthazar Bux, the name

giver, loses his own name for the sake of gaining his true self. But the name giver may not stay in Fantasia; he has to return to the human world - with his wisdom gained through transcendence and new-found selfhood, which, being acquired by losing the self, consists in selflessness. (The significance of this for the Romantic hero who has to accomplish the feats of finding his 'self' and returning to his own world is to be seen from the rest of this chapter, as well as elsewhere in the study.)

Another child who has to be led back to her own world by an incarnate divine guardian is the girl Myra in Ursula Le Guin's story 'Buffalo Gals, Won't You Come Out Tonight'. Surviving a plane crash, the girl follows the Coyote into the world of the animal people and ultimately - because she has to - back to the world of those whom Coyote calls 'the others. The new people. The ones who came ... We were here,' Coyote says, 'We were always here. Where we are is here. But it's their country now. They're running it ... Shit, even I did better!' (Le Guin, 1987:32). For Coyote is the maker and empress of this land: "'This is my country,'" she informs the child, 'with dignity, making a long slow gesture all round the vast horizon. "I made it. Every goddam sage bush"' (1987:22). In Le Guin's *Always Coming Home*, it is told that, in the music in the beginning of time,

the coyote's soul [which] was in some of those sand-grains, some of those dust-motes ... wanted more kinds of music, chords with more voices, disharmonies, crazy rhythms, more going on. The coyote soul began moving and shifting. It let the dust and sand lie there and pulled itself together out of everywhere, out of everything, from all the beaches and plains and deserts. Doing that, pulling itself together, it left gaps behind, holes in the world, empty places. By unmaking it made darkness. So light came in to fill the holes: stars, sun, moon, planets came to be. Shining began. Brightness came to pass. (Le Guin, 1986:167)

Thus Coyote is presented as an animating spirit. Another story contains the song the 'human people' sing, despite the fact that Coyote tries to drive them away:

'Hey, Coyote, we are coming! / You called us, you sang us, / Coyote, we are coming! ... Anyhow, so here we are, the children of Coyote and the Mountain, we are their turds and their words, so they say, and so it began, they say' (Le Guin, 1986:168). 'It was Coyote who fixed up this world, you know,' writes Thomas King (1992:1) in *A Coyote Columbus Story*, 'She made rainbows and flowers and clouds and rivers. And she made prune juice and afternoon naps and toe-nail polish and television commercials. Some of these things were pretty good, and some of these things were foolish.' So, Coyote is the maker-goddess, though she is a harsh and scowling one, often an unwilling one.

P.L. Travers (1989:258) reminds us, in her essay 'Grimm's Women', that 'both the true and the false are variants of Kali, the Black One, the supreme mother-goddess of India, life-giver and life-taker, whose power the Hindus believe - and the Grimm brothers mutely acquiesce - abides in every woman'. Coyote, certainly, seems to embody the qualities of 'all the priestesses of the Great Goddess, who have the power to bless or curse at will, who birth the babe, and stand by the bride-bed and ready the corpse for its clay cradle' (Travers, 1989:258). It is in assuming the mother aspect in 'Buffalo Gals' that Coyote's duality is illustrated. She invites the child to follow her by asking, 'Are you coming or are you dying there?' (Le Guin, 1987:32) Later on, the child accepts Coyote as her mother and comes to call her so; Coyote calls her 'Pup'. But 'a lot of things were hard to take about Coyote as a mother. When her boyfriend came to visit, the child learned to go to stay with Chipmunk or the Rabbits or the night' (1987:32). Coyote is mother, but also crone, witch and whore - judged by human morals though, perhaps, not by animal. 'You want a code of justice from a coyote?', she asks, 'Grow up, Kid!' (1987:32.).

In 'Buffalo Gals' the link between child and nature is presented in a significant way. Coyote explains that 'there's the first people, and then the others. That's the two kinds.' The 'first people' are 'us, the animals... and things. All the old ones. You know. And you pups, kids, fledglings. All first people' (Le Guin,

1987:32). The child is able to 'see the world whole' and is therefore able to move in the world of the animals as one of the 'first people'. The integration of the child within this world, the fading of frontiers - thus, the revelation of 'wholeness' - is apparent from the following passage:

The child turned. She saw a coyote gnawing at the half-dried-up carcass of a crow, black feathers sticking to the black lips and narrow jaw.

She saw a tawny-skinned woman kneeling by a campfire, sprinkling something into a conical pot ... The woman's hair was yellow and grey, bound back with a string. Her feet were bare ... She wore blue jeans and an old white shirt. She looked over at the girl. 'Come on, eat crow!' she said ... Coyote was now blowing into the pot or basket or whatever it was. (Le Guin, 1987:20-1)

Later on, the girl remarks, 'I don't understand why you all look like people'. 'We are people,' answers Coyote. "'I mean people like me, humans.'" "Resemblance is in the eye," Coyote said' (1987:31).

Coyote leads the child to this transcendence and it is she also who, shaman-like, has to lead the child back to the world of the others, the humans - for a child does not stay a child and only a child can be of the first people. 'If one of them, or Cottontail, or Jackrabbit, had come upon her in the desert lying lost and half-blind, would they have stayed with her, like Coyote? That was Coyote's craziness, what they called her craziness. She wasn't afraid. She went between the two kinds of people, she crossed over' (Le Guin, 1987:35). The goddess Coyote moves between the worlds, for, as animating spirit, she contains the 'world whole', and as such sacrifices herself in order to lead a child to her inevitable place in this world. In the town of the human people, a

smoked salmon, a whole chinook, lay on a little cedarbark mat. 'An offering! Well, I'll be darned!' Coyote was so impressed she didn't even swear. 'I haven't seen one of these for years! I thought they'd forgotten!'

'Offering to who?'

'Me! Who else? Boy *look* at that!'

The child looked dubiously at the salmon.

'It smells funny.'

'How funny?'

'Like burned.'

'It's smoked, stupid! Come on.'

'I'm not hungry.'

'OK. It's not your salmon anyhow. It's mine. My offering, for me. Hey, you people! You people over there! Coyote thanks you! Keep it up like this and maybe I'll do some good things for you too!'

'Don't, don't yell, Mom! They are not that far away' -

'They're all my people,' said Coyote with a great gesture, and then sat down cross-legged, broke off a big piece of salmon, and ate.

Evening Star burned like a deep, bright pool of water in the clear sky. Down over the twin hills was a dim suffusion light, like a fog. The child looked away from it, back at the star.

'Oh,' Coyote said. 'Oh, shit.'

'What's wrong?'

'That wasn't so smart, eating that,' Coyote said, and then held herself and began to shiver, to scream, to choke - her eyes rolled up, her long arms and legs flew out jerking and dancing, foam spurted out between her clenched teeth. Her body arched tremendously backwards, and the child, trying to hold her, was thrown violently off by the spasms of her limbs. The child scrambled back and held the body as it spasmed again, twitched, quivered, went still.

By moonrise Coyote was cold. (Le Guin, 1987:48-9)

Having buried her 'Mom', the girl 'also went to where the salmon had lain on the cedar mat, and finding the carcass of a lamb heaped dirt and rocks over the poisoned thing. Then she stood up and walked away without looking back' (1987:50). Even though she walks back into the desert and curses the human people - 'I hope you all die in pain' (1987:50) - the child is already returning to the human world, where once another lamb was sacrificed. On the way, she meets Chikadee, who takes her to the house of Grandmother, the great weaver, underground. 'You'd better go back there now, Granddaughter,' says Grandmother, 'That's where you live.'

'I lived with Coyote. She's dead. They killed her.'

'Oh, don't worry about Coyote!' Grandmother said, with a little huff of laughter. 'She gets killed all the time.' (Le Guin, 1987:50)

Refusing the child's request to go back to Coyote's house, Grandmother explains that 'you got outside your people's time, into our place; but I think that Coyote was taking you back, see. Her way. If you go back now, you can still live with them' (1987:51). But even though the child must needs lose the vision of the world whole, the world is and remains whole and something within her, her true self perhaps, will always remember this: 'Don't be afraid,' says Grandmother, 'You can live well there. I'll be there too you know. In your dreams, in your ideas, in dark corners in the basement. Don't kill me, or I'll make it rain ...' 'I'll come around,' Chikadee says, 'Make gardens for me.' Yet, even as 'she turned away ... and started up the night slope towards the day, ahead of her in the air of dawn for a long way a little bird flew, black-capped, light-winged' (1987:51).

Coyote's sacrifice creates a bridge by way of which a child can cross over to another world, or rather another dimension of the world. The formidable lady North Wind, in George MacDonald's *At the Back of the North Wind*, herself serves as gateway to the realm 'at the back of the north wind', where she leads the little boy Diamond. Of her sacrifice North Wind says, 'it's easy enough for me. I have only to consent to be nobody, and there I am. I draw into myself, and there I am on the doorstep' (MacDonald, [1871] 1934:108). Yet, when Diamond reaches the land beyond the North Pole

there the form sat, like one of the great figures at the door of an Egyptian temple, motionless, with drooping arms and head. Then Diamond grew frightened, because she did not move or speak. He was sure it was North Wind, but he thought she must be dead at last. Her face was white as the snow, but her eyes were blue as the air in the ice-cave, and her hair hung straight, like icicles. She had on a greenish robe, like the colour in the hollows of a glacier seen from far off. (MacDonald, 1934:117)



Illustration by Arthur Hughes for MacDonald's *At the Back of the North Wind* (in Carpenter & Prichard, 1984:34)

However, North Wind informs him that she is waiting till she should be wanted and asks him what he would like to do.

'I want to go into the country at your back.'

'Then you must go through me.'

'I don't know what you mean.'

'I mean just what I say. You must walk on as if I were an open door, and go right through me.'

'But that will hurt you.'

'Not in the least. It will hurt you, though.'

'I don't mind that, if you tell me to do it.'

'Do it,' said North wind. (MacDonald, 1934:118)

Diamond enters the bitter cold that is North Wind, 'all grew white about him; and the cold stung him like fire ... It was when he reached North Wind's heart that he fainted and fell' (1934:118). For the magnificent North Wind is certainly beauty and terror incarnate. At their first encounter, Diamond is 'entranced with her mighty beauty' (1934:19), but she warns him:

If you see me with my face all black, don't be frightened ... if I change into a serpent or a tiger, you must not let go your hold of me, for my hand will never change in yours if you keep a good hold. If you keep hold, you will know who I am all the time, even when you look at me and can't see me the least like the north wind. I may look something very awful. (1934:22)

Yet, the terrible and beautiful North Wind only carries out the tasks assigned to her - like the Black Rabbit in *Watership Down*, discussed in Chapter III. She does so willingly, as she is aware of the music of creation whose ultimate harmony sustains her and which she knows is coming nearer all the time. 'I don't hear much of it,' she says, 'only the odour of its music, as it were, flitting across the great billows of the ocean outside this air in which I make such a storm; but what I do hear, is quite enough to make me able to bear the cry from the drowning ship ... Somehow, I can't say how, it tells me that all is right, that it is coming to

swallow up all cries' (MacDonald, 1934:84). Diamond returns from what has been, after all, just a 'picture' of the land at the north wind's back - 'the real country at my real back is ever so much more beautiful than that. You shall see it one day - perhaps before very long' (1934:378). And soon Diamond leaves for the place where 'the boy-angels sang'. 'They thought he was dead. I knew that he had gone to the back of the north wind' (1934:391). North Wind fulfils, in the end, also the role of the angel of death and life, or death, which is life.

For North Wind is sometimes called - so she tells Diamond in Chapter XXXVI - 'Bad Fortune, sometimes Evil Chance, sometimes Ruin; and they have another name for me which they think the most dreadful of all' (MacDonald, 1934:377). She tells Diamond that when he went through her bitter cold, he came very close to that which they call by this dreadful name. He would have to pass through the gate that is North Wind once more and finally. One night Diamond 'woke up all at once, as I generally do when I am going to see her, and there she was against the door into the big room, sitting just as I saw her sit on her own doorstep, as white as snow, and her eyes as blue as the heart of an iceberg. She looked at me, but never moved or spoke ... I think I have been rather cold ever since' (1934:389-90). One morning, not long after, Diamond is found 'lying on the floor of the big attic-room, just outside his own door' (1934:390).

Life is the gift of all three of the goddesses mentioned above, the Child Empress, Coyote, and North Wind. All three of them are characterised by an apparent ambivalence in their nature, which ultimately holds the key to their divinity, revealed by beauty as well as terror. They act as guides and mediators to a life-giving transcendence; they are nature priestesses teaching the doctrine of seeing the world whole; they are primal mothers, weaving the strands of true life - involving spiritual wholeness - into the fabric of the world. Embodying this life, which contains all, they can move in what appears to mortals different worlds, spheres, dimensions. It is often through being led to see the wholeness and relatedness of these that their charges attain transcendent wholeness within

themselves and their own small worlds. The sacrifice this involves, in some way or other, on the part of the deity, forms a significant link with the universal sacrifice represented by that of Aslan in Lewis's *Chronicles of Narnia*. Perhaps the goddesses and all the other incarnations of the divine in fantasy and elsewhere are mere shadows - in different forms - of the great unspeakable one who once (and therefore always) became a human in order to teach us - as a brother - to see the world whole. Indeed, in one of the Narnia books, Aslan tells the girl Lucie that she should learn to know him by a different name in the world of the human people (Lewis, 1990b: 188). But to return to a female incarnation, Mary Poppins, too, teaches the lesson of the complete universe; she, too, is cast as a shadow of the ultimately divine.

'You find her everywhere,' says P.L. Travers (1989:47) about the goddess, 'You can't take a step without her. In my field, which I think of as the fairy tale, you can always tell the antiquity of a tale when it has, as its chief character, a woman. She always refers to the Great Mother.' This sweeping statement also applies to Travers's own tales of the curious nanny Mary Poppins, who indeed represents much more than meets the eye. Homer W. Smith (1952:87), in *Man and his Gods*, observes that 'when the people of the east depicted the Mother of All Living as full of contradictions, made her at once cold and passionate, chaste and lascivious, faithful and treacherous, kind and cruel, they achieved notable success in the deification of the universe.'⁵ If the prim and proper Mary Poppins could not be said to be lascivious and definitely not treacherous, nor cruel, she is nevertheless uncompromisingly severe and full of contradictions. More accurately, if one keeps in mind that Good contains terror, she exhibits the duality that is an indication of her divine nature. 'She is an austere miss,' notes

⁵ In Charke de Lint's (1998:538) urban fantasy *Someplace to be Flying* this description of the female divinity is to be found: 'Sweet and fey but oh so strong. You could tell that rivers changed course at her word. Forests would part before her. The wind would carry her hair. The sun and moon would stop for her. Mountains would bow to offer her fealty. The ocean would whisper her name.'



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P. L. TRAVERS
Mary Poppins
COMES BACK



Cover illustration by Piers Sanford for *Mary Poppins Comes Back* (Travers, 1998a)

Staffan Bergsten (1978:26), 'who is at the same time in a kind of union with the animals and the whole of creation.' Mary Poppins is to be discussed in the light of those aspects already mentioned here that are of import to the whole of this study: her divinity, her duality, and her Romantic union with nature. These are also factors to be considered in the discussion of Aslan later on, for it is the duty of the divine incarnations featured in this chapter to bestow transcendence and a lasting spiritual gift by integrating their charges into the world - or rather 'a world' - of nature and by teaching thus the complete universe and the gift of seeing the world whole.

Mary Poppins comes from the sky, whence she returns again at the end of each of her three stays with the Banks family of Cherry Tree Lane. During these visits the Banks children experience the most extraordinary adventures brought about by the magic that is Mary Poppins. For the world she shows the children is not an illusion, but the reality of the mystery behind the ordinary, which she herself embodies, being nothing short of a goddess clad in the vestments of an Edwardian nanny. This, as is everything else about Mary Poppins, is perfectly appropriate, for her task is to teach children - little as well as grown-up - the wisdom of eternal childhood. 'Mary Poppins has the character of a functionary incarnated from above,' states Jonathan Cott (1981:195),

appearing as a kind of combination fairy godmother, guardian angel, shamaness, priestess, witch, and guru, who, using every moment as a moment of instruction, teaches us to watch, to wait, to wake up, and to strive to become what we are. As a Gnostic text says of Mary Magdalene, 'She speaks as a woman who knows the All.'

Knowing 'the All', Mary Poppins teaches the unity of creation and the ability to see it as such - the world whole - by true knowledge of the self, which is a particle of this whole and yet contains it entire.

Especially in her 'fairy godmother, guardian angel' aspects, which, in accordance with the teaching of the holy in the common, she fulfils as 'nanny', Mary Poppins is reminiscent of *Frau Holle* of German folklore. *Frau Holle*, Germanic conception of the primeval Great Mother and known by many names, is described as follows by Karl Paetow (1986:126): '*Geburt und Tod umfassend, ist sie die lebengebärende, lebenspendente und lebennehmende Seelenhirtin*' [Containing within her grasp birth and death, she is the life-giving, life-supporting and life-taking herdswooman of souls]. Paetow (1986:7) cites a Hessian folk rhyme which illustrates her duality:

*Es speist und tränkt ein Mutter fein
Viel hunderttausend Kindelein
Die sie ernährt hat ohne zahl
Verschlingt sie wieder allzumal
Und bringt sie wieder an den Tag,
Als das des Herren Wort vermag.*

[A great mother nourishes hundreds of thousands of children.
The countless ones she has nourished she consumes again, to
bring them to light at the Lord's command].

Margreet van der Heide (in Paetow, 1987:7), in the introduction to her Dutch version of Paetow's book, explains that

Vrouw Holle is de gebiedster in het rijk van het leven dat sich bevindt tussen het rijk van de geest en dat van de stof. Zij ist de hoedster van de levende wezens vóórdát zij op aarde gestalte aannemen. Zij waakt over het zaad als het in de winter in de grond ligt en laat het sneeuwen om de grond te beschermen. Zij is de hoedster van de dieren en ...de zielen van de ongeboren en gestorven mensenkinderen.

[Vrouw Holle is the mistress of life between the realm of the spirit and that of matter. She is the guardian of beings before they assume an earthly form. She watches over the seed as it lies in the ground in winter and makes it snow to protect the ground. She is the guardian of the animals and the souls of unborn and deceased children.]

The singular way in which Mary Poppins incarnates the vital duality of the divine in all aspects of her being should be noted in appreciating her significance. Travers (in Cott, 1981:236) reveres 'the mystery in the most ordinary things. Again and again I've tried to say that this has everything to do with Mary Poppins.' In an interview with Cott (1981:237) she states: 'I'm not interested in any other miracle but the ordinary. "Extraordinary" is the quintessence of the ordinary.'⁶ Mary Poppins has 'shiny black hair - "Rather like a wooden Dutch doll." ... she [is] thin, with large feet and hands, and small, rather peering blue eyes' (Travers, [1934] 1994a: 16). Her eyes are bright and her 'nose turn[s] upwards like the nose of a Dutch doll' (Travers, [1935] 1998a: 20). In her 'blue coat with silver buttons and ... straw hat trimmed with daisies [and with her] umbrella with a parrot's head for a handle' (1998a: 20), she cuts a figure of the highest self-esteem, happy to catch a glimpse of herself in shop windows. As when

she was wearing her new white blouse with the pink spots, and her face, as she beheld herself reflected back ... had a pleased and satisfied air. She pushed back her coat a little so that more of the blouse was visible and she thought that, on the whole, she had never seen Mary Poppins look nicer ... Mary Poppins gave a little conceited nod to her reflection and hurried on. (Travers, 1998a: 36)

For all her amusing vanity, Michael Banks realizes on the very first evening of Mary Poppins's arrival, when he has to take his medicine, 'that you could not look at Mary Poppins and disobey her. There was something strange and extraordinary about her - something that was frightening and at the same time

⁶ 'Today, when every creed is being questioned,' states David L. Edwards (1963:36), 'our ways of knowing God are being related afresh to our ways of knowing people or knowing things, and the result of the painful process of thought may be a fresh sense of the mystery which has always lain at the heart of all true religion: the mystery which speaks of the purpose of the universe, yet is encountered in daily life, which will always baffle our little minds, yet fascinates and grasps.'

most exciting' (Travers, [1944] 1994a: 22). This description of her nature informs all the subsequent dealings of the Banks children with Mary Poppins. For it is said that 'she is a fairy-tale come true' (Travers, 1998b: 212). Yet, as Bettina Hürlimann (1959:178), who affirms that in Mary Poppins we are confronted with a modern equivalent of the fairy tale, points out,

Mary Poppins besitzt ... keine der üblichen Attribute einer Märchenfigur. Sie ist weder eine Fee noch eine Hexe. Sie ist ein steifes, strenges, absolut unsentimentales Kinderfräulein, die nach Schuhwichse riecht und in gestärkten Kleidern herumläuft [Mary Poppins possesses none of the usual attributes of a fairy tale figure. She is neither a fairy nor a witch. She is a stiff, strict, absolutely unsentimental nanny, who smells of shoe polish and goes around in starched clothes].

Cott (1981:196) observes that 'to P.L. Travers, fairy tales are "fallen into time and locality". And this, in fact, is the way Mary Poppins appears, falling from the skies with her parrot-headed umbrella, white gloves, and carpetbag.' Thus, Mary Poppins exemplifies and embodies in a striking manner the profound doctrine of the holy in the common.

But she does more than this. The trappings of this apparently 'ordinary' nanny have a two-fold significance: Mary Poppins the goddess illustrates the holy in the common, but Mary Poppins the nanny, taking such obvious pride in herself, teaches something the importance of which Travers (1989:17) stresses in her essay 'The World of the Hero': 'Everybody has to be the hero of one story: his own.' Cott (1981:228) observes that 'all of Mary Poppins's little tasks and lessons and teachings, if they could be summed up, might come out as: see, know, and become yourself.'⁷ One of the most important aspects of Mary Poppins's teaching of the mystical unity of all creation is the part each individual forms thereof and

⁷ Idries Shah (1964:274), in *The Sufis* notes that 'the religious context of dervish thinking is merely the vehicle for the self-realization which is aimed at: "He who knows his essential self, knows his God". Knowledge of the essential self is the first step, before which there is no real knowledge of religion. '

the special solidarity of child and nature. In order to realize the transcendental value of this principle in everyday life, one should be able to 'see the world whole' - regard the world with wonder and awe in recognizing the mystery of ordinary things - and be a hero by knowing and revering the 'whole' comprised within oneself. Travers (1989:16) speculates that 'these endeavours are not so much voyages of discovery as of rediscovery; that the hero is seeking not for something new but for something old, a treasure that was lost and has to be found, his own self, his identity. And by finding this, by achieving this, he takes part in the one task, the essential mythical requirement: the reinstatement of the fallen world.' Apparently, the only real task is to make the world whole by finding himself and the world within himself, for 'perhaps the hero is one who puts his foot upon a path not knowing what he may expect from life but in some way feeling in his bones that life expects something from him' (1989:15). The mystery of the ordinary and the task of the hero are fulfilled within the Romantic child, who sees the world whole. Commenting on Chapter VIII in *Mary Poppins Comes Back*, called 'Balloons and Balloons', in which everyone flies by means of the balloon bearing his name collected from the old woman at the park gate, Bergsten (1978:35) notes that 'everyone becomes like a child again and finds himself, finds a truer self under - or rather over - the surface of everyday life.'

In the world over which Mary Poppins presides, her magic provides the transcendence that transports people to the profound reality 'under ... the surface of everyday life'. For in the fairy tale - ultimately that which is life - the journey to another world or to find some treasure, to accomplish some task is central and Travers indicates that this is, on the most profound level, an inward journey of discovery. ' "Don't you know," said Mary Poppins pityingly, "that everybody's got a Fairyland of their own?" ' (Travers, 1994a: 38). The last stage of the journey, asserts theologian Dorothee Sölle (1975:74), '*ist der Weg zurück in die Welt*' [is the way back into the world].

Die andere Welt, die der Held auf seiner Reise erfährt, ist notwendig für seine Identitätsfindung, aber sie wird nicht zum Ersatz dieser Welt. Es gibt kein Bleiben in ihr, sowenig es ein Bleiben in der sichtbaren Welt gibt. Ohne 'Reise' kommt der Mensch nicht aus, und jeder Versuch, sie zu erübrigen zerstört auch die Wahrheit der erreichten Versöhnung. [The other world, which the hero experiences on his journey, is necessary for the finding of his identity, but it does not become substitute for this world. There is no remaining there, even as there is no remaining in the visible world. Without the journey one cannot get by and every attempt to dispense with it also destroys the truth of the achieved reconciliation].⁸

One wonders whether this might hold a clue to one of the most characteristic peculiarities of Mary Poppins's ambiguous nature. When Michael tells her, 'I only want you - for always ... "Humph!" said Mary Poppins crossly, as she plonked the toast on the table. "You can't have *anything* for always - and don't you think it, sir!'" (Travers, 1998b: 226). Almost invariably, after an 'other-worldly' experience with Mary Poppins, she is infuriated should the children mention it. On the evening of her arrival, in *Mary Poppins Comes Back*, at the end of Michael's kite string, for instance, he confronts her, but

her voice when she spoke was worse than her look.

'Did I understand you to say that' - she repeated the words slowly, between her teeth - 'that I came down from somewhere on the end of a string?'

'But you did!' faltered Michael. 'To-day. Out of a cloud. We saw you!'

'On the end of a string. Like a Monkey or a Spinning-Top? Me, Michael Banks?'

Mary Poppins, in her fury, seemed to have grown twice her usual size. She hovered over him in her night-gown, huge and angry, waiting for him to reply. He clutched the bed-clothes for support. (Travers, 1998a: 28)

⁸ A reconciliation of the worlds, this and the 'other', is implied.

On another occasion 'he gave a little beseeching cry, for Mary Poppins was glaring at him in a way that made him shudder. Standing there in her flannel nightgown, she seemed to freeze him in his cosy bed' (Travers, 1998b: 36). Perhaps Mary Poppins's task includes prompting the hero back into 'this world', which can only be seen whole if the 'other' is known. Travers (in Cott, 1981:205) says that the Mary Poppins books, 'if they do anything, celebrate the whole of life - nobody is separate from anyone else. I hope they're life-celebrating books.' Life has to be lived to the full - 'celebrated' thus - out of both worlds, which are one, the world whole. For, as the children know at Mary Poppins's final departure at the end of *Mary Poppins Opens the Door*, 'in the summer days to come and the long nights of winter, they would remember Mary Poppins and think of all she had told them. The rain and the sun would remind them of her, and the birds and the beasts and the changing seasons. Mary Poppins herself had flown away, but the gifts she had brought would remain for always' (Travers, 1998b:256).

In order to illuminate these and other related ideas around Mary Poppins, the subsequent discussion will focus mainly on three parallel chapters from the first three books, *Mary Poppins*, *Mary Poppins Comes Back*, and *Mary Poppins Opens the Door*. These are what Bergsten (1978:50) calls the three 'cosmic parties', the first of which takes place among the animals in the zoo (*Mary Poppins*, Chapter X: 'Full Moon'), the second among the stars of the night sky (*Mary Poppins Comes Back*, Chapter VII: 'The Evening Out') and the third at the bottom of the sea (*Mary Poppins Opens the Door*, Chapter VI: 'High Tide'). These chapters 'have a pronounced mythical character,' notes Bergsten (1978:38), 'They describe celebrations which involve the whole of creation and in which Mary Poppins is honoured in scenes resembling apotheosis.' And indeed, for all their humour and festivity, there runs through these chapters a profound spiritual vein. Mary Poppins presents herself a high priestess of nature, initiating the children into the union of all things - what Bergsten (1978:50) calls 'the secrets of existence' -,

bestowing transcendent experiences in which they recognize themselves as integrated elements of the complete universe, land, sea, and sky.

When 'the Birthday' - Mary Poppins's, that is - falls on full moon, the animals get to walk free (humans lingering after closing time are put on display in cages) and a grand feast is held in the zoo. The centre of all is the Snake House, where Mary Poppins is waiting and where the children are introduced to the Hamadryad, who is 'the lord of our world,' the Brown Bear informs them, 'the wisest and most terrible of us all' (Travers, 1994a: 179-80). The Hamadryad's 'curious deep eyes seemed to draw them towards him. Long and narrow they were, with a dark sleepy look in them, and in the middle of that dark sleepiness a wakeful light like a jewel' (1994a: 179). He has a 'soft, terrifying voice' (1994a: 179) and addresses Mary Poppins as 'cousin'. As birthday present for his 'cousin' he offers his own golden skin, a symbol about which more will be said later.

When Mary Poppins's 'Second Thursday' falls on high tide, the feast is submarine. The Terrapin is the presiding ancient on this occasion; he is 'the oldest and wisest thing in the world' (Travers, 1998b: 182). As in the case of the Hamadryad, the Terrapin's eyes reveal life and energy, being 'like two small black stars' (1998b: 182.). He welcomes Mary Poppins as 'my dear young relative ... in the name of the creatures of the deep' (1998b: 183). Mary Poppins's 'china-blue eyes looked into the black ones and a strange smile passed between them. It was as though neither of them had any secrets from the other' (1998b: 183). The implication here is most significant, Mary Poppins being in the company of him who declares:

I am the Terrapin. I dwell at the roots of the world. Under the cities, under the hills, under the very sea itself, I make my home. Up from my dark root, through the waters, the earth rose with its flowers and forests. The man and the mountain sprang from it. The great beasts, too, and the birds of the air ... I am older than all things that are. Silent and dark and wise I am, and quiet and very patient. Here in my cave all things have their beginning.

And all things return to me in the end. I can wait. I can wait ...
(Travers, 1998b: 185-6)

The Terrapin, too, offers a gift - in the form of a starfish, but like the Hamadryad, gives much more than this in conferring divine authority upon Mary Poppins, what she is and what she teaches. For these ancients of the earth impart to the children the wisdom of the doctrine of the unity of all things, centring around the all-embracing concept of 'life', which is symbolized by their gifts. Bergsten (1978:42) points out that 'the snake that casts its skin, that emerges anew from its own dead covering, is an ancient symbol for resurrection,' thus the rejuvenation of life. 'The precious gems have their kind in the sea,' the Terrapin declares to the children, 'so have the starry constellations' (Travers, 1998b: 188). By presenting Mary Poppins with a starfish, he symbolically links the life of the sea with that of the rest of the united universe. These gifts of life are earthly manifestations of that given by the life-giving Sun on Mary Poppins's 'Evening Out' in *Mary Poppins Comes Back*.

Having spent an extraordinary evening in the circus of the constellations, of which the great Sun himself is the Ring-Master, the children wonder what will follow when 'as the lash swung up, every star and constellation turned in its tracks. Then, with one movement, every one of them bowed' (Travers, 1998a: 172). They turned to find, 'sitting alone in the Royal Box, ... a well-known figure in a straw hat and blue coat' and "'Hail, Mary Poppins, hail!'" came the massed voices from the Circus Ring' (1998a: 174). Mary Poppins, kneeling before the Sun as he welcomes her, is told:

'The Planets hail you, and the Constellations give you greeting.
Rise, my child!'

She stood up, bending her head respectfully before him.

'For you, Mary Poppins,' the Sun went on, 'the Stars have gathered in the dark blue tent, for you they have been withdrawn to-night from shining on the world. I trust, therefore, that you have enjoyed your Evening Out!'

'I never had a better one. Never!' (Travers, 1998a: 174)

When Jane approaches him, the Sun warns her: 'Touch me not, Child of the Earth! ... Life is sweet and no man may come near the Sun - touch me not!' (1998a: 176). This serves as an indication of how the Sun's gift to Mary Poppins acknowledges and honours her divine nature; for the Sun kisses her:

Then, with a large and gracious movement of his head, the Sun leaned across the space that separated him from Mary Poppins and, with great ceremony, carefully, lightly, swiftly; he brushed her cheek with his lips.

'Ah!' cried the Constellations, enviously. 'The Kiss! The Kiss!'

But as she received it, Mary Poppins's hand flew to her cheek protectingly, as though the kiss had burnt it. A look of pain crossed her face for a moment. Then, with a smile, she lifted her head to the Sun.

'Farewell!' she said softly, in a voice Jane and Michael had never heard her use. (1998a: 178-9)

As has been mentioned, the lords of creation not only put their seal on Mary Poppins's authority, but also corroborate her teaching. The Hamadryad as well as the Terrapin stress the common source of all life, which by implication creates union and solidarity among those living who are aware of it and recognize it. 'The rose remembers the salty waters and the moon the ebb and flow of the tide,' says the Terrapin, 'You, too, must remember it, Jane and Michael!' (Travers, 1998b: 188). Bergsten (1978:50) justly points out that Mary Poppins takes the children on these 'nocturnal celebrations ... to initiate them into the secrets of existence.' The Hamadryad, 'flicking his terrible little forked tongue in and out as he spoke,' delivers his wisdom to the same effect:

'We are all made of the same stuff, remember, we of the Jungle, you of the City. The same substance composes us - the tree overhead, the stone beneath us, the bird, the beast, the star - we are all one, all moving to the same end ... Bird and beast and stone and star - we are all one -' murmured the Hamadryad, softly

folding his hood about him as he ... swayed between the children
... 'Child and serpent, star and stone - all one.'
(Travers, 1994a: 186-7)

What triggers this response from the Hamadryad is Jane's amazement at the way hunter and hunted are keeping amicable company on this strange occasion. The Hamadryad explains that 'to-night the small is free from the great and the great protect the small.' He argues further that 'after all ... it may be that to eat and to be eaten are the same thing in the end. My wisdom tells me that it is probably so' (Travers, 1994a: 185-6). Ursula Le Guin (1987:195-6) echoes this wisdom in 'She Unnames Them':

They seemed far closer than when their names had stood between myself and them like a clear barrier: so close that my fear of them and their fear of me became one same fear. And the attraction that many of us felt, the desire to smell one another's smells, feel or rub or caress one another's scales or skin or feathers or fur, taste one another's blood or flesh, keep one another warm, - that attraction was now all one with the fear, and the hunter could not be told from the hunted, nor the eater from the food.

The sentiment expressed by the Hamadryad seems to suggest such a nameless - perhaps 'unnamed' - union representing the complete truth of existence, a truth that always seems to be that of opposites, of paradox, Blake's contrary states without which is no progress. The dual significance of the ultimately divine unity of nature is probably best embodied by the Hamadryad himself, for good reason. According to Bergsten (1987:41-2), the zoo over which a snake presides as lord, represents 'a kind of Garden of Eden' and he cites the Gospel of Saint John III:xiv-xv ('And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life') to show 'that the snake is a Christ Symbol, and according to Gnostic tradition the snake in Paradise was already a god in

disguise.' As Moses' brass serpent is a symbol of newly granted life, the Hamadryad's cast golden skin represents a gift of life and a summons to appreciate life as such a gift.

This is to be achieved only by accepting the beauty as well as the terror of the divine, light and shadow, a feat that requires the spirit of the Romantic child. Teaching us that 'understanding' means to 'stand under', Travers (in Cott, 1981:199) says that 'in order to understand, I come to something with my unknowing - my nakedness, if you like: I stand under it and let it teach me, rain down its truth upon me. That is, I think, what children do; they let it make room in them for a sense of justice, for the Wicked Fairy as well as the Sleeping Beauty, for dragons as well as princes.' Mary Poppins presents the children with transcendent experiences outside their own limiting time and space where all creation - everything that came from the primal darkness of the Terrapin's cave - can be seen to be one and eternal. In a chapter from *Mary Poppins Opens the Door*, called 'Happy Ever After', the opposites meet in such unity inside the crack in time between the old year and the new.

'Inside the Crack all things are at one,' explains the Sleeping Beauty, giving 'a charming yawn'. 'The eternal opposites meet and kiss. The wolf and the lamb lie down together; the dove and the serpent share one nest. The stars bend down and touch the earth and the young and the old forgive each other. Night and day meet here, so do the poles. The East leans over to the West and the circle is complete. This is the time and place, my darlings - the *only* time and the *only* place - where everybody lives happily ever after'. (Travers, 1998b: 209)

But the children have to return to the dimension of time, as the hero is always compelled to return to his own world and brave it with the inspiration gained from the other. 'O, Lion and Unicorn, Wolf and Lamb! Friend and Enemy! Dark and Light! ... O fleeting moment! O, time on the wing! How short is the space between the years! Let us be happy - happy ever after!' (1998b: 216). In order to

be happy ever after the hero also has to accept opposing forces within himself and be at peace. About Mr. Linnet, a character in her book *Friend Monkey*, who throws away his boots and hat on embarking upon his new life on a tropical island, but has them restored by the infatigably amiable Monkey, Travers (in Cott, 1981:238) remarks to Cott:

He *has* to have back his boots and his hat, and go forward with all, good and bad, that are his own - all that make him Linnet. Doesn't this relate to what we began with when you admitted you had been depressed? All right, so you, too, have to have your depressions, your negativity, what you will, as well as the jewels at your feet - look in front of you - and also *me*. You've got a friend! So with all this *you* can go forward - see! And dance!

And dance! Significantly, the dance is the supreme symbol of unity featuring in and binding the three accounts of cosmic celebration discussed earlier. In 'Full Moon', the climatic conclusion of events is the 'Grand Chain', in which all the animals dance in a ring around Mary Poppins, 'wildly crying their jungle songs, prancing in and out of the ring, and exchanging hand and wing as they went as dancers do in the Grand Chain of the Lancers' (Travers, 1994a: 183). Having imparted his piece of wisdom to the children, Hamadryad directs their attention to the Grand Chain so as to demonstrate its profundity, and indeed, the dance has come to absorb everything into one magical whole:

Birds and animals were now swaying together, closely encircling Mary Poppins, who was rocking lightly, from side to side. Backwards and forwards went the swaying crowd, keeping time together, swinging like the pendulum of a clock. Even the trees were bending and lifting gently, and the moon seemed to be rocking in the sky as a ship rocks on the sea. (Travers, 1994a: 187)

Bergsten (1987:51) says that life is, 'above all ... movement. And the archetypal movement of the created world is, both in Mary Poppins' world and in that of

myth, the dance, the cosmic dance.' The Sailor's Hornpipe in 'High Tide', has the same significance, where 'ever among the scaly throng, a dark shape moved like a graceful shadow. Heel and toe, went Mary Poppins, as she danced the Hornpipe on the floor of the sea. The fish swung round her in shining rings and their scales made a dapple of light about her ... Oh, the circling sea, that rocks us all in its mighty cradle' (Travers, 1998b: 187-8). It has been pointed out earlier that the ancient lords of creation grant authority to the teaching of Mary Poppins. In this respect, the dance takes on an even greater significance; 'just as the static patterns of myth are developed in the dynamic life of ritual,' states Bergsten (1987:52), 'so the dance gives life and reality to the wisdom revealed to the children by the kings of the jungle and the ocean.' And that this wisdom *is* alive is attested to by Laurens van der Post (1975:111) in an account of the great fire dance of the Bushmen people, in which all the life of the desert is said to join in its manifold voices:

In the end the dancing produced such an atmosphere of oneness and belonging between all that when the climax came and the fire was found I felt that I, who had come so far from so remote a world, was no longer a stranger, standing alone and isolated, but someone who had found sanctuary in an ancient temple participating for the first time in an act of natural Communion with one of the greatest congregations of life ever gathered.

To return to Mary Poppins and another great fire dance, in 'The Evening Out', the Sun, Lord of the Sky, commands 'the dance of the Wheeling Sky', in which 'Mary Poppins and the Sun were dancing together ... Mary Poppins and the Sun never once touched, but waltzed with arms outstretched, opposite each other, keeping perfect time together in spite of the space between them. About them wheeled the dancing Constellations' (Travers, 1998a: 176-7).⁹ The

⁹ This dance of the Lady and the Sun makes one think of the strange events that occurred at Fátima, Portugal, in 1917, when the Holy Virgin appeared and seventy thousand people witnessed the miracle of the 'dancing sun', as they called it. 'As the Lady ascends in the

description of the solar dance contributes towards the feasibility of Mary de Forest's (1991:141 &143) cosmic interpretation of Mary Poppins as fulfilling 'the double role of woman and planet' in her essay *Mary Poppins and the Great Mother*, where she points out that the dance recalls the way 'the earth and sun wheel around each other through the immensities of space.' The Sun is 'King of the South and North ... and Ruler of the East and West. He walks the outer rim of the world and the poles melt in his glory. He draws up the leaf from the seed and covers the land with sweetness' (Travers, 1998a: 176). Yet, when Jane asks him whether it 'is ... true that we are here to-night, or do we only think we are?', he answers, smiling 'a little sadly' that 'from the beginning of the world all men have asked that question. And I, who am Lord of the Sky - even I do not know the answer' (1998a: 176). So he, life-giver, is not the greatest dancer; there is another, a greater even than he. One thinks of him whom Sydney Carter (in Woods, 1983:347-48) calls the *Lord of the Dance*:

I danced in the morning
When the world was begun,
And I danced on the moon
And I danced on the sun,
And I came down from heaven
And I danced on the earth,

direction of the east, ', Joseph A. Pelletier (1983:123) describes the event, she opens her hands and turns her palms upward toward the center of the sky...From the Lady's upturned palms rays of light are reflected upon the sun...a spinning disc of brilliantly glowing silver. Senhor Manuel Nunes Formigão, Viscount of Montello (1923:9) gives the following eyewitness account of the 'dance of the sun':

Como que por encanto rasqaram-se de repente as nuvens, e o sol no zenith appareceu em todo o seu esplendor e girou vertiginosamente sobre si mesmo...revestindo successivamente todas as côres do arco-iris e projectando feixes de luz

[All of a sudden the clouds split open and the sun appeared at the zenith in all its splendour. It spun round vertiginously...successively assuming all the colours of the rainbow and shooting out shafts of light.]

At Bethlehem
I had my birth.

*Dance then, wherever you may be,
I am the Lord of the Dance, said he,
And I'll lead you all wherever you may be,
And I'll lead you all in the dance, said he.*

I danced for this scribe
And the pharisee,
They would not dance
And they would not follow me.
I danced for the fishermen,
For James and John,
They came with me
And the dance went on.

I danced on a Friday
When the sky turned black -
It's hard to dance
With the devil on your back.
They buried my body
And they thought I'd gone,
But I am the dance
And I still go on.

They cut me down
And I leap up high;
I am the life

That'll never, never die;
I'll live in you
If you'll live in me -
I am the Lord
of the dance, said he.

Living his life in the spirit so that the spirit lives its life in him is the ultimate quest and formidable task of the hero, for which reason he has to know and be himself, recognizing the profound mysterious truth that what is without is within. What the Sun teaches is, perhaps, of the greatest transcendental value to the children, to the heroes. Jane asks him whether Michael *really* held the

moon in his hands, and he answers: 'What is real and what is not? Can you tell me or I you? Perhaps we shall never know more than this - that to think a thing is to make it true. And so, if Michael thought he held the real Moon in his arms, why, then he had indeed' (Travers, 1998a: 176). It is imperative for the hero always to return from the 'other world' to his own, largely because the most profoundly transcendent is to be found within, not without. The Sun teaches that the experience and knowledge of the self and all it harbours are the guide to the hero's path. The German mystic Novalis ([1798] 1955:49) asks, in one of his *Blütenstaub* fragments: "*Wir träumen von Reisen durch das Weltall: ist denn das Weltall nicht in uns?*" [We dream of journeys through the universe: is not the universe within us then?]. '*Suchet in euch*', says Goethe (in Biese, 1926:3), '*so werdet ihr alles finden.*' [Seek within yourselves, and you will find everything.] The tremendous value of learning this is illustrated in Chapter V, 'The Park in the Park', of *Mary Poppins in the Park*. Jane makes a little 'Park for Poor People' of petals, twigs and nettles; the park and its people come to life and a wonderful adventure unfolds. At the end of it Jane cannot bear to leave her park, but Mr. Mo assures her that she 'never will ... As long as you remember it, you can always come and go. And I hope you're not going to tell me you can't be in two places at once...' (Travers, [1962] 1994b: 200). And she finds it to be true:

Crowned with the gold of the buttercup tree, she walked home under the maple boughs. All was quiet. The sun had set. The shadows of the Long Walk were falling all about her. And at the same time the brightness of the little Park folded her closely round. The dark of one, the light of the other - she felt them both together.

'I am in two places at once,' she whispered, 'just as he said it would be!'

And she thought again of the little clearing among the thronging weeds. The daisies would grow again, she knew. Clover would hide the little lawns. Cardboard table and swings would crumble. The forest would cover it all.

But somehow, somewhere, in spite of that, she knew she would find it again - as neat and as gay and as happy as it had been to-day. She only had to remember it and there she would be once

more. Time upon time she would return - hadn't Mr. Mo said so? - and stand at the edge of that patch of brightness and never see it fade ... (Travers, 1994b:210-11)

Being in two places at once, argues Bergsten (1978:68), 'is of the essence in Pamela Travers's fairy-tale world, not in a faraway place but right in the middle of plain reality; yet in some way exceeding or superior to that reality.' As an extension of the doctrine of the holy in the common - perhaps its most sublime aspect, it is noted, thus, that knowingly or unknowingly the hero has within all that is without.

Admittedly, much of this would inevitably be 'unknown knowledge'. In *Mary Poppins Comes Back*, the new-born baby Annabel knows wondrous things, which the Starling, perched upon the edge of the cradle, assures her she will forget within a week 'I am earth and air and fire and water,' declares Annabel.

I come from the dark where all things have their beginning ... I come from the sea and its tides ... I come from the sky and its stars; I come from the sun and its brightness ... And I come from the forests of earth ... Slowly I moved at first ... always sleeping and dreaming. I remembered all I had been, and I thought of all I shall be. And when I had dreamed my dream, I awoke and came swiftly ... I heard the stars singing as I came and I felt warm wings about me. I passed the beasts of the jungle and came through the dark, deep waters. It was a long journey. (Travers, 1998a: 118-19).¹⁰

¹⁰ In a poem composed between the ages of four and five years, Hilda Conkling ('About My Dreams', 1920:27) says:

When I am sleeping
 I find my pillow full of dreams.
 They are all new dreams:
 No one told them to me
 Before I came through the cloud.
 They remember the sky, my little dreams,
 They have wings, they are quick, they are sweet.
 Help me tell my dreams
 To the other children,
 So that their bread may taste whiter,
 So that the milk they drink
 May make them think of meadows

It is clear that what Mary Poppins comes to teach Jane and Michael, they once knew, coming from where Annabel has come, 'trailing clouds of glory'. Therefore, she teaches above all to know the self, as in that way only can something of this primal wisdom be regained and can some form of wholeness be achieved. When this happens, a mortal being can experience what Travers (1989:168-9) calls the 'eternal instant, that holds what was and will be.' Of 'that which calls and calls me back to the sole and living moment' Travers says 'I shall not be given to know its name nor even to ask to know it. Somewhere within me it is known, it has no need of words' (Travers, 1989:168-169). On the Merry-go-round at the end of *Mary Poppins Comes Back* the children know that 'never again would [they] ... be so close to the centre of the world as they were on that whirling ride' (Travers, 1998a: 244). This knowledge is the wisdom of the 'unknower'. Mary Poppins gets on the Merry-go-round and it takes her back to the sky whence she came, her teaching done - for the moment. The children watch a new bright star from their window; 'high above them the great shape circled and wheeled through the darkening sky, shining and keeping its secret for ever and ever and ever...' (Travers, 1998a: 254).

'It is from the Unknowing that all the myths, and, one may say, all religions issue forth and reveal themselves ... as it were, summoned,' states Travers (1989:170). The Sun appears to be the highest authority to be met in the Mary Poppins books; in claiming ignorance as to the mystery of being, he also reveals the highest wisdom. 'Unknowing, if one can be open and vulnerable, will take us down to the very deeps of knowing, not informing the mind merely but coursing through the whole body, artery and vein - provided one can thrust aside what the world calls common sense, that popular lumpen wisdom that prevents the emerging of the numinous' (Travers, 1989:171). From the viewpoint of this study

In the sky of stars

The true poet is the one who remembers what she knew before she 'came through the cloud', he one whose dreams 'remember the sky'.

there is no greater wisdom than the unknowing knowledge of the numinous and the transcendence it bestows upon all heroes who are brave enough to go the path of the inner life of the universe and the self. When Mary Poppins leaves for the final time at the end of *Mary Poppins Opens the Door*, the children

did not try to explain it to themselves, for they knew there were things about Mary Poppins that could never be explained. Where she had come from nobody knew, and where she was going they could only guess. They were certain of one thing - that she had kept her promise. She had stayed with them till the Door opened and then she had left them. And they could not tell if they would ever see that trim shape again. (Travers, 1998b: 253)

But she opened doors for them too, for how can the followers of Mary Poppins be anything but unknowers with a teacher who 'kept her thoughts to herself and never told anyone anything...' (Travers, 1998a: 31).

From the 'Unknowing', according to Travers, come all myths and all religions, and thus also the ultimate and archetypal incarnation of the divine. 'As myth transcends thought', states C S Lewis (1971:42) 'incarnation transcends myth. The heart of Christianity is a myth, which is also a fact. The old myth of the Dying God, *without ceasing to be myth*, comes down from the heaven of legend and imagination to the earth of history.' In this sense, the magnificent lion Aslan, Lord of the magical land of Narnia, is more than a Christ-figure, being an incarnation drawn from the reaches of the 'unknowing', of tradition, myth and imagination. Sue Matheson (1988:15), writing from an anti-apologist perspective, argues that 'the irruption of the Lion out of the dead Christian symbol indicates that a new Signature is replacing the old: archetypal history is repeating itself.' Also dismissing symbolism, Evan K. Gibson (1980:263) asserts that 'Aslan, the lordly lion, is not a symbol, but a sacrament of Christ because, although not as lordly as the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, he has on a lower level, something of the character of Christ.' Signature or Sacrament, it is clear that Aslan is not to be

regarded only as an allegory of Christ, but as something profoundly significant in himself, a significance intensified by the truth of Christ informing it. For this reason, the incarnation of this divine truth as a lion, beautiful and terrible, is likely to bear upon more than the revelation of St John the Divine that 'the Lion of the tribe of Judah ... hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof' (Revelation V:v). For in the 'Unknowing' are many strange, mysterious things.

How did the lion come to be traditionally regarded as the lord of the beasts? A study of this question might fill volumes and is not to be investigated in any depth here, but the fact remains that the answer is not a simple one. In *Mary Poppins* the lion's supremacy as King of the Beasts is scoffed at and ridiculed - appropriately, perhaps, in a world where the female and the serpent rule, and which draws on the tradition of the earth mother. Here the cosmic lion is a conceited dandy:

I am the Lion, Leo-the-Lion,
The beautiful, suitable, Dandy Lion
Look for me up in the starry sky on
Clear, cold nights at the foot of Orion,
Glimmering, glittering, gleaming there,
The Handsomest Sight in the atmosphere!
(Travers, 1998a: 169)

In Lewis the lion is restored to the glory that is his by virtue of a profound and ancient tradition. Lewis takes us back to the tradition of the sky father, in relation to which Travers's depiction of a starry lion is ironically apt. For there exists an enigmatic connection between the sun and the lion - and these are both associated with Christ.¹¹ Saint Luke (I: lxxviii) declares that 'the dayspring from

¹¹ The great sphinx at Giza in Egypt knows something about the mystery of the sun and the lion. Astro-archaeologists Robert Bauval and Graham Hancock (1996:5) note that physical features of the sphinx suggest that it might once have been purely leonine in form - before the lion became man, as it were. Their studies reveal that this lion on earth gazed directly at Leo, its



Illustration by Bowen Boshier for Mutwa's *Isilwane: The Animal* (Mutwa, 1996: 150)

on high hath visited us.' In his study *Jesus Christ, Sun of God: Ancient Cosmology and Early Christian Symbolism*, David Fideler (1993:2) notes that 'in the first centuries of the common era, Jesus was widely perceived and represented as the Logos - the cosmic power of Harmony, which, was seen as underlying the order of the universe ... In antiquity, the nature of the Logos was represented in many ways, but its most central emblem was the Sun, symbolizing the source of Reality, the source of Light and Life.' One is reminded of the all-powerful of the Sun in *Mary Poppins* and also Frith, sun-god of the rabbits in *Watership Down*, discussed in Chapter III. The sun, of course - and the lion, too - has its duality as life-giver, but also death-dealer, being a blazing fire of incomprehensible magnitude. In a study on archetypal symbolism, Avril Rubinstein (1998:198) mentions that 'the lion's strength has been linked to that of the sun: the solar body, with its intense light and warmth, speaks to the human psyche of fecundity, growth and immense power.' Howard M. Jackson (1985:67), in a treatise significantly titled *The Lion Becomes Man: The Gnostic Leontomorphic Creator and the Platonic Tradition*, gathers that 'the terrestrial lion was therefore a beast the very marrow of whose bones is fire (from its bones, when broken, fire erupts, according to Aelian 4.34; and cf.12.7 where he claims: "Since the lion is of such an exceedingly fiery nature, they [the Egyptians] say that Leo is the house of the sun.")' Notice how the ideas around sun and lion are captured in these lines from South African poet Bruce Hewett's *Lion and Sun* (in Butler & Butler, 1988:162):

then comes the voice
 of Africa's wilds
 'Who is king of our day? '
 and the lion

own image in the sky, in the mysterious 'First time of the Gods,' the time of the 'Star people' (1996:78 & 219). That the connection between sun and lion existed in Africa before history is attested to by the fact that 'the Sphinx was often referred to as *Seshep-ankh Atum*, "the living image of Atum", after *Atum-Re* the self-created sun-god, the first and original deity of the ancient Egyptian pantheon' (1996:5).

eye to eye with
 the lionizing sun
 answers boldly
 while herds of buck run
 'I am, I am, I am!'

Fascinatingly, the Basotho and Tsonga peoples of Africa refer to the lion as 'the star creature', notes Credo Mutwa (Mutwa, 1996:152) and he translates its ancient Shona name as 'the greatest ruler of all'. In Mutwa's (1996:151) praise song to the lion, it is said to be 'three animals in one like God Omnipotent on high! / *Ngonyama*, the thunder of the Valleys! / *Ngonyama*, where your roar is heard, there is life to be found!'

There is death to be found in the desert of Graógramán, one further example of a sun lion, from Ende's *Die Unendliche Geschichte*. Here we are presented with a striking example of how the mysterious notions around the lion and the sun have found their way into a work of fantasy. Lord of *Goab*, the Desert of many Colours ('*Die Farbenwüste*'), this terrible lion called the Many-Coloured Death ('*Der Bunte Tod*') is '*aus tödlichem Feuer*' [of deadly fire] (Ende, 1979:251-2). The desert is his realm as well as his work, for he carries it with him (1979:251); his life means death, for his '*Dasein allein genügt, selbst die gewaltigsten und furchtbarsten Wesen auf tausend Meilen im Umkreis zu einem Häuflein Asche verbrennen zu lassen*' (1979:243) [mere existence suffices to turn to ashes even the most tremendous and dreadful being within a radius of a thousand miles]. Graógramán is significantly associated with the sun from his first appearance:

Auf dem Gipfel der feuerroten Düne stand ein riesenhafter Löwe. Er stand genau vor der Sonne, so daß seine gewaltige Mähne das Löwengesicht wie ein Flammenkranz umloderte (1979:241) [On the peak of the fiery red dune stood a gigantic lion. He stood directly in front of the sun, so that his tremendous mane lit up his lion's face like a halo of flames].

At the end of every day - and every time forever, as he asserts enigmatically - the blazing lion is turned to cold, black stone until the morning. The reason for this is finally revealed to him by Bastian, the name-giver, who is protected from the lion's fire by the amulet *Auryn*. When evening falls, there grows in *Goab*, the desert, the magnificent Night Forest *Perelín*, a jungle of living light (Ende, 1979:252). Graógramán realizes now '*daß mein Sterben Leben gibt und mein Leben den Tod, und beides ist gut. Jetzt verstehe ich den Sinn meines Daseins*' (1979:252) [that my death gives life and my life death, and both are good. Now I understand the reason for my existence]. Graógramán is clearly an embodiment of the profoundly significant archetypal images of sun and lion. His symbolism is amplified and intensified, by the aspect of sacrifice, which inevitably links him to Christ and so to our great lion, Aslan, who is at home - literally - within the imagery of light and sky; when he sends the children Lucy, Edmund and Eustace back to their own world at the end of *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*, 'all in one moment there was a rending of the blue wall (like a curtain being torn) and a terrible white light from beyond the sky, and the feel of Aslan's mane and a Lion's kiss on their foreheads' (Lewis, [1955] 1990b:188).

'A terrible white light from beyond the sky' is suggestive of the ineffable nature of the lord Aslan, of what is known of him and much more that is not known. For 'people who have not been in Narnia sometimes think that a thing cannot be good and terrible at the same time' (Lewis, 1996:283); the god of Narnia defies any such notion. From the very first appearance of Aslan in the Narnia books, the beauty and terror of his nature are invoked to create an intensely numinous experience. In *The Magician's Nephew* he sings the land of Narnia into existence: 'Huge, shaggy, and bright, it stood facing the risen sun. Its mouth was wide open in song ... "This is a terrible world," said the Witch. "We must fly at once"' ([1955] 1996:94). This first vision of Aslan presents him in close connection to the sun and life, and as the bane of death and evil. The two-fold aspect of his life-giving nature is apparent in the old rhyme cited by Mr Beaver in *The Lion, the*

Witch and the Wardrobe, proclaiming that 'when he bares his teeth, winter meets its death, / And when he shakes his mane, we shall have spring again' ([1950] 1996:241). When Lucy wants to know whether it is safe around this lion, Mr Beaver has to reply, 'Who said anything about safe? Course he isn't safe. But he's good. He's the King, I tell you' (Lewis, 1996:241). One is reminded once again of Williams's good that contains terror, a quality that seems to be regarded by Lewis as being inherent in the lion - he expresses the thought that 'the lion, when he has ceased to be dangerous, will still be awful' (in Lindskoog, 1973:53). Charles A. Brady (1972:4, 5) states that 'the greatest service Lewis does childhood ... is to elicit a sense of the numinous' in the chronicles, 'touch[ing] the nerve of religious awe on almost every page.' It has been seen repeatedly that this awe involves the beauty and the terror of the divine and numerous instances of the words and actions of Aslan reveal that it is the same in Narnia. Aslan inspires terror even in those who have nothing to fear from him and Lindskoog (1973:59) compares this 'reverential dread' with the experience of Mole and Rat encountering Pan in *The Wind in the Willows* (discussed in Chapter I). In *The Silver Chair*, when Aslan speaks to Jill for the first time, 'it did not make her any less frightened than she had been before, but it made her frightened in rather a different way' (Lewis, [1952] 1990a: 23). Shasta, in *The Horse and his Boy*, 'was no longer afraid that the Voice belonged to something that would eat him, nor that it was the voice of a ghost. But a new and different sort of trembling came over him. Yet he felt glad too' (Lewis, [1954] 1996:462). This clearly bears resemblance to Mole's words, 'Afraid! Of *Him*? O, never, never! And yet - and yet - O, Mole I am afraid!' (Grahame, 1984:105). Later, as morning breaks for Shasta and his horse, 'a golden light fell on them from the left. He thought it was the sun ... He turned and saw, facing beside him, taller than the horse, a Lion ... It was from the Lion that the light came. No one ever saw anything more terrible or beautiful' (Lewis, 1996:462-3).

Blake complains in 'The Everlasting Gospel' about the 'creeping Jesus' of popular conception and Lewis, too, notes Lindskoog (1973:70), 'constantly preaches that love is something more stern and splendid than mere kindness'. Aslan illustrates this principle by being himself, acting like a true lion. 'He's wild, you know. Not like a *tame* lion' (Lewis, 1996:332). Aslan's wildness expresses and pre-supposes the inscrutable nature of his divinity, placing his being within a sphere unreached by human understanding. The reality of the divinity represented by Aslan - a reality that nevertheless transcends the boundaries of reason - is appealed to by G.K. Chesterton (1927:15) in *The Everlasting Man*: 'We must invoke the most wild and soaring sort of imagination; the imagination that can see what is there'. Again and again in references to Aslan, his wildness is invoked as an expression of the awe he inspires. For instance, when Jill encounters Aslan for the first time at the stream in *The Silver Chair*, she notices that his voice is not human, but 'deeper, wilder, and stronger; a sort of heavy, golden voice' (Lewis, 1990:23). Jill is 'dying of thirst', but also terrified of the lion and asks him to promise not to harm her; 'I make no promise,' says Aslan. To her question as to whether he eats girls, he replies that he has 'swallowed up girls and boys, women and men, kings and emperors, cities and realms.' He warns the girl that if she dares not drink she 'will die of thirst', for 'there is no other stream' (1990a: 24).

This daunting Aslan is - like Christ - the water of life; he himself is the only stream. And the New Testament abounds in water symbolism, not the least example of which is the fact that Jesus changes water to wine, in its turn symbolizing his blood - thus life out of death. For, like the life-giving and life-taking sun, water, too, has its dual aspect. (One is reminded of the death and life water in *The Three Mulla-Mulgars*, discussed in Chapter III). Dorothee Sölle (1975:109) notes that

'ein wiederkehrendes Bild in den mystischen Texten für die Tiefe, in die die Seele sich begibt, wenn sie lernt, sich zu lassen, ist das Bild des

Wassers. Wasser und Seele gehören zusammen in mythischer Sprache'
[a recurring image in the mystic texts for the depth to which the soul comes when it learns to abandon itself is the image of water. Water and soul belong together in mythic language.]

However,

das Symbol des Wassers ist nur zu verstehen, wenn man sich über die Bedrohung, die es natürlicherweise hat, klar ist. Das Wasser bedeutet Untergehen und Sterben ... Nur durch diese Bedrohung und durch diesen Tod des alten Menschen kann der neue Mensch geboren werden. Nur wer sich diesem Tod des Sich-Verlierens und der Selbstaufgabe preisgibt, findet Leben. (Sölle, 1975:110)

[the symbol of water is to be understood only when there is clarity about the threat it naturally involves. Water means going under and dying ... Only through this threat and this death of the old self can the new self be born. Only the one, who abandons himself to this death of losing and surrendering himself, finds life.]

The Lion makes no promises and the girl must abandon herself to her peril in order to find life. A new Jill has to emerge for the quest Aslan has in store. At the end of *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*, Edmund and Lucy ask to know the way from their own world to Aslan's country. 'I shall be telling you all the time,' says the lord Lion, 'But I will not tell you how long or short the way will be; only that it lies across a river. But do not fear that, for I am the great Bridge Builder' (Lewis, 1990b: 187-8).

Aslan is the stream whence flows the water of life and thus the central reality in his enchanted land of Narnia. Without the Lion there could be nothing. He creates Narnia and in doing so, Matheson (1988:16) states, 'he creates a world of which he is part, because that world is, in essence, himself ... Narnia is manifestation of the Lion's inner reality, Aslan turned inside out.' According to Grace M. Jantzen (1984:148), God 'has poured himself out, and will continue to do so, in loving manifestations of himself, in ways which, doubtless, we cannot even guess.' In *The Silver Chair*, the Queen of Underland weaves a spell to make the

children believe that the 'Overworld' is but a dream and that only her reality exists - "'There never was a *sun*," said the Witch' (Lewis, 1990a: 142). The last and ultimate reality Jill recalls 'seemed to take all the good out of her, she said: "There's Aslan"' (1990a: 143). The spell is only broken, however, when the Marsh-wiggle Puddleglum manages to put out the witch's fire and asserts: 'I'm on Aslan's side even if there isn't any Aslan to lead it' (Lewis, 1990a: 145). The Marsh-wiggle is able to make this statement only because his very being is a part of that sacred reality which is Aslan. In a declaration enunciating the way in which his being involves all aspects of life and bearing resemblance to God's 'I am that I am' (Exodus III: xvi) to Moses by the flaming bush, Aslan replies to Shasta's question, '*Who are you?*', out of the dark:

'Myself', said the Voice, very deep and low so that the earth shook: and again 'Myself', loud and clear and gay: and then the third time 'Myself', whispered so softly you could hardly hear it, and yet it seemed to come from all round you as if the leaves rustled with it. (Lewis, 1990a: 462)

Like Aslan, Mary Poppins is the informing principle of her world and like Mary Poppins, Aslan teaches the supreme importance of the self. At the dawn of Narnian history Aslan breathes something of his own divine nature into the talking beasts, binding himself to this chosen group of creatures in an even more special way than to the rest of his creation.

The Lion opened his mouth, but no sound came from it; he was breathing out, a long, warm breath; it seemed to sway all the beasts as the wind sways a line of trees. Far overhead from beyond the veil of blue sky which hid them, the stars sang again; a pure, cold, difficult music. Then there came a swift flash like fire ... either from the sky or from the Lion itself ... and the deepest, wildest voice ... ever heard was saying:

'Narnia, Narnia, Narnia, awake. Love. Think. Speak. Be walking trees. Be talking beasts. Be divine waters.' (Lewis, 996:106)

Most significantly, Aslan proceeds to say: 'Creatures, I give you yourselves ... I give you the stars and I give you myself' (1996:107). Aslan infuses the whole of his creation with his divine spirit, but one might understand that his chosen ones - by being 'given' themselves by the one who also gives himself - receive the further gift of 'knowing' their god in the sense of having an awareness of his presence in and around them and that they are a part of him. In *The Pilgrim's Regress*, the Pilgrim is told that 'for this end I made your senses and for this end your imagination, that you might see my face and live' (Lewis, 1944:220). 'My child', says Mutwa (1998:562), 'God is more in you, and is more part of you than you are in and part of yourself. He exists in you more than you exist in yourself.' The implication appears to be that in knowing the self, the divine giving life to the self is known. Commenting on the lines from a traditional rhyme running, 'One is one and all alone / And evermore shall be so', P.L. Travers (1989:279) recounts that, as a child, she 'brooded long upon that One. Was it God? Was it myself? I have now come to the conclusion that it is both.' In *The Last Battle*, Ginger the Cat betrays his god by betraying Narnia to the Calormenes, a people differing from the Narnians in their lack of imagination and individuality, a 'nation of slaves' (Gibson, 1980:151-2). The cat consequently loses the gift of speech, what Gibson (1980:213) calls 'the gift of self-consciousness which made him a Talking Beast. His reversion to being a dumb animal is a death to his selfhood.'

In contrast to Ginger the Cat who loses himself by betraying his god, Emeth the Calormene finds his god by choosing for and following the good within himself, knowing his true self. Having served Tash, the demonic god of Calormene, since childhood, his 'great desire was to know more of him, if it might be, to look upon his face. But the name of Aslan was hateful to me' (Lewis, 1990:152). Entering the dark straw-roofed hovel - an inward journey? - on the night of the Last Battle, Emeth suddenly finds himself within a wondrous world

of light and beauty. So, thinking himself to be in the country of Tash, he sets out to seek his god. But

in a narrow place between two rocks, there came to meet me a great Lion ... his hair was like pure gold and the brightness of his eyes like gold that is liquid in the furnace. He was more terrible than the Flaming Mountain of Lagour, and in beauty he surpassed all that is in the world ... Then I fell at his feet and thought, Surely this is the hour of death, for the Lion (who is worthy of all honour) will know that I have served Tash all my days and not him. Nevertheless, it is better to see the Lion and die than to be Tisroc of the world and live and not to have seen him. But the Glorious One bent down his golden head and touched my forehead with his tongue and said, 'Son, thou art welcome'.
(Lewis, 1990c: 154)

Emeth is made afraid by his previous homage to Tash and Aslan has to explain that 'no service which is vile can be done to me, and none which is not vile can be done to him' (1990c: 155). Emeth follows the light of truth and goodness within his own being in the same way that Puddleglum chooses to stand on Aslan's side even when made to doubt the very existence of the Lion. Both are rewarded by the confirmation of all pure and holy qualities, incarnate in the god of light, life, and truth. 'For all find what they truly seek,' declares Aslan (1990c: 155).

Mary Poppins never tells anyone anything; Aslan - as we learn from several instances in the Chronicles - tells one nothing but one's own story: 'I tell no one any story but his own' (Lewis, 1996:462). This, together with the insistence that wanderers, adventurers and pilgrims return to their own worlds after their sojourn in fantasy (an idea mentioned earlier with reference to Sölle and to be considered again for its significance in Narnia), directs inward, to the self and into the self, the end of which is to seek - and find! - the holy within the common. The seeker must turn from the beautiful and terrible divine that is unfathomable and approached with but half-understanding, in order to find its holiness within and around himself - to be comprehended and made part of the

One again. Why else does the Friend and Helper of *The Wind in the Willows* make the Rat and the Mole forget their vision of him (cf. Chapter I) and are we told in *The Three Mulla-Mulgars* that a poor creature who looks into the face of even one of the Maidens of the great Tishnar can never be happy again for the sight (cf. Chapter III)? Because the creation of the One is infused with his Holy Spirit, his creatures are nourished continually by his divine presence. In the context of Aslan as god incarnate, Gibson (1980:155) says of Christ: 'His divinity is forever united with our dust.'

As Christ combines within his being the ultimately divine with the ultimately human, Aslan represents the divine incarnate in the form of a true beast. Lindskoog (1973:54-55) points out that Lewis's sentiments regarding this holy paradox are based 'on the principle that everywhere the great enters the little ... Because he believes in the power of the Higher, just in so far as it is truly Higher, to come down, the power of the greater to include the less, Lewis presents a God capable of becoming a true lion.' Bree the Horse holds comfortably vague and abstract beliefs about his god before the living Aslan appears to him: 'No doubt, ... when they speak of him as a Lion they only mean he's as strong as a lion or (to our enemies, of course) as fierce as a lion. Or something of that kind ... it would be quite absurd to suppose he is a *real* lion. Indeed it would be disrespectful. If he was a lion he'd have to be a Beast just like the rest of us' (Lewis, 1996:489). Aslan calls the terrified Bree to him, warning him, 'Do not dare not to dare. Touch me. Smell me ... I am a true Beast' (1996:490). For 'the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory ... full of grace and truth' (St John, I: xiv). In contrast to Bree, his companion the mare Hwin is so well aware of the Lion's dual nature that, only wishing to worship him, she says 'Please ... you're so beautiful. You may eat me if you like. I'd sooner be eaten by you than fed by anyone else' (Lewis, 1996:489). He kisses her instead.

Hwin seems to share the sentiments of Prince Rilian where he declares in *The Silver Chair* that 'Aslan will be our good lord, whether he means us to live or die. And all's one, for that' (Lewis, 1990a: 152). Aslan is the source of Narnian reality, therefore lord of life *and* death, as he is the one who has the power to lay down his life and take it up again, which he does - Christ-like - in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*. The incarnation of the divine informs the doctrine of the holy in the common, a central idea also in Lewis's thinking. For the true Christian, Christ is literally everything - life and death, light and shadow. In his spiritual autobiography, *Surprised by Joy*, Lewis (1955:170) relates how, at the time of his conversion to the faith in Christ, he 'saw the bright shadow coming out of the book into the real world and resting there, transforming all common things and yet itself unchanged. Or, more accurately, I saw the common things drawn into the bright shadow.' So Lewis comes to discover around him, and depict in his work, 'the real universe, the divine, magical, terrifying and ecstatic reality in which we all live' (in Lindskoog, 1973:39). For, in the words of Dorothy Sayers (1970:87), 'the mind of the maker is generally revealed, and in a manner incarnate, in all its creation. The works, severally and jointly, are manifestations within space-time of the Energy and instinct with the Power of the Idea. Thus the Spirit of God brooded upon the face of the primeval waters.' When the world without and the self within - linked to other 'selves', all of which together form part of the One - are regarded in this Light, nothing is what it seems and everything more, much more, than it is taken to be. In *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader* the reader encounters Ramandu, an Old Man, who is in actuality 'a star at rest' (Lewis, 1990b: 158). When Ramandu

set for the last time, decrepit and old beyond all that you can reckon, I was carried to this island. I am not so old now as I was then. Every morning a bird brings me a fire-berry from the valleys in the Sun, and each fire-berry takes away a little of my age. And when I have become as young as the child that was

born yesterday, then I shall take my rising again ... and once more tread the great dance. (Lewis, 1990b: 159)

The boy Eustace remarks that in his world 'a star is a huge ball of flaming gas' and the reply comes from the Star that 'even in your world, my son, that is not what a star is but only what it is made of' (Lewis, 1990b: 159).

The principle of the holy in the common is aptly illustrated by the ways into and out of Narnia. In *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, the Pevensie children find their way into Narnia through an old wardrobe; in *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader* through a picture on a wall, and in *The Silver Chair* the way is through a door in a stone wall behind which lies a moor. The reason, of course, is that the way to Aslan's country is Aslan, who is the only stream and the great Bridge Builder. He tells Jill in *The Silver Chair* that 'you would not have called to me unless I had been calling to you' (Lewis, 1990a: 25). Thus, once again, the true way to communion with the divine is an inward journey. Therefore there must be ways out of Narnia too, out and back to one's own world, inward to the self. Paul F. Ford (1980: xxi) notes that 'each reader brings to the *Chronicles* his or her own story and comes away with expanded horizons and renewed vision.' Consider the legacy of Polly and Digory, the first children to visit Narnia, described in a passage of which Ford (1980:55) remarks that 'Lewis intends to weave a spell here that will be with his readers all their days for their having been in Narnia and met the Lion.' At the end of *The Magician's Nephew*,

the children were looking up into the Lion's face ... and all at once ... the face seemed to be a sea of tossing gold in which they were floating, and such a sweetness and power rolled about them and over them and entered them that they felt they had never really been happy or wise or good, or even alive and awake, before. And the memory of that moment stayed with them always, so that as long as they both lived, if ever they were sad or afraid or angry, the thought of all that golden goodness, and the feeling that it was still there, quite close, just round some corner or just behind some

door, would come back and make them sure, deep down inside,
that all was well. (Lewis, 1996:163)

Around corners and behind doors - the golden sea, the bright shadow. The immediacy and ever-presence of the ineffable in the everyday for the followers of the One makes one think of these lines from a poem by W.H. Auden (in Travers, 1989:25)

The glacier knocks in the cupboard,
The desert sighs in the bed
And the crack of the tea cup opens
A lane to the land of the dead.

At the end of the Chronicles, Aslan stand by the door between the worlds - old Narnia and new, everlasting Narnia. His chosen ones pass through it, but others disappear in his terrible dark shadow. Aslan tells his followers that they are '- as you used to call it in the Shadowlands - dead ... The dream is ended: this is the morning' (Lewis, 1990c: 171). The narrator tells us that 'the things that began to happen after that were so great and beautiful that I cannot write them ... Now at last they were beginning Chapter One of the Great Story which no one on earth has read: which goes on forever' (1990c: 171-2).

But as for now, for us, Aslan sends us back with his words to Edmund and Lucy in *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*, that 'you must begin to come close to your own world now' (Lewis, 1990b: 188). All the experiences of the hero in the fairy tale are but to equip him with his self, and that is the beginning of his story, not the end, for the story has no end. So this is the command of Coyote, the Child Empress, the great Mary Poppins and the great Lion Aslan to the hero: Go back now to YOUR story and seek for the bright shadow there.

Who is she that looketh forth as the
Morning
Fair as the moon, clear as the sun,
And terrible as an army with banners?
- Song of Solomon, VI: x

Jesus said, 'Fortunate is the lion that the human will
eat, so that the lion becomes human. And foul is the
human
that the lion will eat, and the lion will become human. '
- Gospel of Thomas, VII

CHAPTER III

'Bones and Dull-Red Berries'

The Poetry of Death and Life: An Animal Perspective on Duality

It was cold, it was cold and the roof was made of bones. The roof was made of the interlaced sprays of the yew tree, stiff twigs twisted in and out, over and under, hard as ice and set with dull-red berries.

- Richard Adams

Richard Adams (1990: 156) recounts in his autobiography how he, at the age of ten, 'came within half a plank of worshipping Tishnar, ' the mysterious nature goddess of Walter de la Mare' s *The Three Mulla-Mulgars* (1910, republished in 1936 as *The Three Royal Monkeys*). Adams acknowledges that de la Mare' s work came to have a profound influence on his own thought and writing. Joan Bridgman (1993: 7) draws attention to this revelation in pointing out that de la Mare' s work 'was the inspiration for the metaphysical dimension, which marks Adams' s *Watership Down*. Apart from the obvious influence of de la Mare' s animal world upon that depicted in *Watership Down*, the sense of mystery regarding death and the transcendent pervading this novel is also to be traced to *The Three Mulla-Mulgars*.

In an obscure final chapter, Chapter XXIV: 'Tishnar', de la Mare offers some scant information on the significance of 'the Beautiful One of the Mountains', who presides over the world of the three royal monkeys. Nevertheless, the secrets of the divine are not to be unraveled by a mere human and the author ends a more than slightly esoteric book appropriately - and with special significance for the treatment of the numinous in *Watership Down* - by remarking that, 'as everyone can see, I am only chattering about what I cannot understand' (1936: 272).

The name of Tishnar, 'a very ancient word in Munza, ...means that which cannot be thought about in words, or told, or expressed. So all the wonderful, secret, and quiet world beyond the Mulgars' lives is Tishnar - wind and stars, too, the sea and the endless unknown' (de la Mare, 1936: 268). Thus, Tishnar represents the mystery and the awe of nature, that which is inscrutable and elicits from mortal creatures a 'half-understanding' at most. Her association with snow subtly marks the fact that Tishnar exists within a world, even dimension, apart from that of the monkeys, whose environment is obviously tropical. 'The Valleys of Tishnar lie on either flank of the Mountains of Arakkaboa, though she herself wanders only in the stillness of the mountain snows' (de la Mare, 1936:268). A



Illustration by Mildred E. Eldridge for Chapter XXIV: 'Tishnar' of de la Mare's *The Three Royal Monkeys* (de la Mare, 1936:269)

strange and unexplained feature of de la Mare' s story is that, as the three royal brothers, Thimble, Thumb and Nod, start out on their quest for the paradisiacal Kingdom of Assasimmon in the Valleys of Tishnar, 'Witzaweelwulla (the White Winter) ' (de la Mare, 1936:22) falls. These frosty conditions, utterly uncongenial to the animals, persist throughout the journey, until the monkeys finally reach the slopes of the Arakkaboa mountains, where 'a warm sweet wind was moving with daybreak, and only on the heights next the pallor of the sky shone Tishnar' s unchanging snows ' (1936:264).

In an essay comparing *The Three Mulla-Mulgars* with Tolkien's *The Hobbit*, A. Bentinck (1989: 40) asserts that 'in both stories there is an emphasis on clear-cut good and evil. In *The Three Royal Monkeys* the good spirit of Tishnar is ranged against the evil Immanâla.' Of de la Mare' s work this is true only to a certain extent and rather superficially. (Also in the work of Tolkien, thoughts about good and evil become more complicated if one considers *The Lord of the Rings*). In fact, de la Mare comments on the fathomless nature of the divine spirit in such a way as to suggest the awe it inspires without attempting to provide an exegesis. Writers confronting the theme of nature are often driven to deal with this awkward mystery in some way or other. One thinks of the supreme example of Blake, puzzled by the divine mind, which conceived of both the tiger and the lamb.

Vera Chapman (1981: 32) refers to Tishnar as 'the gentle goddess of the land'. This vague description seems to over-simplify the divine nature of Tishnar. She might be gentle, but it is difficult to say what this would imply, as she is also cold and unknowable. Her element is ice, that which signifies death and darkness. And Tishnar is also associated with moonlight - thus night - to the creatures of the forest. Tishnar stands in apparent opposition to the evil spirit Immanâla, that which is

unstoried, nameless, unknown, darkness, secrecy. All these the word means. Night is Immanâla to Munza-Mulgar. So is sorcery. So, too, is the dark journey to death or the Third Sleep. And this *Beast* they name Immanâla because it comes of no other beast that is known, has no likeness to any. Child of nothing, wits of all things, ravenous yet hungerless, she lures, lures, and if she die at all, dies alone. (de la Mare, 1936: 119)

Yet, de la Mare's description of the leopard ('Roses as they call her, for the beauty of her clear black spots') seems to suggest a Blakean vision of the interdependence of good and evil: 'Her beauty is Tishnar's; the savagery of her claws is Noomanossi's' (1936:271), that of death, 'darkness, change, and the unreturning' (1936:268).

Tishnar exists outside the sphere of good and evil. Her beauty is that of the divine, an enigma. 'So beautiful is she that a Mulgar who dreams even of one of her Maidens, and wakes still in the presence of his dream, can no longer be happy in the company of his kind. He hides himself away in some old hole or rocky fastness, lightless, matted, and uncombed, and so thins and pines, or becomes a Wanderer or Môh-Mulgar' (de la Mare, 1936:268). The narrator assures us, however, that 'it is rare for this to be for very few Mulgars dream beyond the mere forest' (1936:268). How would the creatures of 'the mere forest' know what Tishnar knows of Immanâla? De la Mare's description of Tishnar's Maidens, especially the Water Middens, is revealing in this context:

These Water Middens, or Water maidens, are like the beauty of the moonlight. The countless voices of fountain, torrent, and cataract are theirs. They, with other of Tishnar's Maidens, come riding on their belled Zevveras, and a strange silence falls where their little invisible horses are tethered; while, perhaps, the Maidens sit feasting in a dell, grey with moonbeams and ghostly flowers. Even the sullen Mullabruk learns somehow of their presence, and turns aside on his fours from the silvery mist of their glades and green alleys, just as in the same wise a cold air

seems to curdle his skin when some haunting Nooma passes by.
(De la Mare, 1936:271)

The suggestion of what one might call 'death imagery' is arresting. Again, images of cold and night predominate in a description of that which pertains to the sphere of Tishnar. The duality of her nature is evoked by strange visions of 'grey... moonbeams and ghostly flowers' and 'the silvery mist of...green alleys'. Creatures of water, the Water Maidens personify the life-blood of the natural world and all living things, yet they are associated with the 'cold air' of 'some haunting Nooma', which one might, synthesizing the information provided by de la Mare, take the liberty of translating as 'death shadow'. On seeing again the capricious and rather deceitful Water Midden, who seized his Wonderstone and disappeared with it, Nod 'spoke gently, for he could not look into her beautiful wild face, and her eyes, that were like the forest for darkness and the moonlit mountains of Tishnar for loveliness, and still be angry, or even sad' (de la Mare, 1936:249). (Nod comes to realize that the Water Midden is a lonely and deeply unhappy creature. Her only 'sorrowful wish' is not to be forgotten when the monkeys finally reach the Valleys of Tishnar. It seems that Tishnar's Maidens, or at least some of them, who are the voices of the fountains and the streams, do not lead lives of untempered bliss). The dual nature of Tishnar's divinity is reflected in her creatures, as 'there is a never-ending changeableness and strife in their short lives' (1936:271). At the end of the novel, de la Mare seems to assert the wholeness of light, dark and shadow: 'Yet because dark is but day gone, and cruelty *unkindness*, therefore even the heart-shattering Noomanossi, even Immanâla herself, is only absent Tishnar' (1936:272).

About de la Mare's conception of nature, J.R.R. Tolkien observes: 'I do not think Walter de la Mare walked in my country... as far as my feelings for and understanding of his work goes, I should guess that he inhabited a much darker and more hopeless world: one anyway that alarms me profoundly' (Bentinck,

1989: 40). Richard Adams also recognizes the grimness of de la Mare' s vision, yet embraces it as presenting true aspects of nature. He designates de la Mare' s poems as

open[ing] the door upon a numinous, night-blue world of incessant danger, wild beauty, loss, fear and death; no pretence or dressing-up...but deeply felt and sincere, and all cast in words of storm, rainbow and wave. They struck into my heart the full realization of humanity' s ultimate ignorance and insecurity in this world; and this has never left me. (Adams, 1990: 156)

As for Tishnar, presiding enchantress of de la Mare' s vision, it is interesting to note that a brilliant attempt at describing her nature might be seen in a passage from Tolkien' s *The Lord of the Rings*. This is what the Lady Galadriel envisages herself becoming, should she accept the Ring offered to her by Frodo:

'And now at last it comes. You will give me the Ring freely! In place of the Dark Lord you will set up a Queen. And I shall not be dark, but beautiful and terrible as the Morning and the Night! Fair as the Sea and the Sun and the Snow upon the Mountain! Dreadful as the Storm and the Lightning! Stronger than the foundations of the earth. All shall love me and despair!' (Tolkien [1968] 1990:385)

Galadriel' s dual vision of beauty and terror is ultimately that of nature as seen throughout *Watership Down*. The rest of this chapter will reveal de la Mare' s influence on the presentation of nature and the numinous in Adam' s novel.

The opening line of *Watership Down* presents us with an image of transitoriness: 'The primroses were over'. This is a foreboding that springtime must pass, is passing, as everything must. The life of a rabbit is a precarious one. On the second page of the novel we are told, in a footnote, that 'rabbits can count up to four. Any number above four is Hrair" a lot", or "a thousand". Thus they say *U Hrair* - "The Thousand" - to mean, collectively, all the enemies (or *elil*, as they call them) of rabbits - fox, stoat, weasel, cat, owl, man, etc.' (Adams,

1972:16). As Charles A. Meyer (1993: 71) notes. 'the rabbits in... *Watership Down* are pre-occupied with death and dying, and rightly so, for they have a thousand enemies'. The legendary hero of the rabbits is called El-ahrairah, 'Prince with a Thousand Enemies'. His is a true de la Marean 'world of incessant danger, ...loss, fear and death'.

Survival, the cry of every creature, is symbolized for the rabbits by the cunning, the resourcefulness and the speed of El-ahrairah. To the fox, the stoat and the weasel, 'Frith gave the cunning and the desire to hunt and slay and eat the children of El-ahrairah. And so they went away from Frith full of nothing but hunger to kill the rabbits' (Adams, 1972:39). But to El-ahrairah he gave a promise: 'All the world will be your enemy, Prince with a Thousand Enemies, and whenever they catch you, they will kill you. But first they must catch you, digger, listener, runner, prince with the swift warning. Be cunning and full of tricks and your people shall never be destroyed' (Adams, 1972:40). The ways of dealing with the theme of death in *Watership Down* depend for their effect upon the understanding that survival is to be desired at all costs, death to be dreaded. Survival is the promise of the life-giving sun, Lord Frith, to the rabbits; that is their gift. Hazel and his companions leave Sandleford Warren because of Fiver's premonition of danger, his vision of death. As the epigraph to Chapter 5, the beginning of the rabbits' long journey, Adams provides a quote from R.M. Lockley's *The Private Life of the Rabbit*, the 'remarkable book' to which he is 'indebted for a knowledge of rabbits and their ways': 'These young rabbits...must move out if they are to survive. In a wild and free state they...stray sometimes for miles...wandering until they find a suitable environment' (1972:33). The first sentence reads in full: 'Under pressure of population at the center these thin young rabbits, the lowest in the hierarchy of the colony, must move out if they are to survive' (Lockley, 1976: 134). Thus Adams calls on a verifiable survival crisis to justify the possibility of the rabbit

journey, establishing the fear of death or the will to survive as the impetus at the heart of the novel.

But the 'real' - and *Watership Down* is peculiarly realistic in terms of rabbit behaviour, testified to by the prominence of references to Lockley's book in the text - and the metaphysical inform each other. Hazel and his company of 'thin young rabbits' leave Sandleford Warren not only according to the nature of rabbits, but also because of Fiver's vision of blood, a vision intricately involved in Adams's symbolism:

'I don't know what it is,' answered Fiver wretchedly. 'There isn't any danger here, at this moment. But it's coming - it's coming. Oh, Hazel, look! The field! It's covered with blood!' 'Don't be silly, it's only the light of the sunset. Fiver, come on, don't talk like this, you're frightening me!' (Adams, 1972:19)

The two images of blood and sunset or the two-fold image of sunset covering the field with blood is significant with regard to the all-importance of Lord Frith, the rabbits' sun-god, in the novel. Frith, the sun, is the giver of life; 'Long ago, Frith made the world. He made all the stars too and the world is one of the stars' (1972:37). Rabbit time is structured according to the comings and goings of Frith and in various places events in the novel are marked by reference to his position in the sky.

In 'The Significance of Myth in *Watership Down*', Bridgman (1993: 7) asserts that 'mythic interpretation...exists as a continuous layer of meaning throughout the text. From the first page, the reader is trained to view the events in the narrative on the real and transcendental levels.' The blood of Fiver's vision is that of death and corresponds to the exit of Frith. A line from Silverweed's poem in Chapter 16, which is a poem about death, reads: 'Frith lies in the evening sky. The clouds are red about him' (Adams, 1972:113). At the beginning of Chapter 1, Adams quotes from Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*: 'The house reeks of

death and dripping blood...The stench is like a breath from the tomb' (Adams, 1972:15). But the blood of Frith's departure is not always significant of death or terror. Bridgman (1993: 10) points out that the rabbits arrive on Watership Down at sunset and that the red light has a different meaning under these circumstances. She says of Frith that

he is the supreme arbiter of events and underlines their significance. It is the presence of Frith in the first blood-red sunset that signifies the fields as covered in blood, a warning of the massacre to come. The rabbits' arrival on Watership Down is similarly bathed in red, flashing light to emphasize the importance of the place envisioned by Fiver. In the penultimate chapter, Frith's crimson light signifies the blood of regeneration. (Bridgman, 1993:10)

Here, the entrance of Lord Frith is described in vivid brilliance as 'the whole down and all below it, earth and air, gave way to the sunrise. As a bull, with a slight but irresistible movement, tosses its head from the grasp of a man who is leaning over the stall and idly holding its horn, so the sun entered the world in smooth, gigantic power' (Adams, 1972:187). Like blood, with its dual significance of lifeblood and death blood, the rising and setting of the sun involves a promise of new mornings, new life, as well as the coming of the shadow.

Light and shadow being spoken of, something should be said at this point about Tishnar and Immanâla. They, and the ideas around them, find their way into *Watership Down* subtly and without corresponding directly to elements in Adams' s work on a one-to-one scale. Yet, their spirit informs the symbolical and mythological aspects of the novel. Tishnar's duality is expressed in terms of an association with water. An identification of 'life water' and 'death water' could function on various levels, as has been pointed out earlier. Tishnar dwells in the 'unchanging snows' of the mountains, she sends a terrible winter to try her creatures on their journey, and her Water Maidens, presiding over rivers and

springs, are designated in such a way as to be linked to the haunting death shadows, spirits of Immanâla' s realm. Also, at the end of their journey, just before passing into the Kingdom of Assasimmon, the monkeys have to float through a dark cavern under the mountains over dangerous and treacherous water, 'sleepy water', as Thumb warns Nod, 'sleepy water. Moon-Mulgars there, drunk and drunk; thirstier and thirstier, torches out - all dead asleep - all dead asleep' (de la Mare, 1936: 260). On 'these thin grey waters' (1936:259) Nod 'dreamed a hundred dreams, rocked softly on the sliding raft, all of burning sunshine, or wild white moonlight, or of icy and dazzling Witzaweelwulla; but yet, it seemed, the Water Midden' s beauty haunted all' (1936:260). Thus, on the deathly water of the cavern Nod is haunted by manifestations of Tishnar' s death water.

A duality akin to this is that of Frith, the sun-god. Tishnar' s moon, ice and water are transformed into the fire and blood of Frith, whose duality is marked by the images of 'life blood' and 'death blood'. For in this novel, too, death is a mystery tied up with a divinity barely grasped by its creatures. What the rabbits are taught to believe about Lord Frith is only that which is necessary for their survival within the dimension in which they live. Most rabbits, true to the will of Frith, bother only about staying alive at all costs and do not dwell on issues of death or the relation between Frith and the Black Rabbit of the Moon. Fiver, prophet and poet, senses more about these dark things and is terrified by them. Nod' s death dreams are about 'burning sunshine' and 'wild white moonlight', Fiver shudders at the Black Rabbit of the Moon, who does the sun-god' s bidding. The terror of these visionaries, who are the guides of their people, makes one think of certain lines from the poem 'Gog' by Ted Hughes (1967:151):

Sun and moon, death and death,
Grass and stones, their quick peoples, and the
bright particles
Death and death and death -

Her mirrors. (Hughes, 1967: 151)

In *The Three Mulla-Mulgars* the connectedness between Tishnar and Immanâla is only vaguely suggested; that between Frith and the Black Rabbit in *Watership Down* is stated. 'There 's another place,' says Fiver in Chapter 28, ' - another country - isn' t there? We go there when we sleep; at other times too; and when we die...It' s a wild place, and very unsafe. And where are we really - there or here?' (Adams, 1972:255). Also in *The Three Mulla-Mulgars* death and sleep are shown to be closely related: 'From Tishnar'...comes the Last Sleep - the sleep of the entire World. The last sleep just of their own life only is Noomanossi - darkness, change, and the unreturning' (de la Mare, 1936: 268). What Fiver is thinking of is the domain of the Black Rabbit of Inlé. In Chapter 31, 'The Story of El-ahrairah and the Black Rabbit of Inlé', we are told about this dread, 'the power of the night, the press of the storm, / the post of the foe;/ Where he stands, the Arch Fear in a visible form' (Adams, 1972:273, from the epigraph to Chapter 31, quoted from Browning' s *Prospice*). The Black Rabbit is terror incarnate, 'fear and everlasting darkness'.

He is a rabbit, but he is that cold, bad dream from which we can only entreat Lord Frith to save us today and tomorrow. When the snare is set in the gap, the Black Rabbit knows where the peg is driven; and when the weasel dances, the Black Rabbit is not far off. ...Some say that the Black Rabbit hates us and wants our destruction. But the truth is - or so they taught me - that he too serves Lord Frith and does no more than his appointed task - to bring about what must be. (Adams, 1972:276)

Keeping in mind Tishnar and Immanâla, one is sensitive to the fact that the Black Rabbit acts as the servant of Frith in *Watership Down*. The opposing forces of light and dark - for mortals do regard them as standing in opposition - are brought together and an important aspect of Frith' s nature is revealed as one realizes that the shadow is part of it, his alter ego; the moon shines by the light of the sun.

Bridgman (1993: 13) argues that rabbits 'have become accustomed to the idea of the black Rabbit as the gateway to death in their legends and stories' and that death is seen as 'unavoidable, even familiar... The acceptance of all the gods, including the death-dealing one, means the acceptance of the shadow.' John Pennington (1993: 46) asserts that El-ahrairah, in 'The Story of El-ahrairah and the Black Rabbit of Inlé', 'close[s] the gap between the known and the unknown, between the fear and the desire of death... As myth bridges the gap from known to unknown, so does El-ahrairah as rabbit hero.' But the mythology of *Watership Down* is not as clear-cut and defining as these critics would have it be. (The reaction of Pipkin and the others at the telling of this story does not seem to testify to the closing of any gap between the known and the unknown for them.) Death is never to be desired or even accepted, survival being the rabbit's primal instinct - and here we must be reminded of the novel's specific realism. Fiver, who knows and understands more than other rabbits and who is a prophet, reveals an attitude that is far from accepting the wisdom of a soothing mythology. Talking about the world of death, or the world after death, he ponders: 'El-ahrairah comes and goes between the two as he wants, I suppose, but I never could quite make that out, from the tales. Some rabbits will tell you it's all easy there, compared with the waking dangers they understand. But I think that only shows they don't know much about it' (Adams, 1972:255). The mythology of the rabbits is a reflection of living in a world of duality, not a system neatly ordering the forces of their environment for the sake of psychology. Acceptance of death and the knowledge thereof is the terrible fate of the warren of the poet Silverweed.

What Hazel's rabbits encounter in Cowslip's warren is a sensibility grotesquely alien to the nature of the rabbit, as established by the novel. Fiver knows instinctively from the start that 'there's something unnatural and evil twisted all round this place' (Adams. 1972:99). When Dandelion tells the trickster tale of El-ahrairah and the king's lettuce to 'these magnificent, well-fed

strangers, with their detached manners, their shapes on the wall, their elegance, their adroit evasion of almost all questions - above all, their fits of un-rabbit-like melancholy' (Adams, 1972:110), it elicits remarks such as: 'I always think these traditional stories retain a lot of charm...especially when they're told in the real, old-fashioned spirit' (1972:111). Dandelion and his friends find out that these strange rabbits 'don't tell the old stories much...El-ahrairah doesn't really mean much to us.' Buckthorn protests that 'El-ahrairah is a trickster...and rabbits will always need tricks' (to survive, that is, to be true to the blessing El-ahrairah received from Lord Frith). 'No,' comes the shocking and alien reply, 'rabbits need dignity and above all, the will to accept their fate' (1972:111).

The acclaimed poet Silverweed now recites his exquisite death poem, the epitome of the sensibility of this alien warren and also a significant statement on the part of the novelist. Silverweed 'had a wild, desperate air and his ears twitched continually...But there was an arresting fascination in his voice, like the movement of wind and light on a meadow, and as its rhythm entered into his hearers the whole burrow became silent.

The wind is blowing, blowing over the grass.
It shakes the willow catkins; the leaves shine silver.
Where are you going, wind? Far, far away
Over the hills, over the edge of the world.
Take me with you, wind, high over the sky.
I will go with you, wind, I will be rabbit-of-the-wind,
Into the sky, the feathery sky and the rabbit.

The stream is running, running over the gravel,
Through the brooklime, the kingcups, the blue and gold of
spring.
Where are you going, stream? Far, far away
Beyond the heather, sliding away all night.
Take me with you, stream, away in the starlight.
I will go with you, I will be rabbit-of-the-stream,
down through the water, the green water and the rabbit.

In autumn the leaves come blowing, yellow and brown.
They rustle in the ditches, they tug and hang on the hedge.
Where are you going, leaves? Far far away
Into the earth we go, with the rain and the berries.
Take me leaves, O take me on your dark journey.
I will go with you, I will be rabbit-of-the-leaves,
In the deep places of the earth, the earth and the rabbit.

Frith lies in the evening sky. The clouds are red about
him.
I am here, Lord Frith, I am running through the long grass.
O take me with you, dropping behind the woods,
Far away, to the heart of light, the silence.
For I am ready to give you my breath, my life,
The shining circle of the sun, the sun and the rabbit.
(Adams, 1972:112-113)

Having been driven to live in an unnatural, that is un-rabbit-like, relationship with death, the rabbits of Cowslip's warren have come to Romanticize death in their striving to accept their fate with dignity. Silverweed's poem expresses a sensibility, which, under unnatural circumstances, has moved out of the sphere of the natural and has adopted an alien mind to cope with an alien situation. Having become aliens in the natural world of the rabbits by 'accepting death' and abandoning the will to survive by means of what El-ahrairah has received from Lord Frith, these rabbits embrace death as a means of being reunited with that world again, of returning to it. The whole poem conveys a desperate longing for something lost, something of which the wind and the stream are a part, something of which the poet might become a part again if he goes on the 'dark journey' of the leaves, the rain and the berries.

'Cowslip's warren has crossed the boundary,' states Pennington (1993: 43), 'but they have moved from wilderness to civilization, and as a result they exist in a horrible gap, believing nothing' [Emphasis in the original]. It is true that they exist outside 'wilderness' (one might do well to adopt Pennington's terminology at this point), but they do believe in something - death. The last

stanza of Silverweed's poem also suggests that they believe in an afterlife. Accepting death, they have come to a knowledge of death which forces them to consider things natural rabbits would not bother - not dare, perhaps - to wonder about. Silverweed's poem suggests that, existing outside 'wilderness', they are able to see death as part of the natural process, part of the intricate cycle of life, and therefore accept it, even desire it, whereas 'natural rabbits', being part of 'wilderness', experience death as something unnatural - survival being natural -, something that concerns the Black Rabbit of Inlé, a mysterious associate of the unfathomable mind behind 'wilderness'. This notion is supported by the fact that Adams contrasts Silverweed's poem with Dandelion's trickster tale which celebrates the way the people of El-ahrairah live and stay alive, flourish in fact, through cunning and resourcefulness. Note the way Dandelion's story ends: '[Prince Rainbow] let the rabbits out of the marshes of Kelfazin and they multiplied everywhere. And from that day to this, no power on earth can keep a rabbit out of a vegetable garden, for El-ahrairah prompts them with a thousand tricks, the best in the world' (Adams, 1972:10).

Fiver's reaction to Silverweed's poem is revealing and startling, since he is the only one of Hazel's group who understands it. His sensitivity seems to be echoed in a certain way by the epigraph to the chapter, a quote from 'Four Postures of Death' by Sidney Keyes, the last two lines of which read: 'I'm a poor tattered thing, but not unkind/ To the sad dancer and the dancing dead' (Adams, 1972:110). Fiver says that Silverweed 'smells like barley rained down and left to rot in the fields. He smells like a wounded mole that can't get underground' (Adams, 1972:112). These images of death and decay mark Fiver's knowledge of the un-rabbit-like resignation propounded by Silverweed even before he has heard the poet speak. Regarding the poem,

Fiver, as he listened, had shown a mixture of intense absorption and incredulous horror. At one and the same time he seemed to

accept every word and yet to be stricken with fear. Once he drew in his breath, as though startled to recognize his own half-known thoughts: and when the poem was ended he seemed to be struggling to come to himself. He bared his teeth and licked his lips, as Blackberry had done before the dead hedgehog in the road. (Adams, 1972:113)

Fiver's reaction is suggestively compared to Blackberry's at the sight of a dead hedgehog on a road, a horrific sight of death under unnatural circumstances on a road built by alien humans. There is much more to Fiver's experience than mere horror at something unnatural, however. Later in the novel Fiver is to say about Silverweed that 'he terrified me and yet I knew that I understood him better than anyone else in that place. He knew where he belonged, and it wasn't here. Poor fellow, I'm sure he's dead. They'd got him all right - the ones in that country. They don't give their secrets away for nothing, you know' (Adams, 1972:255). Silverweed remains to be pitied and 'the other country' remains a grim place. Silverweed's desire for death is 'folly', although Fiver admits that he 'speaks the truth ... it's like a great mist of folly that covers the whole sky; and we shall never see to go by Frith's light any more. Oh, what will become of us? A thing can be true and still be desperate folly' (1972:114). Fiver realizes the danger of probing the ineffable, of trying to deal with that which is not to be dealt with. There is only one way for rabbits to exist, that provided by Lord Frith and his blessing to El-ahrairah. The rabbits of Silverweed's warren

had no Chief Rabbit - no, how could they? - for a Chief Rabbit must be El-ahrairah to his warren and keep them from death: and there was no death but one, and what Chief Rabbit could have an answer to that? Instead, Frith sent them strange singers, beautiful and sick like oak-apples, like robins' pincushions on the wild rose. And since they could not bear the truth, these singers, who might in some other place have been wise, were squeezed under the terrible weight of the warren's secret until they gulped out fine folly - about dignity and acquiescence, and anything else that

could make believe that the rabbit loved the shining wire.
(Adams, 1972:126)

At this point one might deviate to say something about rabbits and humans, since this can be related to the reader's reaction to Silverweed's poem, which is important. From the first page of *Watership Down* the reader is wholly intergrated within the rabbit world. Everything is seen through rabbit eyes, everything experienced through rabbit perception; things are called by rabbit names and explained in footnotes. As Meyer (1991: 144) expresses it, 'we climb inside rabbit brains and perceive the world through rabbit feelings.' Also, the author makes a point of comparing rabbits with humans, a trait he seems to have taken over from Lockley, who says in the first chapter of *The Private Life of the Rabbit* that 'as we shall see throughout our story, humans are so rabbit' (1976: 22). In Chapter 4 of *Watership Down*, we read that, in certain ways, rabbits 'are much the same as primitive people' (Adams, 1972:28). The point about primitive people having been made, one is to consider Pennington's (1993:38) notion that 'Adams...returns the reader to a mythical time where rabbit and reader are wedded, while simultaneously contrasting this to the real time of the narrative (where rabbit and human are divorced). The novel...bring[s] a timeless, mythic order to our chaotic world by crossing that boundary from civilization to wilderness.' All of this implies that the reader is able to understand, if not to share to some extent, the reaction of Fiver towards Silverweed's poem, which ultimately presents a vision of modern human civilization and culture. Reading with a 'rabbit brain', having absorbed rabbit responses and trickster tales, the reader feels Fiver's shock and indignation while, at the same time, remaining human and part of the world of civilized culture, recognizing the beauty and the power of Silverweed's art.

It would seem that poetry in *Watership Down* is reserved for the issues of death, for the dark places of the mind. Hazel's dream in Chapter 17 is described in poetic language:

It was cold, it was cold and the roof was made of bones. The roof was made of the interlaced sprays of the yew tree, stiff twigs twisted in and out, over and under, hard as ice and set with dull-red berries. ...But then came Bigwig, twisting in and out of the branches, his mouth full of berries. 'Look!' said Bigwig, 'I can do it. I'm running another way. Ask me where, Hazel! Ask me where! As me where!' Then they were running another way, running, not to the warren but over the fields in the cold, and Bigwig dropped the berries - blood-red drops, red droppings hard as wire. 'It's no good,' he said. 'No good biting them. They're cold.' (Adams, 1972:115-116)

The poetry serves to stress the prophetic quality of the dream; its language allows for the striking identification of the berries with death, becoming the blood of the cold, hard death of the wire. Bigwig's near-death experience, foretold by Fiver and foreshadowed by Hazel's dream, is represented by his twisting 'in and out of the branches' like the yew sprays twist 'in and out, over and under' to make a roof of bones, of death.¹² Berries, nourishment and thus survival, turn hideous and become blood, death blood. Pennington (1991: 75) notes that

Adams magnifies the problem of survival in the fallen world by clouding good from evil. ...In Adam's world...the enemy can be within, and we see this in the rabbits' encounter with Cowslip's warren and Woundwort's Efrafa. A free or floating motif in *Watership Down* is the deceptive mist that pervades the novel and shrouds the truth. ...The wire snare, a deadly trap effective because it is hidden, is also a key symbol for this deception. In Cowslip's warren the rabbits have been tainted by man; they are food for man, for man gives them food.

Poetry is dark and grim in *Watership Down* and associated with the unnatural. Being fed by man, the rabbits of Cowslip's warren survive to lead a deathly existence. The same duality applies to General Woundwort, who, by

¹² The rich European lore around the yew as the tree of death is also of significance to the symbolism here.

militaristically striving to create a maximum-survival society, has created nothing more than a death camp. In Efrafa, unsurprisingly, we encounter another poem.

When Bigwig overhears Hyzenthlay's poem, found in Chapter 35, he 'remembered the smell of carrots, and Silverweed dominating the crowd in the great burrow. But these verses went to his heart as Silverweed's had not' (Adams, 1972:325). The reason for this is that Silverweed's poem is a melancholy celebration of death, whereas Hyzenthlay's poem is a nostalgic lament for the loss of life, a protest against death:

Long ago
The yellow-hammer sang, high on the thorn.
He sang near a litter that the doe brought out to play,
He sang in the wind and the kittens played below.
Their time slipped by all under the elder bloom.
But the bird flew away and now my heart is dark
And time will never play in the fields again.

Long ago
The orange beetles clung to the rye-grass stems.
The windy grass was waving. A buck and doe
Ran through the meadow. They scratched a hole in the bank,
They did what they pleased all under the hazel leaves.
But the beetles died in the frost and my heart is dark;
And I shall never choose a mate again.

The frost is falling, the frost falls into my body.
My nostrils, my ears are torpid under the frost.
The swift will come in the spring, crying 'News! News!
'Does, dig new holes and flow with milk for your litters.'
I shall not hear. The embryos return
Into my dulled body. Across my sleep
There runs a wire fence to imprison the wind.
I shall never feel the wind blowing again. (1972:326)

The first two stanzas recall a time when life could be led according to Lord Frith's wishes. In both, images of fertility and new-born life are invoked. The last lines of these stanzas describe in each case the departure of an animal, which evokes a

sense of the loss of 'wilderness'. The last two lines of the second stanza are marked by the introduction of the image of frost, cold being perhaps the most prominent image of death in the novel. The third stanza, dealing with the unnatural present and its deathly cold, follows this. It is interesting to notice the way its first line echoes the structure of Silverweed's first lines. Again, in the last two lines the focus is on the invasion of the natural by the unnatural. (The contrast between milk and frost highlights this). The wire fence, a human thing, strikingly symbolizes the unnatural, which imprisons the wild, free wind, all that is wild and 'wilderness'. What Hyzenthlay is speaking of in the last stanza is that called 'resorption', which is described by Lockley (1976: 136) as 'the prenatal mortality of one or more or all of the developing litter in the womb of the doe, which takes place at any time from half-term to three-quarters term of the four weeks of pregnancy. ...It is...believed that resorption is as much a psychological as a physiological reaction to adverse factors in the environment.' In *Watership Down*, death gives life to poetry, wrung from dark reaches by adversity and the violation of the blessing of El-ahrairah.

The images of dark and frost in Hyzenthlay's poem recall the world of *The Three Mulla-Mulgars*. It is revealing to note that in de la Mare's novel, poetry deals, in all but a few instances, with darkness, cold, death and water. At the outset of their journey the Mulla-Mulgars sing a farewell song about 'an old and grey Baboon, / ...Once a Prince among his kind, / Now forsaken, left behind, / Feeble, lonely, all but blind', called to go on a journey by Tishnar, who 'came by night, / In the moonbeams cold and white' and comforts him:

'Be not frightened, shut thine eye;
 Comfort take, nor weep, nor sigh;
 Solitary Tishnar's nigh!
 Sulani, ghar magleer.

Old Baboon, he gravely did
 All that peaceful Tishnar bid;

Ah-mi, Sulani!
In the darkness cold and grim
Drew his blanket over him;
Closed his old eyes, sad and dim:
Sulani, ghar magleer. (de la Mare, 1936:34)

The last verse of the song is given in Mulgar, as, 'after the doggerel I have made of the others, I despair of putting [it] into English' (1936:34). Whatever secret the final verse holds, the suggestion seems to be clear that this is a death poem and that the old Baboon would not open his eyes in this world. (If 'the last sleep' is Noomanossi - darkness, change, and the unreturning' (1936:268), then Tishnar and Noomanossi are one, for the summons is Tishnar's.) It is of striking significance that the monkeys should sing such a song at the beginning of their journey. Carpenter and Prichard (1984: 526) call *The Three Mulla-Mulgars* 'a quest story with allegorical overtones.' Although denying 'that there is the least suggestion of allegory,' Forrest Reid (1929: 124-125) concedes that the reader 'can if he likes view in it his own earthly pilgrimage', for 'its beauty relates it to the main body of Mr de la Mare's work: behind earth's loveliness hovers a dream of the absolute: a divine discontent awakens in it and is comforted.' One wonders about the true nature of the land of Assasimmon in which the monkeys find themselves, having gone through the dark cavern over the death water inside. Have they not come to the 'dream of the absolute' come true?

Another, and a curious, death poem is to be found in the episode where Nod and his brothers are led along the 'secret walks' of the Mountain-Mulgars. While moving along these dangerous mountain paths, 'high above the remote thunder of the surging waters in the ravine' (de la Mare, 1936:183), Thumb, the eldest royal brother, strikes up the Mulgar Journey Song, which enrages the resident eagles so much that they attack the monkeys and kill three of the Mountain-Mulgars. The song tells that 'In Munza a Mulgar once lived alone, / And his name it was Dubbuldideery, O;/ With none to love him, and loved by

none, / His hard old heart it grew weary, O' (1936:183). Dubbuldideery sets out 'to seek for the waters of 'old-Made-Young' and comes through many dangers

Till Tishnar's sweet river came near he, O -
The wonderful waters of 'Old-Made-Young, '
A-shining for Dubbuldideery, O,
Wan, wizened old Dubbuldideery.

He drank, and he drank - and he drank - and he -
drank:
No more was he old and weary, O,
But weak as a babby he fell in the river,
And drowned was Dubbuldideery, O,
Drown-ded was Dubbuldideery! (de la Mare,
1936:184-185)

Whether the story of the monkeys is to be read allegorically or not, journeying and dying seem to be strangely linked in the minds of its characters. The process of death by water, resulting in a renewal of life, as is hinted at by the experience of the Mulla-Mulgars, having passed from the cavern into the Valleys of Tishnar, is inverted in the case of Dubbuldideery in such a way as to leave one with questions and a certain sense of unease.

The songs of the shipwrecked sailor, Andy Battle, the only human in the story, deal with the lot of the lost seaman, thus bringing to light yet another aspect of death water, that of the tempestuous sea. Battle bemoans the fact that 'now lean with long travail, all wasted with woe, / ...He sits 'neath the Cross in the cankering snow, / And waits for his sorrowful end' (de la Mare, 1936:125). He 'sailed/ Leagues across/ Foam haunted/ By the albatross' (1936:155) and came to Tishnar's deadly snow, where the ravenous Immanâla thirsts for his blood. At the end of the Mulgars' journey, in the cavern under the mountains, Nod sings a song Battle taught him about a sailor who, with 'zteep/ Unwonnerin' eye/ Ztares zon tossed sea/ An' empty zky' (1936:258).

The Water Midden, too, who 'can but make/ A little song, / For singing' s sake' (de la Mare, 1936:238), expresses her desolation in poetry as she wonders 'why, then, has / Wise Tishnar made/ One so lovely, / One so sad?' (1936:237).

If, in *The Three Mulla-Mulgars*, the experience of the royal brothers hints at coming to the light by passing through the shadow, or attaining life through death, this is shaped into reality in *Watership Down*. Adams' s novel ends with a death, but, true to the nature of this nove, the death of Hazel-rah presents a revelation. El-ahrairah himself comes to summon Hazel to his new life: 'You' ve been feeling tired, ...but I can do something about that. I' ve come to ask whether you' d care to join my Owsla. We should be glad to have you and you' ll enjoy it. If you' re ready, we might go along now' (Adams, 1972:478). Hazel is not going to Fiver' s dreaded 'other place' and one wonders what has become of the Black Rabbit of Inlé. In fact, Hazel' s death teaches us that the Black Rabbit holds sway only in the world of mortals, where his presence is manifest in all kinds of tribulation, fear and disease. He is what mortal creatures perceive to be the dark unknown at the end of their earthly lives. But Hazel has crossed the fine line to where it is not dark and where darkness and death do not exist. He has come to where, in de la Mare' s (1936: 100) words, 'all secrets/ He/ Shall pierce and see, / And walk unharmed where' er he goes.' As Hazel leaves his body behind, he is aware of the 'extraordinary feeling that strength and speed were flowing inexhaustibly out of him into [...the] sleek young bodies and healthy senses' (Adams, 1972:478) of his rabbits. El-ahrairah assures him that 'you needn' t worry about them...They' d be all right - and thousands like them' (1972:478). The blessing of El-ahrairah is celebrated and life remains Frith' s gift to all rabbits who desire nothing but life. Hazel' s new life (or rather, perhaps, his 'real' life) begins in unison with spring and new life everywhere, for as 'they slipped away, running easily down through the wood...the first primroses were beginning to bloom' (1972:478).

But they never dance as we dance,
they have not the speed nor the grace.
We scorn both the cat and the dog
who lie by their fireplace.
We scorn them licking their paws,
their eyes on an upraised spoon,
we who dance hungry and wild
under a winter's moon.

- Elizabeth Coatsworth
from 'Song of the Rabbits Outside the Tavern'

CHAPTER IV

'About Buttercups and That Sort of Thing, and Spring Times' The Garden and the Wilderness in Children's Poetry

And I looked around and found a nice little book.
All it had in it was little poems,
But I liked it very much,
Because they were pretty little poems,
Like about buttercups and that sort of thing,
And spring times.

- Mark¹³

¹³From 'Two Pennies' by Mark (aged seven) quoted in Arnstein (1967:134).

The assertion could surely be made that in as far as the ineffable can be evoked in human language, it is to be hinted at in poetry, the ancient code of mystery. 'We cannot weigh an abstraction,' says Alan Tucker (in Chambers, 1980:127) in an essay 'On Poetry and Children', 'but it exists, and we need poetry to get at its intangible reality.' It can be seen in numerous extracts from literature quoted in this study that where the awe of the numinous is expressed the language is charged with poetry. Poetry invokes and attends the presence of Aslan, Frith, and Tishnar; Mary Poppins tacitly teaches that our world is made of poetry, if we can but see it whole. In a scene from Virginia Woolf's ([1919] 1966:451) *Night and Day*, Mrs. Hilbery speaks of 'all the things that aren't written down, but- but -'. She waved her hand, as if to indicate the wealth of unwritten poetry all about them. 'The night and the stars, the dawn coming up, the barges swimming past, the sun setting ... I sometimes think that poetry isn't so much what we write as what we feel.' Tucker (in Chambers, 1980:126) agrees that 'poetry is a game that is too difficult for us, so we play it instinctively.' The Romantic child, by instinct - as 'nature's priest' - holds the ultimate poetic ability to know the very fabric of the universe for 'unwritten poetry'. The notion that the Romantic child retains a preindustrial, unspoiled relationship with the natural world has been mentioned earlier in this study; in a somewhat evolutionist sense, the prominence of poetry in the world of Romantic childhood might be considered in the light of the following statement by C.L. Wrenn: 'It is,' says Wrenn (1967:35), 'so to speak a law of nature that the oral making of verse arises early in the history of a people's culture ... Religion, magic, the natural rhythms of work and of the seasons, all ask for poetry and song or chant from virile human beings in a natural state of living.' The poet Jacques Roubaud (1994:49-50) echoes these sentiments in stating that '*la poésie est l'enfance dans la langue, l'enfance qui reste dans la langue pendant que tout le reste vieillit*' [poetry is childhood in language, the childhood that remains within the language while all the rest grows old]. Even with regard to prose, the writer Hans Andreus (in

Linders, 1995:20 *et al.*) believes that '*kinderverhalen moeten dicht bij de poëzie staan. Elk kind leeft namelijk in een poëtische wereld*' [children's stories should stand close to poetry. For every child lives in a poetic world].

Whether or not the inclusion of 'every child' is questionable, poetry does appear to be a place where the idea of the Romantic child converges in some ways with conceptions of the intended audience of poetry written or selected 'for children'. Since this points to something inherent in the very nature of poetry - the mystic capability at its core - that is of importance to the argument of this study, some more should be said of it before proceeding. For about 'children's poetry' Peter Hunt (1991:195) says that 'this is one of the most questionable areas of writing for children: is there such a thing?' One only has to read the introductions and prefaces to anthologies of children's poetry and consider the poem gatherers' sentiments regarding their collections to realize the gravity of this question.

Iona and Peter Opie (1973:vii), editors of *The Oxford Book of Children's Verse*, describe their anthology as 'a gathering of verses that have been written for children, or written with children prominently in mind.' The editor of *The Oxford Book of Children's Verse in America*, Donald Hall (1985:xxiv), differs from the Opies 'on the perennially vexed issue of intentions.' Hall (1985:xxiv) argues that 'some literature becomes "for children" by what I must call a structural intention,' in the same way that 'any child, looking at the huge concrete pipe sections manufactured for culverts, knows that these pipes *intend* to be crawled through - whatever the manufacturer or highway engineer had in mind.' The Opies (1973:viii-ix) do point out, however, that 'few of our nursery rhymes, for instance, were originally compositions for the young' and justly assert that 'the more pure the poetry, the more difficult it can be to say for whom the poet is writing'.

'Pure' poetry, it seems, defies categorization and where anthologists make mention of the age of their readers it is to invoke the transcendently ageless

and timeless quality of Romantic childhood. Janet Adam Smith (1953:20) of *The Faber Book of Children's Verse* records that 'I, and many others, have found that the poetry we most enjoyed reading in those years [childhood] has stuck in our minds, without any deliberate learning, in a way that poetry learnt more recently has not.' The editor of *The Puffin Book of Twentieth Century Children's Verse*, Brian Patten (1991:19), also thinks that 'while the majority of poems written for adults seem to age and grow creaky as the years pass, poems written for children retain their freshness. The best have a sense of wonder, mystery and mischief that their older brothers and sisters often seem to lose.' Perhaps it can be suggested that the best have mostly been written in the spirit of eternal childhood and therefore express wonder, mystery and mischief. Anyhow, the terms 'for children' and 'for adults' appear to be used superficially here, as Patten's collection includes work 'by poets who wrote specially for children', poems 'adopted by children' as well as poems 'worthy for adoption' (1991:19). A glance at some anthologies shows that poems 'worthy of adoption' cover an extensive field, including in the *Faber Book* Christopher Smart's 'Cat Jeoffry' passage and Shakespeare's 'The rain it raineth every day'. More often than not, the inclusion of such poems is guided and motivated by the Romantic spirit, celebrating the wonder and the mystery of the world in numerous ways. And such poems can be found anywhere; indeed, Seamus Heaney and Ted Hughes (1982:19), editors of *The Rattle Bag* say about their selections that 'most of the poems lay about for the taking in places already well known to people, younger or older, who read verse.' Not children, but 'people who read verse' is a key concept from the viewpoint of this study, with the further qualification that in 'children's poetry' are inevitably to be found qualities valued by the Romantic sensibility. Walter de la Mare's significantly subtitled anthology *Come Hither: A Collection of Rhymes and Poems for the Young of All Ages* has been described as 'probably the most haunting magical collection of English Romantic poetry that has yet been compiled' (quote from the *Observer* appearing on the cover of the second impression, 1962). It should be noted that

'Romantic' here has its broad application, since the collection features numerous poems not from what is traditionally taken to be the 'Romantic period'. De la Mare ([1923] 1962:xxvii) recalls his childhood experience of the poems in the book of the mysterious Mr Nahum that forms the basis of *Come Hither*:

So what I then read has remained a clear and single remembrance, as if I myself had seen it in a world made different, or in a kind of vision or dream. And I think Mr. Nahum had chosen such poems ... as carried away the imagination like that; either into the past, or into another mind, or into the all-but-forgotten; at times as if into another world. And this kind has been my choice in this book.

And since this kind has been the choice for this chapter, de la Mare's succinct appraisal of some of the primal aspects of Romanticism seems an apt introduction to it, especially the reference to 'another mind'.

De la Mare speaks of other worlds, the past and the 'all-but-forgotten'; he also speaks of 'another mind'. These images form a proper backdrop to the rest of this chapter, which is concerned with other worlds in a significant way. The first world to be mentioned is that of the pastoral. The term is used here in its most simplistic form to refer to that idyllic and ideal retreat born of the sigh for the lost Eden where sweet harmony is to be found and where no danger and no shadow lurk, a world that has come to be associated with Romantic childhood. Yet, although championing the natural and the rustic, the pastoral presents an essentially human-centred mentality in which the danger of the elements and the ferocity of natural forces are denied. To move from a human-centred to a god-centred world is to move into 'another mind', which is ultimately unfathomable but nevertheless embraced by those who see the world whole. Within this reality it is important to call to mind again the 'half-understanding' referred to in Chapter I, for here man is an outsider, standing in awe of the mystery around him that is the product of 'another mind'. In this poetry a sense of the numinous is evoked - as in the literature discussed in the rest of the dissertation - by

focussing on those aspects of nature most unaccommodating to the pastoral mentality: its duality, its interlinked beauty and terror that move the soul towards a recognition of an ineffable other mind. For this reason, and for the sake of the argument, this poetry could be designated 'anti-pastoral', although it should be remembered that it is less of a question of opposition or mutual exclusivity than of a focus shift from the human to the divine. Indeed, in the brief discussion on Blake it will be seen that neither of these invalidates the other, that both states, though contrary, can be seen to be necessary and inevitable; experience can look back on innocence and see its worth, yet realize that without contraries is no progression. This constitutes part of the doctrine of the dual world, a place whose utter beauty and utter terror do us the service of hinting at the terrific grandeur of its Maker.

Any attempt at a simple description of the pastoral mode is bound to refer to an ideal and idyllic world of rustic peace and innocence, removed from the corruption of society; in addition to this might be found aspects such as a nostalgia for an idealized past (Peck & Coyle, 1984:57-8; Van Gorp *et al.*, 1991:297-298). This relates to what Bryan Loughrey (1984:21) calls 'the cult of the child', which suggests that 'Post-Romantic conceptions of childhood, as a state of natural innocence, joy and wisdom, corrupted by entry into the adult world, allowed the child to usurp the traditional role of the shepherd.' According to Peter V. Marinelli (1971:20) the pastoral nostalgia for the lost garden has its origin in the fall of human nature, which

Fall is therefore the major pre-condition of pastoral poetry, the greatest loss of all. Hence pastoral's double concern for the primitive beginnings of the entire race, and with the primitive beginnings in childhood of the individual. Both man as a type and man as an individual sense that once upon a time they came trailing clouds of glory into the world.

C.W. Haney (1965:3) agrees that 'what childhood is to the individual man, Eden is to man collectively - paradise lost ... In paradise, before the initial union of man, God, and nature was shattered, man was at home as he has not been at home anywhere since.' Placing the question in evolutionary perspective, Paul Shepard (1991:95) states that

the garden is a formal human recognition in art of the beauty of the forest edge, the amenity of clearings in the forest, the gift of hoofed animals. Hence it is at once an embodiment of history and an objectification of paradise.

'It was not possible to see the forest while in it, ' writes Shepard (1991:22). ' Once out, we acknowledge the bond by remaining near its edge, cutting it back the right distance or planting forest-edge growth near us. ' About our affinity for the auspicious forest edge he explains:

The bush apes ancestral to man gradually worked farther from the forest. They took the sea eye out of the gloaming and into the radiance of the open day, though not without some enduring nostalgia...An affinity for shade, trees, the nebulous glimmering of the forest interior,...climbing, the dizzy childlike joy of looking down from a height, looking through windows and into holes, hiding, the mystery of the obscure, the bright reward of discovered fruits are all part of the woody past.

The garden at the edge of the woody past is a magical place like twilight, a place where worlds meet, in light and in shadow. It is a place that remembers the past, where a river flows out of Eden in to the primordial sea.

The Garden presents a potent image of the pastoral sensibility, since it involves a world that is safe, secure, secluded and enclosed. W.H. Auden (in Loughrey, 1984:92) poses as one of his axioms of 'all dream Edens' that 'space is both safe and free. There are walled gardens but no dungeons, open roads in all directions but no wandering in the wilderness.' Comfort and safety ensure

happiness within the garden and, as a garden is artificially cultured to a specific effect, so the pastoral world is artificially constructed to create this kind of peaceful happiness. Robert Louis Stevenson's *A Child's Garden of Verses* might be considered in this light as a prime example of the pastoral world. Carpenter and Prichard (1984:114) describe the verses in this collection as 'both a description of childhood as seen by an adult, from the outside, and an attempt by Stevenson to re-create the sensations of his own childhood as he had felt them.' That his *Child's Garden* is an artificial world purposefully constructed in the pastoral spirit, is clear from what Stevenson writes about his childhood. In his introduction to the verses, Guy Kendall (in Stevenson, 1915:xi) quotes the poet as stating: 'My childhood was in reality a very mixed experience, full of fever, nightmare, insomnia, painful days, and interminable nights. I can speak with less authority of gardens than of that other "land of counterpane".' Yet, as Kendall (in Stevenson, 1915:xi) points out, '*A Child's Garden of Verses* gives us no suggestion of anything but a pure, child-like joy in living.'

The pastoral, asserts W.W. Greg (in Loughrey, 1984:78), 'is the expression of instincts and impulses deep-rooted in the nature of humanity.' Surely, one of the most important of these is the need for shelter, safety and security. The examples to be given of Stevenson's safe and sheltered pastoral world naturally emphasize its human-centredness, which most characteristically distinguishes it from the god-centred anti-pastoral, a dangerous, incomprehensible place. In 'My Kingdom' (Stevenson, [1885] 1915:50) the child proclaims that

all about was mine, ...
The little sparrows overhead,
The little minnows too.
This was the world and I was king;
For me the bees came by to sing,
For me the swallows flew.

In the pastoral world nature is not incomprehensible and indifferent to man, but exists for his pleasure and ease. This poem echoes the longing for an Eden where man took dominion over creatures he named, known by him, the time before the breach of knowledge and understanding between man and the natural world. The same reassuring primacy of human needs and happiness is evident in 'Summer Sun' (Stevenson, 1915:65):

Above the hills, along the blue,
Round the bright air with footing true,
To please the child, to paint the rose
The gardener of the World, he goes.

For in this world all things are familiar and known. Its Sun is very unlike Frith of the Rabbits or the Lord of Mary Poppins; its stars

 chased me with cries,
And they soon had me packed into bed;
But the glory kept shining and bright in my eyes,
And the stars going round in my head
(*'Escape at Bedtime'*, 1915:22)

Of its wind it is asked whether it be 'a beast of field and tree, / Or just a stronger child than me?' (*'The Wind'*, 1915:26). Even in winter a pretty image tempers the cold when 'tree and house, and hill and lake, / Are frosted like a wedding-cake' (*'Winter-Time'*, 1915:41). Truly, in this garden,

Sing a song of seasons!
Something bright in all!
Flowers in the summer,
Fires in the fall!
(*'Autumn Fires'*, 1915:68)

Greg (in Loughrey, 1984:81) identifies 'the reaction against the world that is too much with us ... [as] the keynote of what is most intimately associated with the name of

pastoral in literature.' Thus the pastoral constitutes essentially an escape, in which context it is important to note that whatever elements compose the pastoral environment are of less significance in themselves than the overriding certainty that there is no threat, nothing to cause pain or dismay. In this light might be considered the places of Stevenson's 'Travel' (1915:10-11):

I should like to rise and go
Where the golden apples grow; -
Where below another sky
Parrot islands anchored lie ...

The 'golden apples' of the first image suggest perhaps a mythical setting, which would set an appropriate tone for the images to follow - of places that do not belong to superficial reality, but to Romantic reality. These places - one may note without scorn - are adventure story stock settings: 'Eastern cities ... with mosque and minaret', 'forests, hot as fire, / Wide as England, tall as a spire, / Full of apes and cocoa-nuts / And the Negro hunters' huts' and 'Where among the desert sands / Some deserted city stands ...' And in this spirit should be regarded the 'man-devouring tigers' that are 'in jungles near and far'. These tigers are a necessary part of the jungle picture, but the pastoral sentiment in its context implies the assurance that no man is to be devoured in this man-centred world. Marinelli (1971:2) regards the pastoral as 'evidence of a deep-rooted instinct for perfection'; this instinct informs any pastoral setting or image and presents it as a place ultimately benevolent to man and existing for his pleasure and comfort. This place has ever been the abode of the Romantic child and at the end of the poem the child-speaker states with typical pastorally inclined nostalgia for times past that

There I'll come when I'm a man
With a camel caravan;
Light a fire in the gloom

Of some dusty dining room;
See the pictures on the walls,
Heroes, fights and festivals;
And in a corner find the toys
Of the old Egyptian boys. (Stevenson, 1915:11)

Whether the pastoral escape route leads to an adventure island - with
man-devouring tigers that devour no man - or to a past that never was,

I know that, till to-morrow I shall see the sun arise,
No ugly dream shall fright my mind, no ugly sight
my eyes,
But slumber holds me tightly till I waken in the dawn,
And hear the thrushes singing in the lilacs round the
lawn.

('A Good Boy', 1915:21)

Where the dark of night holds no fear or mystery and where the sun and the
waking are certain, the child rules unchallenged and undisputedly. There is
solidarity of the child and his environment within which he remains when
night's shadow comes over the world. For

When the golden day is done,
Through the closing portal,
Child and garden, flower and sun,
Vanish all things mortal.
('Night and Day', 1915:60)

A troubling overtone might be perceived in the last line's suggestion of death
and the sun's mortality. However, within the context it is also clear that
Stevenson's pastoral garden is a daylight world that goes to sleep with its child
king. Night is no part of this world, but seems to constitute a different and
separate reality. Of the moon it is said that

all of the things that belong to the day
Cuddle to sleep to be out of her way;
And flowers and children close their eyes
Till up in the morning the sun shall arise.
(‘The Moon’, Stevenson, 1915:34)

The pastoral world can only be if, sometimes, flowers and children close their eyes. For should the child stare wide-eyed and in wonder at the shadow of night, he should cease to rule and be ruled instead. As it is, mystery has little, if any part in the Child's Garden. A profound sense of mystery would invade and dismantle the pastoral world, dethrone and terminate the reign of the pastoral child by forcing him to confront 'another mind'. Although the validity of the pastoral in a certain sense should be stressed, it might also be pointed out that, denying mystery at their peril, child and flower close their eyes and rule a world of light and no shadow, beauty and no terror - half a kingdom, thus. Yet, mystery has the power to render their world unreal. Stevenson's 'Happy Thought' (1915:25) reads:

The world is so full of a number of things,
I'm sure we should all be as happy as kings.

But, in the context of the *A Child's Garden of Verses*, the world of these kings is not a dual one. In the pastoral where 'This was the world and I was king ... I played there were no deeper seas, / Nor any wider plains than these, / Nor other kings than me' ('My Kingdom', 1915: 50). Unlike the anti-pastoral, where the world is a mystery of beauty and terror informed by 'another mind', the pastoral is in the mind of its king, who measures it and fashions it in his image. 'This was the world and I was king.'

Stevenson, as an adult poet who admits that his own childhood was not an untainted pastoral dream, sets out to create in *A Child's Garden of Verses* a pastoral dream that recalls only the happy memories of childhood; all other,

darker thoughts must stay outside the walls. It is interesting to compare Stevenson's world to that of Hilda Conkling in her *Poems by a Little Girl* (composed between the ages of four and ten). Although Conkling's poetry is marked by a pervasive pastoral sensibility, there enters into it a sense of untamed mystery that approaches awe and creates a spirit not entirely at home in Stevenson's Garden. Because

It isn't alone purple
And blue on the edge of purple,
It is what the sun does,
And the air moving clearly,
The petals moving and the wings,
In my queer little garden! (Conkling, 1920:37)

These lines are expressive of a crucial focus shift to be discerned in many of Conkling's poems - away from the child and towards recognizing the mystery of even the least forces of nature. 'What the sun does', not as a fully comprehensible part of the trappings of the pastoral Garden, but as an autonomous force outside of the child's understanding, makes the man-centeredness that is essential to Stevenson's pastoral crumble. Instead, an image is evoked of a living world apprehended by the child, a world breathing its own life - 'the petals moving and the wings.'

Conkling's world is, like Stevenson's, an enclosed one, but only in that it exhibits the pastoral principle of safety and shelter. 'If I could tell you the way to this place,' says the poet, 'You would sell your house and your land / For silver or a little gold, / ... Live alone and sing to yourself / For a year and a year and a year!' ('If I Could Tell You The Way', Conkling, 1920:69) In this place there is little question of the dual reign of beauty and terror as in the anti-pastoral. One might consider, for instance, the disarmament of the potentially terrifying in the 'Thunder Shower' (Conkling, 1920:35):

The dark cloud raged.
Gone was the morning light.
The big drops darted down:
The storm stood tall on the rose trees:
And the bees that were getting honey
Out of wet roses,
The hiding bees would not come out of the flowers
Into the rain.

The hiding bees in the second part of the poem create an image of shelter where something more troubling might surely have followed on the portentous first four lines describing the raging storm. Yet, the element of mystery and wonder that informs so many of the poems undermines the essentially man-centred quality of the pastoral. In most of the poems the poet observes with wonder the mysterious world about her and very seldom, if ever, shows the complacent grasp of it that often attends the pastoral. Even in a poem such as 'Autumn Song' (Conkling, 1920:31) that centres uncharacteristically around the speaker herself, she does not deny the discomfiting and is not unaware of the shadow:

I was a queen of yellow leaves and brown,
And the redness of my fairy ring
Kept me warm.
For the wind blew near,
Though he made no noise of going ...

And she knows that 'even a queen of fairies can be cold / When summer has forgotten and gone!' In this garden frost is not unknown either:

Keep me warm, red leaves;
Don't let the frost tiptoe into my ring
On the magic grass! (1920:31)

That Conkling's poetry is not man-centred (and could be said to be god-centred, as will be seen) is the result of the profound apprehension of the 'other

mind' that could be said to inform it and which is absent from Stevenson's pastoral verses. In the pastoral world all things are familiar and known, but Conkling sings the unknown and unknowable. Her sensitivity to the mysterious can be discerned in almost all her poems; in 'The Dew-Light' (Conkling, 1920:63) she tells of the 'Dew-man' who

sings in the soft light
That grows out of the dew,
Out of the misty dew-light that leans over him
He makes his song ...
It is beautiful, the unknown world!

The intuitive sense of the unknown, the 'other mind', that underlies the known world around, informs the spirit of Conkling's poetry and inspires lines such as these from 'Moon Doves' (1920:108):

*I hear so many doves along the sky
How will her dove-cote hold them?
The moon says not one word to me;
She lets me wonder.*

Unlike in Stevenson's pastoral - where 'this was the world and I was king' - Conkling celebrates nature within its own context of otherness and strangeness. And it is strangeness that she seeks: In 'The White Cloud' (1920:49) she states that 'there are many clouds / But not like the one I wait for, / For mine will have a strangeness / Whiter than anything your eyes remember.' Whereas Stevenson's Moon is alien to the daylight world of the pastoral Garden that only waits for the sun to bring it to life, Conkling's Moon is meditated upon as something imbued with mysterious knowledge that knows the secret of the unity of all things. 'Moon Thought' (1920:50) reads:

The moon is thinking of the river
Winding through the mountains far away,
Because she has a river in her heart
Full of the same silver.

In 'Holland Song' (Conkling, 1920:55)

All is drowsy,
All is strange,
With the moon and stars shining round the world:
The wind stops,
The windmills stop
In Holland ...

The poet of *Poems by a Little Girl* does not inhabit a world that centres around her, but a world of wonder. She is not its queen, but a part of it and is prepared to listen and wait for an answer and to learn from its silence and its unknown, mysterious ways. She is 'alone and very quiet / Hoping the moon may say something / Before long' ('Night Goes Rushing By', 1920:67).

I am alone and very quiet. Aloneness and loneliness do not enter the Garden of Stevenson, where there are no shadows and where all is but an extension of the child's self-absorbed happiness. For this reason it is important to pay some attention to the recurrence of aloneness and its shadow loneliness in Conkling's poetry as it marks distinctly the shift in focus from the man-centred to the god-centred. In 'Snowflake Song' (Conkling, 1920:79) 'the moon seems to say: / *It is time for summer when the birds come back / To pick up their lonesome songs.*' A discordant note is sounded here in the pastoral season of summer, where idyllically songs should not be lonesome. But it would appear that for Conkling a sense of the 'lonely' is somehow expressive of the aspect of nameless mystery inherent in nature and of which Stevenson's Garden is largely devoid. A sense of loneliness might well be a conception of that yearning incited in the Romantic spirit by the mystery of nature - its unmistakable intimation of the beyond of

which we are aware, yet ignorant. It is perhaps this intimation that spurs the longing in the Romantic sensibility for 'another world', a longing apparent in a number of Conkling's poems, for example in 'Thoughts' (Conkling, 1920:59):

My thoughts keep going far away
Into another country under a different sky:
My thoughts are sea-foam and sand;
They are apple-petals fluttering.

In the context of the longing for another world and the idea of 'loneliness', some lines to be quoted presently from Conkling's 'Poem-Sketch in Three Parts' (1920:61-2), take on a somewhat troubled aspect. In part II, 'The Coming of the Great Bird', 'a boy was watching the water / ... He was thinking how he wished to see / Foreign lands, strange people.' The great bird offers to carry the boy across the sea and in part III, 'The Island'; the following lines conclude the poem-sketch:

There was one poplar tree
On the lonely island,
Swaying for sadness.
The clouds went over their heads
Like a fleet of drifting ships.
And there they sank down out of the air
Into the dream.

Conkling moves out of the pastoral dream and into 'another mind', into a dream that knows shadow and sadness. For the world of her poems is not an artificial one like Stevenson's Garden, but the world of her experience, her spirit informed in every way by her communion with nature. She knows the dream to be a part of her being and that light and shadow both dwell there. 'There is an island,' she says,

In the middle of my heart,
And all day comes lapping on the shore
A long silver wave.
It is the lonesome wave;
I cannot see the other side of it.
It will never go away
Until it meets the glad gold wave
Of happiness! ('The Lonesome Wave', Conkling,
1920:45)

'I am the one who lives under the sky,' proclaims Conkling (1920:100) in
'Summer-Day Song',

And happiness makes me like a great god
On the earth.
It makes me think of great things
A little girl like me
Could not know of.

I am the one ... like a great god. One is reminded here of the rhyme (mentioned in Chapter II) that runs, 'one is one and all alone and evermore shall be so', and of which P.L. Travers concludes that 'one' is both the self and God. That one is one, all alone and that its oneness and its aloneness bear a significance of cosmic profundity in the mind of Conkling is apparent from the poet's rather startling approach to God in 'Spring Song' (Conkling, 1920:20-1), where she declares that

He is sometimes sad and alone
Up there in the sky trying to keep his worlds happy.
I bring him songs
When he is in his sadness, and weary.
I tell him how I used to wander out
To study stars and the moon he made,
And flowers in the dark of the wood.
I keep reminding him about his flowers he has forgotten,
And that snowdrops are up.
What can I say to make him listen?

'God,' I say,
'Don't you care!
Nobody must be sad or sorry
In the spring-time of flowers.'

The intimacy of this address is a recognition that one is one and speaks of a deeply experienced communion with nature and an all-informing conviction of the unity of all things. The natural unity implicit in 'Spring Song' is made explicit in some other poems, in images such as these: 'I am willowy boughs / For coolness; / I am goldfinch wings for darkness' ('I Am', Conkling, 1920:103). The unity of the one that is all alone can be perceived solely by virtue of the recognition of the source of all life in God and a knowledge of the connectedness of the self, for, in the words of Hopkins: 'The world is charged with the grandeur of God.' (in Allison *et al*, 1983:855) This wisdom underlies Conkling's sense of mystery, which is the mystery of being, and which she acknowledges in 'Three Thoughts of My Heart' (1920:110):

*What would you do ... I asked my heart ...
If you were a floating ship of the sky ...
If you were a peering bird ...
If you were a wild geranium?*

*And my heart made answer:
That is what I wonder and wonder!
After all it is life I love,
After all I am a living thing,
After all I am the heart of you ...
I am content!*

Conkling seems to agree with Goethe (quoted in Chapter II), that within the self everything is to be found, and also with Shabistari (in Shah, 1964:206), urging: 'In an instant, rise from time and space. Set the world aside and become a world within yourself.' One might consider in this light what happens in 'The Field of Wonder' (1920:107):

I walk in the Field of Wonder
Where colors come to be;
I stare at the sky ...
I feel myself lifting on the wind
As the swallows lift and blow upward ...
I see colors fade out, they die away ...
I blow across a cloud ... I am lifted ...
How can I change again into a little girl
When wings are in my feeling of gladness?
This is strange to know
On a summer day at noon,
This is a wild new joy
When summer is over.

Gaining access to the world contained within the self involves surrendering the self to the One, attaining its unity - something not possible in a pastoral world that centres around the self. For Conkling's transcendent 'wild new joy' is brought about by an absolute immersion in nature, a contemplation of the other mind on its own terms - in short, by seeing the world whole. 'What could be more wonderful,' asks the poet at the beginning of 'The Field of Wonder' 'than the place where I walk sometimes? / Swaying like trees in rain ... / Swaying like trees in sunshine' (Conkling, 1920:107). Conkling's wisdom is that of the world whole, and her vision of it is informed by her recognition, contemplation and submission with regard to the mystery of the 'other mind' inherent in nature. For she is one who 'read[s] poems by snowlight. / If I cannot understand them so, / I will turn them upside down / And read them by the red candles / Of garden brambles' (Conkling, 'Poems', 1920:71). And bramblelight shows up the mystery of all things, the mystery that binds them and makes them One. Poetry tells us about the mystery, but does not tell us it; the mystery is like the song of the yellow summer-throat:

He kept saying the same thing;
The willow did not mind.

*I knew what he said, I knew,
But how can I tell you?*

I have to watch the willow bend in the wind.
(*'Yellow Summer-Throat'*, Conkling, 1920:64)

To have to watch the willow bend in the wind is the way of Travers's 'unknowing'. In Conkling's poetry invoking the unknown creates a sense of mystery. Her wisdom might perhaps be called that of innocence, as the knowledge of the shadow is not starkly manifest in her vision, being an unknown within the unknowing. The mystery of the One grants Conkling passage between the pastoral and the other mind, allowing her to transcend and cross over. Another poet who knows this way is Christina Rossetti; but her evocation of mystery draws on the wisdom of experience, so that the interplay of pastoral and counter-pastoral elements is far more marked here than in Conkling. For in Rossetti the shadow is not unknown, but named and its darkest manifestation is death.

In her nursery rhymes (*Sing-Song, A Nursery Rhyme Book*, 1872), Rossetti sings a world of nature that is often of a purely pastoral quality and harbours children, animals and flowers in a place 'where innocent bright-eyed daisies are' (Rossetti, 1911:433). But among the roses, the lilies and the honeysuckle there are 'violets of fragrant breath, / For death' (1911:437) and more often than of pastoral bliss, the rhymes speak of winter, snow and sorrow. For 'oh in windy autumn, / When frail flowers wither, / What should we do for hope and joy, / Fading together?' (1911:434). And what should we do for hope and joy when given counsel such as this: 'Under the ivy bush / Cease from your sighing, / But under the willow tree / Lie down a-dying' (1911: 434). The world sung by the rhymes is one of peril, since it knows beauty and terror, joy and sorrow, shelter and danger. Destructive elements are not denied or excluded, cast outside the walls or assigned to night; contrariwise, when at work, they are seen to pervade

and fuse, and what happens inside the walls is a mere intimation of greater trouble without:

The wind has such a rainy sound
Moaning through the town,
The sea has such a windy sound, -
Will the ships go down?

The apples in the orchard
Tumble from their tree. -
Oh will the ships go down, go down,
In the windy sea? (Rossetti, 1911:436)

Pastoral safety is undermined even more when escape is denied from an insecure and transitory world. A 'crown of wind-flowers' is sought in one of the rhymes, to 'fly away' and go 'beyond the surging of the sea / And the storms that blow.' But a grim reply follows: 'Alas! Your crown of windflowers / Can never make you fly: / I twist them in a crown to day, / And to night they die' (1911:430-1). By the same reasoning it seems that 'I planted a wish, / But there sprang a thorn, / While heaven frowned with thunder / And earth sighed forlorn' (1911:434). Rossetti's vision is one of a dual world where the pastoral is no independent heaven, but a foil for a more troubled, but more mysterious, more divine reality. Since flowers are so prominent in the rhymes, it seems apt to remark that the rose emerges as something of a symbol of divine duality. For 'harebells and sweet lilies show a thornless growth, / But the rose with all its thorns excels them both' (1911:428). Combining frail beauty and belligerency, 'there's nothing like the rose / When she blows' (1911:435). The counter-pastoral symbol of the rose attests that the supreme in nature disregards human comfort and the grasp of human understanding. For it is true that

The lily has a smooth stalk,
Will never hurt your hand;
But the rose upon her briar

Is lady of the land.

There's sweetness in an apple tree,
And profit in the corn;
But lady of all beauty
Is a rose upon a thorn.

When with moss and honey
She tips her bending briar,
And half unfolds her glowing heart,
She sets the world on fire. (Rossetti, 1911:439)

What could be said about the presence in the pastoral garden of a rose upon a thorn? William Empson (1935:23) refers to the 'pastoral process' as being that of 'putting the complex into the simple.' Ironically, the reverse process reveals the pastoral itself as a province of dual qualities. Indeed, 'its very nature is to arouse ambivalent feelings,' states Marinelli (1976:39-40). And, to be sure, 'sorrow is inherent in Eden itself,' as Empson (1935:187) declares when he reminds us that 'the same Nature produced the *balm* of healing and the fatal *fruit*.' This duality is apparent in the rhymes by Rossetti, where the pastoral and the anti-pastoral co-exist within one mind, the pastoral as a valid and vital dream - sometimes reflected in reality - and the anti-pastoral as the necessary wisdom of experience that comes from the knowledge of the divine and awful shadow in nature. The two rhymes by Rossetti, mentioned earlier, where the wish and the escape are denied, correlate with Harold E. Toliver's (in Loughrey, 1984:128) comment that 'rather than imposing a total harmony on nature, ... pastoralists in the main tradition usually suggest that paradise is beyond the reach even of poetry.'

The duality to be found in Rossetti is also evident in the work of Walter de la Mare (as has been seen in the discussion of his *The Three Mulla-Mulgars* in Chapter III). *Songs of Childhood* (1902), his first collection to be published, was inspired by Stevenson's *A Child's Garden of Verses* (Carpenter & Pritchard, 1984:

115) and a pastoral sensibility permeates much of his poetry. However, as in Rossetti's rhymes but unlike in Stevenson's garden, the pastoral does not preclude the wilderness in de la Mare's songs. In fact, Richard Adams (in Carpenter & Prichard, 1984:145), whose admiration for and indebtedness to de la Mare has been mentioned earlier (Chapter III), sees his poetry as being 'informed throughout in the most disturbing manner by a deep sense of mankind's ultimate ignorance and insecurity.' But it is also crucial to acknowledge that de la Mare's vision is grounded in a sense of unity. In his introduction to *Come Hither*, he remarks that 'shadows are only the absence of light, though light is needed to make them visible' (de la Mare, [1923] 1962:xxvii). Thus the light calls forth the shadow and gives it life, so the shadow is to be found where the light is, although shadow is where light is not.¹⁴ This idea is apparent in 'Dream-Song', from *Peacock Pie: A Book of Rhymes* (1913), of which the second stanza reads as follows:

Lantern-light, taper-light,
 Torchlight, no-light:
 Darkness at the shut of day,
 And lions roaring,
 Their wrath pouring
 In wild waste places far away. (de la Mare, 1969:186)

In *Songs of Childhood* there is a poem called 'Tartary', that is reminiscent of 'My Kingdom' by Stevenson. Stevenson's poem describes a conceived reality where 'this was the world and I was King'. This pastoral bravado is somewhat curbed in de la Mare by the subjunctive first line of each stanza. For,

If I were Lord of Tartary,
 Myself, and me alone,

¹⁴ Thoreau (1995:262) states in *Walden* that 'the light which puts ^{out} our eyes is darkness to us. Only that day dawns to which we are awake. There is more day to dawn. The sun is but a morning star.'

My bed should be of ivory,
Of beaten gold my throne;
And in my court should peacocks flaunt,
And in my forests tigers haunt,
And in my pools great fishes slant
Their fins athwart the sun. (de la Mare, 1969:5)

The pastoral strain of the poem suggests that, as in Stevenson's kingdom, none should come to harm by the tigers in the forests of Tartary - they are pastoral tigers that prance with the peacocks in the picture. A far grimmer picture is painted, though (and might even make one think twice about Tartary's tigers), in 'The Grey Wolf', a poem from the same collection, where 'I ran, O, I ran but the grey wolf ran faster, / O, Mother, I cry in the air at thy door, / Cry Shoo! Now, cry Shoo! But his fangs were so cruel, / Thy son (save his hatchet) thou'lt never see more' (1969:16). Whereas Stevenson sets out consciously to create a world safe from harm where the shadow holds no sway, the unreality of the pastoral dream is evident in de la Mare, as is in due measure the danger of what *is* real - the transient and perilous world of beauty and terror. Pastoral sentiments in de la Mare's poetry are for this reason often to be found within a context of nostalgia, dream, or unreality. Indeed, both the waking world and that of slumber are seen to be marked by a dream-like quality that amounts to a sense of unreality as in these lines from 'Sleep', that tell of two realms inhabited by earthly creatures:

The transient strangeness of the earth
Their spirits no more see:
Within a silent gloom withdrawn,
They slumber in secrecy.

Two worlds they have - a globe forgot,
Wheeling from dark to light;
An all the enchanted realm of dream

That burgeons out of night. (de la Mare, 1969:118)

Also the past comes to be sanctified as a remote dream-like world, tied up in story and song, as when the speaker remembers Martha telling her tales:

And her beauty far away
 Would fade, as her voice ran on,
Till hazel and summer sun
 And all were gone:

All fordone and forgot;
 And like clouds in the height of the sky,
Our hearts stood still in the hush
 Of an age gone by. ('Martha', 1969:105)

In 'A song of Enchantment', nature and the past hold the dreams of the solitary poet's heart:

But the music is lost and the words are gone
Of the song I sang as I sat alone,
Ages and ages have fallen on me -
On the wood and the pool and the elder tree. (de la Mare, 1969:186)

Whether the heart is taken off into the past, the 'all-but-forgotten', or another mind, it enters a world that is 'other' and away, and this sets it apart from the known, familiar comfort of Stevenson's Garden. The otherness of this poetic world is sung in various ways in de la Mare's work, for example within the context of unreality, where the poem presents a state of being that is understood to be different and removed from the present lived one, and which often involves nostalgia. For this unreal reality - dream, thus - is unattainable. This is apparent in a poem that evokes a pastoral setting worthy of Stevenson's garden, but has the estranging title of 'The Child in the Story Awakes', so that we know it is in unreality that we hear 'the droning of the bees, / That in the roses

take delight! / And see a cloud stays in the blue / Like an angel still and bright' (de la Mare, 1969:46). Dreaming of distant lands is within the unreality, too, for 'far are the shades of Arabia, / Where the Princes ride at noon.' And it is a sad thing to live within this dream when 'still eyes look coldly upon me, / Cold voices whisper and say - / "He is crazed with the spell of far Arabia, / They have stolen his wits away"' ('Arabia', 1969:121). The shadowy realm of dream and the past cannot be inhabited, since - being shadow - they constitute the unreality: 'Down by the waters of the sea / Reigns the King of Never-to-be / ... And all his realm is foam and rain, / Whispering of what comes not again' ('Never-to-be', 1969:123).

Closely related to the aspect of unreality is that of evanescence, the dream that vanishes, as for instance in 'The Dark Château' that 'in dreams ... / Stands ever open to me', offering an adventurous escape from the world,

But ever as I gaze,
From slumber soft doth come
Some touch my stagnant sense to raise
To its old earthly home;
Fades then that sky serene;
And peak of ageless snow;
Fades to a paling dawn-lit green,
My dark château. (de la Mare, 1969:123-4)

Within the context of evanescence one might also consider 'The Song of the Secret', where beauty is felt to be within the unreality of the dream when 'the green-leafed willow, / Drooping her head, / Whispers low to the shade / Of her boughs in the stream, / Sighing a beauty / Secret as dream.' Should this secret be seen to relate to the pastoral dream of beauty, it is significant to note that its bane lies in the shadow side of the elements that will not be negated. For 'Where is beauty?', the poet asks and laments that it is

Gone, gone:
The cold winds have taken it
 With their faint moan;
The white stars have shaken it,
 Trembling down,
Into the pathless deeps of the sea:
 Gone, gone
Is beauty from me. (de la Mare, 1969:184)

But beauty is *not* gone, for the very beauty of the poem is that of the other mind, which exists not without terror. The poem contradicts itself in evoking the terrible beauty of the white stars, the cold winds and the pathless deeps. Perhaps this has something to do with the 'secret'.

The manifestation of the shadow in de la Mare does not remain with a vague sense of evanescence, however; his poems abound in vanishings without trace, fairy abductions and changelings, and deaths at sea. The aspect of loss testifies to a dangerous world where all roads are not known. It is here that the heart of sweet Annie Maroon is pierced by the Fairy of Doone, 'curled wan as the moon', so that she is as 'the clouds of the sun / Faded at dusk, gone' ('Down-A-Down-Derry', De la Mare, 1969:30), and here lives the Miller where 'three stars shone wild and brightly / Above the forest dim: / But never his dearest son / Returns again to him' ('The Miller and His Son', 1969:18). In 'The Silver Penny' a brother and sister are to cross the sea for a penny's fare, but never do, for 'drowned is the sailor man, / Drowned is sweet Jenny, / And drowned in the deep sea / A bright silver penny' (1969:10). The 'Envoy' that concludes the 1902 edition of *Songs of Childhood* consolidates the knowledge of duality that underlies the sad spirit of nostalgia to be found throughout the collection (and, indeed, throughout de la Mare's oeuvre):

There clung three roses to a stem,
Did all their hues of summer don,
But came a wind and troubled them,
 And all were gone. (de la Mare, 1969:51)

Beauty, terror, and loss combine to stress the transient mode of earthly reality. In the 1916 edition of de la Mare's *Songs*, this envoy is replaced by another that bears the same burden, for it foretells that

Evening will come. And alone
The dreamer the dark will beguile;
All the world will be gone
For a dream's brief while.

Then I shall be old; and away:
And you, with sad joy in your eyes,
Will brood over children at play...(1969:51)

This message is apt and its vein is characteristic of de la Mare, but a greater significance lies in its resemblance to the final poem in the book that inspired *Songs of Childhood*. Within the context of *A Child's Garden of Verses*, Stevenson's envoy 'To Any Reader' presents a revealing poetic experience, as it affords a view of the garden from outside:

As from the house your mother sees
You playing round the garden trees,
So you may see, if you will look
Through the windows of this book,
Another child, far, far away,
And in another garden, play.
But do not think you can at all,
By knocking on the window, call
That child to hear you. He intent
Is all on his play-business bent.
He does not hear; he will not look,
Nor yet be lured out of this book.
For, long ago, the truth to say,
He has grown up and gone away,
And it is but a child of air
That lingers in the garden there. (Stevenson, 1915:80)

The view through the window seems a troubling one, since within the garden the shadow is kept at bay, but from without the garden is seen to be but an idyllic dream, an enclosed world of pastoral beauty where a child of air is king. Stevenson knows, like de la Mare and all other dreamers that the dream cannot be inhabited and cannot be lived within this world of beauty *and* terror. To remember de la Mare's assertion that the shadow is the absence of light, yet dependent upon it is to see the world whole, to know the One. And de la Mare knows what Conkling knows about the mystery of the One, and what Rossetti knows about the duality of the rose, for in 'The Song of Seven', (from *Bells and Grass: A Book of Rhymes*) is written:

The Song of One I know,
A rose its thorns between. (de la Mare, 1969:438)

Yet, the dream is there, to be known, to inform, to sustain and to nourish; and it is valid and it is needed. For only the dreamer can beguile the dark.

At the beginning of this study, Blake is invoked as an informing principle to the whole. Now, having shown something of the interrelatedness of the pastoral and the counter-pastoral: that mystery is to be found in their combination, that beauty and fear inform each other and that both need to be accepted in order to see the world whole, Blake must be sung again. For although the poet's thought is immensely and profoundly complicated, some of its basic and primal tenets combine the strands of this chapter and the study as a whole, and weave them together. For teaching the doctrine of unity within duality, Blake is a true spiritual father to the Romantic child, who knows the One and sees the world whole and dances over nursery meadows and through sinister forests. In *A Visit to William Blake's Inn: Poems for Innocent and Experienced Travellers*, Nancy Willard (1982:14) pays homage to the great poet in his symbolic capacity as father, lord and leader, giver and teacher, for



Illustration by Alice & Martin Provensen for
Willard's *A Visit to William Blake's Inn* (Willard,
1981:29)

... many are the beasts he's tamed
and many are the stars he's named
and many those who stop and take
their joyful rest with William Blake.

The subtitle to Blake's 1795 joint issue of *Songs of Innocence and of Experience: Shewing the Two Contrary States of the Human Soul* intimates its significant bearing on the ideas concerning pastoral and counter pastoral reality considered in this chapter. For Blake, as a unifier of worlds, declares forthrightly the interdependence of his particular conception of good and evil. In *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* (1790-1793) he states that

Without Contraries is no progression. Attraction and Repulsion, Reason and Energy, Love and Hate, are necessary to Human existence.

From these contraries spring what the religious call Good & Evil. Good is the passive that obeys Reason. Evil is the active springing from Energy.

Good is Heaven. Evil is Hell. (Blake, 1958:94)

In the 'Introduction' to the *Songs of Innocence*, as has been mentioned in the Prologue, a child on a cloud requests the poet to compose the pastoral verses that fill its pages. The guardian of Innocence is the child of the enclosed garden where joy is distilled, happiness perpetual and safety assured. But this is only true inside the garden, for there is also one looking through the window from the outside:

Hear the voice of the Bard!
Who Present, Past, & Future, sees;
Whose ears have heard
The Holy Word
That walk'd among the ancient trees. (Blake,
1958:41)

This first stanza from the 'Introduction' to *Songs of Experience* pledges faith to a visionary poet who bears knowledge of the other mind and sees the world whole, surpassing the point of recognizing the shadow by formulating and teaching a dynamic of good and evil. An epitome of this vision - indeed, of the whole of Blake's thought - is to be found in 'The Tyger' in *Songs of Experience*. Willard (1981:12) recounts how she made Blake's acquaintance as a child:

'Tell me a story about lions and tigers,' I said to the baby-sitter. Although it was nearly nine o'clock, I had no desire to sleep.

Miss Pratt, the sitter, looked up at the ceiling on which my father had glued stars that glowed in the dark. Then she said, very softly, a poem that began:

*Tyger, Tyger, burning bright
In the forests of the night,
What immortal hand or eye
Could frame thy fearful symmetry?*

'Did you make that up?' I asked, astonished.

'No,' said Miss Pratt. 'William Blake made it up.'

'Does he live close by?'

'He died nearly two hundred years ago,' said Miss Pratt.

The poem of 'The Tyger' counters that of 'The Lamb' in *Songs of Innocence*, where the speaker asks, 'Little Lamb, who made thee? / Dost thou know who made thee?', and then declares:

He is called by thy name,
For he calls himself a Lamb.
He is meek, & he is mild;
He became a little child.
I, a child, & thou a lamb,
We are called by his name.

Little Lamb, God bless thee!

Little Lamb, God bless thee! (Blake, 1958:28)

A ready response that speaks of pastoral bliss and safe shelter accounts for the Lamb, for in this world, it will be remembered, all is known. The Tyger,

however, inspires a terrible question - as indeed the whole poem consists of unanswered and not to be answered questions. The puzzling, troubling, mystifying, fifth stanza reads:

When the stars threw down their spears,
And water'd heaven with their tears,
Did he smile his work to see?
Did he who made the Lamb make thee? (1958:50)

E.D. Hirsch (in Weathers, 1969:68) justly notes that 'The Lamb' is 'a poem which exclude[s] all genuine terror from life' and that 'The Tyger' counters it 'by embracing both the lamb and the tiger.' For the world of the Garden is true, valid, and born from the memory of a real dream, but the view of the Garden from without and with the world beyond - more significant and more complete.

By the strange - beautiful and terrible - workings of paradox, of which something is to be seen in this study, it is true that the anti-pastoral depends upon the pastoral, a fact that, in turn, lends the pastoral its own terror. For Eden is the first reality and a dream still remembered even in our much-diminished world. 'Innocence', states A.C. Swinburne (in Bottrall, 1970:68), 'the quality of beasts and children, has the keenest eyes; and such eyes alone can discern and interpret the actual mysteries of experience.' And thus the eternal child and the poet are one; light and shadow are one, and the garden is one with the wilderness. This is the world of the forest's edge. And Blake, the knower of innocence and experience must be hailed here for teaching the oneness of the complete universe. A vision of the world whole can only be achieved by grace of a manifestation of the numinous, through an awareness of the 'other mind' within the mind of the poet - a mind unafraid, as it has been in the sheltered garden, so that it is free to wonder. Concerning the Tyger-riddle, some critics, imagining that it requires an 'answer', have said, 'Yes! The answer is Yes!' some 'No!' and others still, that a rhetorical question wants no answer. Wolf

Mankowitz (in Bottrall, 1970:134) makes a valid point, however, in observing that 'The Tyger', although 'often taken to be an expression of naïve wonder at the greatness of a god who could create both tiger and lamb, seems ... to be more a comment on the limited capacity of man to conceive God at all.' It must be remembered that only within the Garden can all things be known, where man is king and rules and owns them, but this is knowledge incomplete. Outside its walls, true knowledge passes into the unknowing and poets alone can hint at something of its depth, which is what Blake does in 'The Tyger'.

The first and last stanzas of this poem are identical, but for one word - 'could' becomes 'dare' in the last sentence of the poem: 'What immortal hand or eye / Dare frame thy fearful symmetry?' (Blake, 1958:50). This change suggests an intensification of apprehensive sentiment after contemplating the Tyger, but also, as E.P. Hirsch (in Weathers, 1969:72) points out, 'emphasizes the artistic daring inherent in a creation that is incredibly rich, and terrifyingly beautiful, and is like God himself beyond human good or evil.' Blake's gift is likewise one of artistic daring, and his service to the Romantic child lies in affirming the mysterious universe. His sincerity answers the inscrutable reality with which nature confronts us.

Thus, Blake's innocence is, in the words of J. Harvey Darton (in Bottrall, 1970:111), 'innocent experience recorded, not as an offering to innocence ... the immediate ecstasy of joy without shadow or reflection.' Unlike Stevenson's Garden and de la Mare's dream places, the nursery meadows where Blake's children dance are not a world crafted of wishes and memories, but a real world and a lived one, as are the sinister forests where the tyger burns bright. For Blake never wrote 'for children', as he never wrote about innocence, but from within innocence, out of experience. In a letter to the Revd. Dr. Trusler, Blake (1958:221) states that he is 'happy to find a Great Majority of Fellow Mortals who can Elucidate My Visions, & Particularly they have been Elucidated by Children.' And as for 'understanding' Blake, about whom scores of impossibly difficult

studies have been written, the Master himself vows that 'neither Youth nor Childhood is Folly or Incapacity. Some Children are Fools & so are some Old Men. But there is a vast Majority on the side of Imagination or Spiritual Sensation' (Blake, 1958:221).¹⁵ These qualities are the gift of those who seek to see the world whole, thereby manifesting the wonder of the Romantic child, who is ageless and timeless.¹⁶ 'Others,' as Harvey Parton (in Bottrall, 1970:111-2) argues, such as

the Edgeworths, the Wattses, the Taylors, the Lambs, the Trimmers ... had their ideas, high, practical, long, severe ... But they never dreamt of knocking at the gate of heaven or playing among the tangled stars ... They never saw the strange distance that is sometimes lifted up almost into sight beyond the clear clean horizon of sunset. They were never taken out of themselves. They always were themselves. They always were themselves in a world of selves, mutually communicable. Blake did not fit into their library ... But today it is his spirit that its poets would like to recapture.

To be taken out of oneself is to be exposed to the other mind, and by the laws of paradox, to sink to a depth where the self is incommunicable.

The spirit that plays among the tangled stars, described by Darton above, is celebrated in Willard's *A Visit to William Blake's Inn*, a picture book in which Blake is the centre of a nursery-rhyme-like world. The personal response inspired by Blake in those 'on the side of Imagination or Spiritual Sensation' seems to sanction the image of Blake as a spiritual inn-keeper and also to concur

¹⁵ Blake scholar and poet Kathleen Raine, in an interview with Tobias Churton (1987:136) states: 'If you start from mind or spirit being the basic, fundamental reality, you have a whole field illuminated which is totally closed if you assume matter to be the basic reality.'

¹⁶ Carpenter and Prichard (1984:66) describe *Songs of Innocence* as 'portraying the world through childlike visionary eyes'. Regarding these visionary eyes that see the world whole, one should remember that 'vision means to see, really see - not 'with the eye', ...but through it. To see reality is vision. It is the visual counterpart of 'intellect'...The mind is creative of reality...Individuals share their source in the divine being' (Churton, 1987:137).

with what Northrop Frye (in Bottrall, 1970:161) has to say about the fame of the Poet, testifying to a living Romantic spirit:

People get attracted to him through feeling that he is for them a personal discovery and something of a private possession. I constantly hear of doctors, housewives, clergymen, teachers, manual workers, shopkeepers, who are, in the most frequent phrase used, 'frightfully keen on Blake', who have bought every book on him they could afford, and kept him around like an amiable household god.

This 'household' status is mythologized in Willard's inn, where even the tiger bows to the power of Blake. Having confessed, in 'The Tiger Asks Blake for a Bedtime Story', to devouring sundry things intended for Blake's table, he declares his recognition of the need for higher and more lasting sustenance:

Soon I saw my health decline
and I knew the fault was mine.
Only William Blake can tell
tales to make a tiger well. (Willard, 1981:40)

Blake obliges and the next poem is entitled, 'Blake Tells the Tiger the Tale of the Tailor'. This latter 'built a house / of wool of bat and fur of mouse, / of moleskin suede, the better part / of things that glimmer, skim and dart' and other stolen stuff of like kind, since 'of wood and stone the man professed / his ignorance' (1981:40). The finished house, of course, is haunted and the tailor and his wife take rooms at Blake's, where true wisdom is achieved, that of reverence for the unity of living things. The tailor has learned the secret of seeing the world whole, for

On windy days and moonless nights,
Blake wears a suit of shifting lights.
The tailor now has grown so clever
he stitches light and dark together.

'Now sun and sparrows, take your rest.
And farewell, friendly trees. It's best
to work with what I know.
Shears, snip. Thread, go.
All things are new in the morning.' (Willard, 1981:43)

All things are new indeed when the world is seen whole and for what it is - light and dark together. Willard's Blake exhibits the cosmic significance of Mary Poppins in teaching the mystery of the complete universe. For him too the sun dances: One evening the Rabbit announces that

'... Two ancient friends of William Blake
have come to bring us cheer.'

Three sunflowers, in earthen beds,
stood up and slowly turned their heads
with patience unsurpassed.

The old sun danced, the new moon sang,
I clapped my hands; the morning rang
as creatures clapped with paw and fang,
and fell asleep at last. (Willard, 1981:20)

In the place where the sun meets the moon in a dance, there is no reality outside of mystery, and only one guide - the poet. 'Make *Believe*,' the Rabbit therefore cries in another poem, 'and make it strong and clear / that I may enter in / with all my kith and kin.' And the Wise Cow declares that '*Believe* shall be a boat / ... and for our captain let us take / the noble poet William Blake' (1981:30). In 'Blake Leads a Walk on the Milky Way', the loss of the one who does not share this vision is as real as the mystery he rejects. For, walking the glorious milky way with Blake and his company,

The rat was sullen. He grumbled
he ought to have stayed in his bed.
'What's gathered by fools in heaven
will never endure,' he said.

Blake gave silver stars to the rabbit
and golden stars to the cat
and emerald stars to the tiger and me
but a handful of dirt to the rat. (Willard, 1981:33)

At the end of her book, Willard (1981:45) quotes from the 'Proverbs of Hell' what she calls 'Blake's Advice to Travellers': 'He whose face gives no light will never become a star.' But who wants to be a star, must see the stars; Blake gives light to faces by teaching eyes to see and minds to wonder. By virtue of the doctrine of the holy in the common, taught also by Mary Poppins, those who see stars will have and be stars, while those who do not will only have dirt. Those who have learned, at Blake's inn, to know mystery, will find it everywhere when they go back - the choice is one of stars or dirt. And Willard, like other wise ones in this study, teaches going back. In her 'Epilogue' we read:

My adventures now are ended.
I and all whom I befriended
from this holy hill must go
home to lives we left below.
...
You whose journeys now begin,
if you reach a lovely inn,
if a rabbit makes your bed,
if two dragons bake your bread,
rest a little for my sake,
and give my love to William Blake. (1981:44)

In the Mary Poppins books discussed in Chapter II, the dance is a symbol of cosmic unity. Willard (1981:36) also describes a dance that recalls a pastoral golden age gone by and foretells a peaceable kingdom to come in 'The Marmalade Man Makes a Dance to Mend Us':

Tiger, Sunflowers, King of Cats,
Cow and Rabbit, mend your ways.
I the needle, you the thread -
follow me through mist and maze.

Fox and hound, go paw in paw.
 Cat and rat, be best of friends.
 Lamb and tiger, walk together.
 Dancing starts where fighting ends.

One is reminded of Blake's children, who dance beyond science and logic, not only over nursery meadows, but through sinister forests too - dance in light and dark. One is reminded, ultimately, of the Lord of Dance, who 'danced in the morning / When the world was begun, / ... danced on the moon / And the stars and the sun,' but also 'danced on a Friday / When the sky turned black' (Sydney Carter, 'Lord of the Dance', in Woods, 1983:347-8). When considering the dance as a pure expression of energy, and recalling what Blake says about Energy, one begins to perceive that, within a specific context and in an unfathomable way, the tiger and the lamb do walk together. T.S. Eliot (1961:31) alludes to Blake in his poem 'Gerontion': 'The word within a word, unable to speak a word, / Swaddled with darkness. In the juvenescence of the year / Came Christ the tiger / ... The tiger springs in the New Year. Us he devours.' Dorothy Sayers (1942:109) cites Eliot's 'disturbing thought' in explaining that, although it is true that Christ teaches Love, 'concentrated, and freed from its anti-passions, love is the Energy of creation.' She further quotes Saint John the Divine (Revelation VI: xvii) on 'the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?' An inscription by Blake on a painting in the Tate Gallery reads: 'God out of Christ is a consuming fire' (S. Foster Damon in Wheathers, 1969:9).¹⁷

¹⁷ It is of this Christ that Afrikaans poet Sheila Cussons ('Rigtings', 1983:20) writes the following comparison:

Die lippe van Boeddha glimlag fyn,
 sy oë betrag 'n binnelig.
 Jesus se oë was adders en vuur,
 sy voorkop was blink van God en sweet.
 [The lips of Buddha smile subtly,
 His eyes observe an inward light.
 Jesus' eyes were adders and fire,

Blake's Tyger is a creature of fire and fear, his way is difficult, and only those who can respond to his beauty as well as his terror can walk it by his light through the forests of the night. For if 'safety' is in the man-centred pastoral, 'danger' is in the god-centred wild, a danger perilous and threatening to most, sublime to the Child and the Poet. 'If he had been Anti-Christ, Creeping Jesus,' says Blake (1958:80) of Christ in 'The Everlasting Gospel', 'He'd have done any thing to please us.' As it is, though, Blake surmises accurately in asserting:

I am sure This Jesus will not do
Either for Englishman or for Jew. (1958:84)

If there has been absolute trust in the safety of the sheltered Garden, the lesson now is to learn to trust in the danger of the wild unknown beyond. This is apparent in A.P. Hope's (in Heaney & Hughes, 1982:430-1) 'Tiger', a poem that warns against a place where 'the paper tigers roar at noon', for the paper tiger's 'forest is the busy street / ... He riddles and corrupts the heart.' But it urges a return to the wilderness whence we came - a return to the innocence of experience - when we hear the jungle tiger's roar and 'it bursts the night and shakes the stars / Till one breaks blazing from the sky':

My child, then put aside your fear:
Unbar the door and walk outside!
The real tiger waits you there;
His golden eyes shall be your guide.

And, should he spare you in his wrath,
The world and all the worlds are yours;
And should he leap the jungle path
And clasp you with his bloody jaws,

Then say, as his divine embrace
Destroys the mortal parts of you:

His forehead shone with God and sweat.]

I too am of that royal race
Who do what we are born to do.

It takes courage and daring to wander the wilderness and risk the divine embrace, if, in the words of Robert Graves (1960:63) in his 'Warning to Children', one 'should dare to think / Of the fewness, muchness, rareness, / Greatness of this endless only / Precious world in which he says / He lives ... ' For the wilderness is also within us and in our thoughts. But Graves ('In the Wilderness', 1960:33) also reminds the traveller that, venturing into the wilderness, he is not alone, but following, for there has been One who 'of his gentleness, / Thirsting and hungering / Walked in the wilderness; / Soft words of grace he spoke / Unto lost desert-folk / That listened wondering.' All are one in their wonder of the One who goes to be followed, goes first and all alone. Even

Basilisk, cockatrice,
Flocked to his homilies,
With mail of dread device,
With monstrous barbèd stings,
With eager dragon-eyes;
Great bats on leathern wings
And old, blind, broken things
Mean in their miseries. (1960:33)

Graves knows that it is often in danger rather than shelter, the frightful rather than the peaceful, the wilderness rather than the garden that the divine seems more immanent. This is strikingly portrayed in 'A Boy in Church' that begins thus: "Gabble-gabble ... brethren ... gabble-gabble!" / My window frames forest and heather.' The boy observes how 'outside it blows wetter and wetter, / ... The tortured copse bends to and fro / In silence like a shadow-show.' The last stanza tells of

... serious people linking
Their prayers to a forgiving God ...

But a dumb blast sets the trees swaying
With furious zeal, like madmen praying.
(Graves, 1960:59)

The child's brethren are the basilisks, cockatrices, and the bats.

But communion with the bat brethren is not a reality to all minds. D.H. Lawrence's 'Man and Bat', a poem included in Heaney and Hughes's *The Rattle Bag*, is but one example illustrating the plight of much modern nature poetry which, to quote Robert Kern (1975:204), 'for all its apparent recognition of the *otherness* of nature, for all its care to avoid the pathetic fallacy and to see nature as in itself it really is, has not fully come to terms with it.' The 'fear of the nonhuman universe' which Kern identifies in such poetry is prominent in Lawrence's poem:

A bird
Flying round the room in insane circles.

In insane circles!

... *A bat!*

...

Let the God who is maker of bats watch with them in their
unclean corners ...

I admit a God in every crevice,
But not bats in my room;
Nor the God of bats, while the sun shines.
(in: Heaney & Hughes, 1982:262,6)

Those elements in nature that also have their place in the Garden are accepted; it is the creatures of the wilderness that cast the shadow that troubles the mind. It is when the bird's insane circles are those of the bat that courage cowers. In fact, Lawrence's poem shows the sensibility that finds itself outside the Garden, but also outside the Wilderness, one that has failed to move into the other mind - recognizing, but not able to accept and, more importantly, to trust in the unknown. Kern (1975:205) notes that 'Lawrence ... makes his poems express ...

man's complete alienation in the natural world.' Kern (1975:205) quotes the following lines from 'Fish' to illustrate how 'Lawrence wants to jar the reader out of any complacent or comfortable sense of relationship with nature, to bring home to him its strangeness and mystery and to make him feel his lack of harmony with it':

And my heart accused itself
Thinking: *I am not the measure of creation.*
This is beyond me, this fish.
His God stands outside my God.

A focus on the alienation of man precludes the working of the all-important element of wonder that allows a vision of the world whole - hence the lack of harmony. Indeed, Kern (1975:205,6) believes that the end of such poetry, 'given its emphasis on difference and discontinuity, is a retreat into humanity rather than a positive return to nature', that it 'inspires not conviction but a subtler terror, and the poets who subscribe to it seem ultimately to withdraw from the very world they evoke.' Fatal withdrawal is the consequence of the belief in alienation that seeks neither to challenge, question, or reject, nor to accept, still less to worship, but merely to observe from outside. And it dares not risk the bloody embrace of the jungle tiger.

Ted Hughes, who has been called the 'Laureate of Nature' (Gifford, 1995), although profoundly aware of the motives behind the stance of alienation - as is clear from the fact that he draws on these sources in his own work and from some choices in collections such as *The Rattle Bag*, is one who does not withdraw and is therefore able to offer a singular and valuable vision of the process of struggle to see the world whole. For Hughes, states Keith Sagar (1978:4), 'is searching for a way of reconciling human vision with the energies, powers, presences, of the non-human cosmos.' But even more than this, he is 'concerned to discover whether negotiations are possible between man and Nature, that is

between man and his Creator, and, if so, why they have so completely collapsed in our time and what the consequences of this collapse have been and may yet be' (Sagar, 1978:4). Hughes's work is informed in a significant way by his sense and conception of the divine in nature. This divine, in Hughes too, is accompanied by an awareness of awesome duality. The author of *Crow: From the Life and Songs of the Crow* has been compared to Blake (Morse in Chambers, 1980:121) and Sagar (1978:159) says of Hughes that 'if *Crow* had been his *Songs of Experience*, *Season Songs* was to be his *Songs of Innocence*.' But there is very little, if anything, of the pastoral in Hughes, and his treatment of the darker side of things belongs to a poetry that could only be written in a world that has seen two world wars and man's depravity in his destruction of nature. *Season Songs* consists mostly of profound observations of the natural world in its harsh and beautiful aspects, untempered by pastoral sentiment. And if Blake's 'evil' represents a pure essence of primal energy, so that certain horrors of our world could not go by that name, the mystical tyger would retreat in dignified disgust from the apter symbol of the gory crow. For in 'Horrible Song' (in the collection *Moon-Bells and Other Poems*) we read that

The Crow is a wicked Creature
Crooked in every feature.
Beware, beware of the Crow!
When the bombs burst, he laughs, he shouts;
When guns go off, he roundabouts;
When the limbs start to fly and the blood starts to flow
Ho Ho Ho
He sings the Song of the Crow. (Hughes, [1976]
1978:29)

In *Crow*, the nature of this dark creature, '... so much blacker / than the moon's shadow / He had stars' ('Crow Colour', Hughes, [1970] 1976:66), and what it represents is more fully and more subtly revealed. Crow is the archetypal anathema and the source of haunting terrors and suffering. 'He saw

the stars, fuming away into the black, mushrooms of the nothing forest, clouding their spores, the virus of God. / ... And he shivered with the horror of Creation' ('Crow Alights', Hughes, 1976:21). So he will not have it pastoral in any way; in 'Crow's First Lesson',

God tried to teach Crow how to talk.
'Love', said God. 'Say, Love.'
Crow gaped, and the white shark crashed into the sea
And went rolling downwards, discovering its own depth.
(1976:20)

Crow's world is one touched by the withering hand of human depravity, a world of despair, whose God is, 'the man-created, broken down, corrupt despot of a ramshackle religion', Sagar (1978:118) quotes Hughes. In 'Examination at the Womb-door', Crow is asked:

Who is stronger than hope? *Death.*
Who is stronger than the will? *Death.*
Stronger than love? *Death.*
Stronger than life? *Death.*

But who is stronger than death?
Me, evidently.

Pass, Crow. (1976:15)

But there is something stronger than Crow:

In the little girl's angel gaze
Crow lost every feather
In the little boy's wondering eyes
Crow's bones splintered

...

Crow got under the brambles, capitulated
To nothingness eyes closed
Let those infant feet pound through the Universe
(In Sagar, 1978:159-60, not collected in book form at the
time)

For nothing is black enough to stand in the light of the angel gaze and
wondering eyes that see the universe whole.

The eyes that gaze on Crow unscathed must needs finish him off, for they
come from the Garden to find the holy mystery of beauty and awe in everything,
and their eyes hold wonder. The composer of *Season Songs* possesses this vision
of wonder. 'One would have thought', remarks Sagar (1978:160), 'there was little
new to be said about the seasons. Hughes says little new, but it seems new
because he has found words, images, rhythms, to make it new, and to embody
autonomous reality, fullness of being, and wonder.' The cycles of life and death
are presented through the seasons as a mysterious miracle, from the time when
'over the whole land / Spring thunders down in brilliant silence' ('Spring Nature
Notes', Hughes, [1975] 1976:17), through Summer, when 'happy the grass / To be
wooded by the farmer, who wins her and brings to church in her beauty' ('Hay',
1976:30), until 'there came this day and he was autumn. / His mouth was wide /
And red as a sunset. / His tail was an icicle' ('There Came a Day', 1976:55). Then
to Winter who 'gnawed bare stalks and turnip tops / In the goose's field. / The
sick sheep froze beside him' ('The Warrior of Winter', 1976:65). The alternating
images of bounty and misery of 'The River in March' are representative of the
duality inherent in the life of the seasons portrayed in Hughes's Songs, as the
opening stanzas show:

Now the river is rich, but her voice is low.
It is her Mighty Majesty the sea
Travelling among the villages incognito.

Now the river is poor. No song, just a thin mad whisper.
The winter floods have ruined her.
She squats between draggled banks, fingering her rags
and rubbish. (Hughes, 1976:15)

And though it be human eyes that hold the wonder in them, when there is killing
to be done, human hands will have a part. As is apparent in the second of 'The
Seven Sorrows' of autumn, the Songs are not without reproach:

The second sorrow
Is the empty feet
Of the pheasant who hangs from a hook with his
brothers.
The woodland of gold
Is folded in feathers
With its head in a bag. (1976:51)

And yet, man is not singled out as perpetrator in this poem, but rather integrated
as but one of the elements in a life-giving, death-dealing whole. Terry Gifford
(1995:118) maintains that 'like Blake, Hughes seeks to look with cleansed
perception upon the "fearful symmetry" of creative-destructive forces.' A vision
of the world whole is achieved and offered in the Songs. 'They are true gifts,'
says Sagar (1978:162), 'we can take them outside and try them, like a new pair of
eyes.' And these eyes afford the wondering angel-gaze of the children who
defeated the crow.

Referring to the vision achieved in *Season Songs*, Sagar (1978:170) asserts
that 'Hughes' earlier books record the struggle towards this wholeness. When it
is achieved life's charge flows freely again and can be communicated to others
through poems.' This struggle with monstrous forces, culminating in a simple
peace, maintained through song, is certainly reminiscent of the struggle between
the Iron Man and the Dragon in Hughes's *The Iron Man: A Story in Five Nights*. A
red star approaches the earth and out of it comes a creature that seems 'to be
either a bat, or a black angel, or a flying lizard - a dreadful silhouette, flying out

of the centre of that giant star, straight towards the earth ... The nameless, immense bat-angel was flying down at the earth, like a great black swan.' (Hughes, [1968] 1975:40) The terrible duality and profound symbolic significance of this creature are inscribed in these descriptions. But its divinely dual aspect is even more apparent when, alighting on Australia and being seen to be a 'terrific dragon', it is still called a 'space-bat-angel-dragon' (1975:43). It demands to be fed, but is challenged by the Iron Man to an ordeal by fire. Not daring to brave the fires of the sun a third time, the dragon is defeated and is to be earth's slave. Its true identity is now revealed:

'Haven't you heard of the music of the spheres?' asked the dragon. 'It's the music that space makes to itself. All the spirits inside all the stars are singing. I'm a star spirit. I sing too. The music of the spheres is what makes space so peaceful.' (Hughes, 1975:57)

When asked why he came to harass the earth, the dragon explains that, 'listening to the battling shouts and the war-cries of the earth - I got excited, I wanted to join in' (1975:57). Instead of joining in, however, it is decided that the slave dragon star spirit should sing for the earth. 'It's a long time since anybody here on earth heard the music of the spheres,' says the Iron Man, 'It might do us all good' (1975:57). And so it did, and

the whole world could hear him, a strange soft music that seemed to fill the whole of space, a deep weird singing, like millions of voices singing together ... And the space-bat-angel's singing had the most unexpected effect The singing got inside everybody and made them as peaceful as starry space All they wanted to do was to have peace to enjoy this strange, wild, blissful music from the giant singer in space. (1975:58-9)

If the songs of the poets could be heard to fill the world with such music, a deep weird singing, like millions of voices singing together, all would follow the

girl with the angel's gaze and the boy with eyes of wonder, and all would be as those in *Season Songs*,

Thanking the Lord
Thanking the Wheat
Thanking the Bread
For bringing them Life
Today and Tomorrow
Out of the dirt. ('The Golden Boy', Hughes, 1976:39)

Divine gifts out of the dirt symbolize the sacred in the everyday, the holy in the common, the greatest of men born in a stable. For those guides who pound through the universe come from the Garden; they have danced through meadows and forests, in the steps of the great Dancer, that holy carpenter who sanctified bread and wine, ultimately combining the man-centred and the god-centred. Hughes (1970:29) writes about his birth in a play called *The Coming of the Kings*: 'I've just had an astounding dream as I lay in the straw,' proclaims the Minstrel, and continues,

I dreamed a star fell on to the straw beside me
And lay blazing. Then when I looked up
I saw a bull come flying through a sky of fire
And on its shoulders a huge silver woman
Holding the moon. And afterwards there came
A donkey flying through that same burning heaven
And on its shoulders a colossal man
Holding the sun. Suddenly I awoke
And saw a bull and a donkey kneeling in the straw,
And the great moving shadows of a man and a woman -
I say they were a man and a woman but
I dare not say what I think they were. I did not dare to
look
I ran out here into the freezing world
Because I dared not look. Inside that shed.

Inside the Innkeeper's old stable 'the King of the Three Worlds' would 'be born to the coughing of animals / Among the broken, rejected objects / In the corner that costs not a penny / In the darkness of the mouse and the spider' (1970:31). Significantly, the beauty and light of this child spring forth out of darkness and wilderness, out of the twilight of the forest edge. For him the world is covered in holiness, who comes to make the world holy:

Slowly the heavens are falling.
Every snowflake is an angel.
The angels are settling on the world.
The world will be white with angels.
The world will be deep in angels. (Hughes, 1970:32)

That the world is deep in holiness, the Child and the Poet know. For 'the viewpoint of vision transcends the contraries of good and evil and joyously hails the holiness of all creation,' states Louis Addison Waters (1962:132) in a study on Blake. And Blake foretells a time to come when 'cities and gardens, sun moon and stars, rivers and stones, trees and human bodies - all are equally alive, equally parts of the same infinite body which is at once the body of God and of risen man' (Frye in Bottrall, 1970:166). 'Child and serpent, star and stone - all one'!

Help me tell my dreams
To the other children,
So that their bread may taste whiter

- Hilda Conking
from 'About My dreams'

CHAPTER V

'They Are Like Beautiful Butterflies' Other Voices from the Unknowing

They are like beautiful butterflies - how will they live if what you say is coming descends upon them? How can they bear the ugliness and the greed, they who are children of this fertile Earth and own nothing and give everything away as children do?

- Jamake Highwater

The Zulu of Africa have a single word for both blue and green - *luhlaza*. To avoid confusion, qualifying phrases are sometimes used, such as *njengezulu*, 'like the sky'. As, however, the primary meaning of *luhlaza* appears to be 'green' (Doke *et al.*, 1996:324), one might take the poetic liberty of translating the description *luhlaza njengezulu*: 'green as the sky'! For such a rendering of the phrase illuminates the strangeness and otherness of an alternative vision of reality. The involvement of the colour experiences of blue and green (their primal nature perhaps evident from the fact that they are the colours of our planet seen from space) in the linguistic singularity of *luhlaza*, suggests the perception of a dimension of reality not known to all. Jamake Highwater (1981:72), discussing similar phenomena in a Native American tongue, rightly observes that 'one of the most startling discoveries of learning a language totally unrelated to the one spoken in our homes is the manner in which words (and images) are used to voice subtly different attitudes and modes of thought.' The green sky, in this context, serves as a reminder that 'the other mind' could also be approached through the minds of 'others', those others of western civilization traditionally perceived as living in closer communion with nature - not only the child, but also primal man. (Highwater (1981:xix) uses the term 'primal' in preference to 'primitive', because of the latter's negative connotations.)

In the times of first contact between the European colonists and the primal peoples of the world, some thought these 'others' to be 'savages' and dismissed them to be slaughtered, reduced and enslaved, and in every way diminished, but a smaller number of others thought of them as 'noble savages', and of this has come some good and some bad. Be that as it may, the Romantic impulse behind the idea of the noble savage manifests something significant: a recognition of the mystery of the 'other', a perception of the existence of 'other' realities, a response to the startling vision of a green sky.¹⁸

¹⁸ Such a response is apparent in the thoughts of the Europeans on encountering the people of the 'New World' for the first time and on being told by the scientists of the day that they were

keel Indians have been the prime example of the noble savage in children's literature. Consider the first paragraph from Ernest Thompson Seton's ([1903] 1962:1) *Two Little Savages*: 'Yan was much like other twelve-year-old boys in having a keen interest in Indians and in wild life, but he differed from most in this, that he never got over it. Indeed, as he grew older, he found a yet keener pleasure in storing up the little bits of woodcraft and Indian lore that pleased him as a boy.' The Romantic sensibility recognizes in primal man those qualities lost and scorned in the materialistic post-industrial world: wonder and an acceptance and integration of the mystery of the living earth in all aspects of human life. Bettina Hürlimann (1959:89) feels that it is

eigentlich ganz klar, daß das Kind, den Dingen der Natur stärker noch verbunden und dem Nützlichkeitstrieb abhold, sein Herz den Indianern schenken mußte und sie literarisch mit Beschlag belegte.

[actually quite clear, that the child, more strongly bound to the things of nature and averse to the utilitarian, should give their hearts to the Indians and monopolize them in a literary way.]

Longfellow (1913:203) recognizes the perceived link between the conception of primal man as 'noble savage' and the childlike in the 'Introduction' to his *Song of Hiawatha* (1855), where he urges the reader to 'listen to these wild traditions / ... That like voices from afar off / ... Speak in tones so plain and childlike, / Scarcely can the ear distinguish / Whether they are sung or spoken.' Significantly he calls on those 'whose hearts are fresh and simple, / Who have faith in God and Nature.' A fusion of wildness, godliness, and childlikeness has found its way into much Romantic writing inspired by the encounter with another's mind. Such writing

'Indians', Lewis Spence ([1914] 1994:1) suggests:

Something deeper and more primitive than science was at work in their minds, and some profound human instinct told them that the dusky and befeathered folk they beheld...were not the inhabitants of an Orient with which they were more or less familiar, but erstwhile dwellers in a mystic continent which had been isolated from the rest of mankind for countless centuries.

exhibits subjective sentiment in a characteristically Romantic way, but is valid in its intention to mark a significant experience.

Sadly, however, this Romantic impulse also led to the emergence of a stereotype, a stock caricature of the 'noble savage'. Carpenter and Prichard (1984:269) point out that 'thanks to Fenimore Cooper, *Hiawatha*, and Westerns, Indians had become stock figures in English juvenile literature by the end of the 19th century, as is shown by their appearance in such works as *Five Children and It* (1902) and *Peter Pan* (1904).' In fact, J.M. Barrie's ([1911] 1994:163-4) treatment of the Piccaninny tribe in *Peter Pan* presents something of a parody of the 'noble savage', even using the term itself:

Around the brave Tiger Lily were a dozen of her stoutest warriors, and they suddenly saw the perfidious pirates bearing down upon them ... For them the happy hunting-grounds now ... It is written that the noble savage must never express surprise in the presence of the white. Thus terrible as the sudden appearance of the pirates must have been to them, they remained stationary for a moment, not a muscle moving; as if the foe had come by invitation. Then, indeed, the tradition gallantly upheld, they seized their weapons, and the air was torn with the war-cry; but it was now too late.

Many writers have protested resentfully against the image of the 'noble savage', mainly because its stereotype has clouded a true effort at understanding people such as the actual Native Americans of the modern world. Between the stereotype of the 'noble savage' and its villainous countertype, the savage brute, there is not much space for a true picture of a human person. Highwater (1981:27) complains that 'primal peoples were ... balanced between two impossible images: innocence or evil, loftiness or lowness, perfection or imperfection. Nowhere in the precepts of eighteenth-century religious rationalism or nineteenth-century Romanticism was there room for them to be simply human.' In the words of Burnette and Koster (1974:xiv),

An Indian was someb... his hand, feathers in his hair, and a grunt on his lips. When he was good, he was very, very good (Uncas, Squanto, Hiawatha, Minnehaha, Old Nokomis, Purty Redwing), and when he was bad he was a ravaging, raping, torturing, murdering brute. Good or bad, his extermination was justified and his heirs no longer existed except in the corners of musty cigar stores ... Such was the stereotype a generation was raised on. The Indian of racist mythology was somehow more real than living, starving flesh-and-blood people.

Vine Deloria (1973:56) agrees in *God is Red* that 'Indians are unable to get non-Indians to accept them as contemporary beings. Non-Indians ... insist on remaining in the last century with old Chief Red Fox, ... reciting a past that is basically mythological, thrilling and comforting.' Commenting on the much-anthologized speeches delivered by Indian chiefs on their surrender to the whites (a simplified version of the famous speech by Chief Seattle is included in *We Call the Whales: Ecological Poems and Songs for Children*, edited by Pinnock, 1993), Deloria (1973:54) justly asserts that 'few readers see a bloody, exhausted Chief Joseph in his last minute of freedom trying to save his tribe. They see a dignified chief, blanket draped respectably across his arm, giving a well-composed finale to the old frontier.'

From Deloria's comments on the Romantic Indian it is clear that 'children are not the only alternative pastoral protagonists', as Loughrey (1984:21) points out. For 'the "civilized" sixteenth-century "discoverers" of the Americas held contradictory attitudes towards the indigenous natives, viewing them in some cases as bestial savages, in others as the embodiment of pre-lapsarian Man' (Loughrey, 1984:21). Both attitudes persisted, but focusing for the moment on the 'good Indian', it is to be noted that, as noble savage, he shares with the child the garden of a pastorally golden past, free from the taints and tribulations of history. Outside the walls of the garden where the pastoral savage dwells lies the wilderness of history. Robert F. Berkhofer (1979:90), referring to the 'trend to Romanticize a past golden age of Indian life prior to White contact', designates *The Song of Hiawatha* as the 'high point

of the tendency to Romanticize the safely dead Indian.' As the cult of the child could only emerge when a preindustrial world was vanishing and its wisdom being abandoned to the nursery of Romantic Childhood, the savage could only be sanctified when there was no more danger from his arrow and his tomahawk. For Deloria (1973:41), 'a mythical Hiawatha, a saddened Chief Joseph, a scowling Sitting Bull, a sullen Geronimo; all symbolize not living people but the historic fate of a nation overwhelmed by the inevitability of history.' While the noble savage speaks of an escape from history, it sadly and ironically reminds of history at the same time. Hürlimann (1959:84) notes that

der Europäer entdeckt die Unschuld der primitiveren, naturverwachsenen Völker, deren Existenz er zugleich bedroht, ja vernichtet. Von allen Völkern sind die Indianer Nordamerikas mit ihren wilden Sitten, ihrem Todesmut und ihrem ungebundenen Leben in Gottes freier Natur die am gründlichsten Geschädigten, die am hoffnungslosesten Vernichteten.

[the European discovers the innocence of the primal, nature-rooted peoples whose existence he threatens, even destroys. Of all these peoples, the Indians of North America with their wild ways, their fearlessness and their free life in the open country are the most thoroughly victimized, the most hopelessly exterminated.]

But not only the European longs for a golden past. Those who might remember a pre-colonial past as golden may not necessarily reconstruct it as a pastoral myth, but might well instead regard the present in a white man's world as artificial and unreal. In the foreword to his account of his Sioux childhood, Charles A. Eastman ([1902] 1971:v) states that 'the Indian no longer exists as a natural and free man. Those remnants which now dwell upon the reservations present only a sort of tableau - a fictitious copy of the past.'

Of the 'Chesapeake, the Chickahominy, and the Potomacs of the great Powhatan confederacy ... the Pequots, Montauks, Nanticokes, Machapungas, Catawbas, Cheraws, Miamis, Hurons, Eries, Mohawks, Senecas, and Mohegans' Dee Brown (1975:6) says that

their musical names recorded on the American land, but their bones were forgotten in a thousand burned villages or lost in forests fast disappearing before the axes of twenty million invaders. Already the once sweet-watered streams, most of which bore Indian names, were clouded with silt and the wastes of man; the very earth was being ravaged and squandered. To the Indians it seemed that these Europeans hated everything in nature - the living forests and their birds and beasts, the grassy glades, the water, the soil, and the air itself.

And so the image of the vanishing Indian has come to be closely associated with a decline in the natural environment - a symbol of nostalgia for a past when harmony of man with nature was not merely a pastoral dream. In her poem 'Indian Names', Lydia Huntley Sigourney (in Hall, 1985:24-5) illustrates Brown's words about their 'musical names' persisting where their spirit is still that of the land. 'Ye say they all have passed away, / That noble race and brave,' the poet says in the first stanza, but then she asserts that 'their name is on your water, / Ye may not wash it out.' The Indian names perpetuate the spirit of connectedness to the places they roamed. The last stanza suggests that they live yet in these places, though their mortal part be destroyed:

Washington hides its lingering voice
Within its rocky heart,
And Allegheny graves its tone
Throughout his lofty chart.
Monadnock, on his forehead hoar,
Doth seal the sacred trust,
Your mountains build their monument,
Though ye destroy their dust.

Two more examples from *The Oxford Book of Children's Verse in America* that link the Indian and the land in lamenting a diminishing country and a passing age both involve the invocation of a kindred symbol - the buffalo. Vachel Lindsay (in Hall, 1985:218-19) writes that

The flower-fed buffaloes of the spring
In the days of long ago,
Ranged where the locomotives sing
And the prairie flowers lie low

...

They gore no more, they bellow no more,
They trundle around the hills no more: -
With the Blackfeet, lying low,
With the Pawnees, lying low,
Lying low.

A pastoral strain runs clear here, in the flowers, the spring and the long ago. In 'Buffalo Dusk', Carl Sandburg (in Hall, 1985:216) also evokes the spring of time, long ago when things were whole:

The buffaloes are gone.
And those who saw the buffaloes are gone.
Those who saw the buffaloes by thousands and how they
 pawed the prairie sod into dust with their hoofs,
 their great heads down pawing on in a great pageant
 of dusk,
Those who saw the buffaloes are gone.
And the buffaloes are gone.

Of the buffalo-hunting Plains Indians Berkhofer (1978:88-9) points out that these 'stalwart tribes people ... became the quintessential American Indian in the eyes of the White citizens of the United States and elsewhere and even many Native Americans themselves.' And it is these people especially who are 'in Romantic eyes a poetical people whose activities took place in a sublime landscape and whose fate aroused sentiment' (1978:88). As for their fate, Berkhofer (1978:88-9) notes that 'most Romantic of all was the impression of the Indian as rapidly passing away before the onslaught of civilization. The nostalgia and pity aroused by the dying race produced the best Romantic sentiments and gave that sense of fleeting time beloved of Romantic sensibilities.' From Berkhofer's words - and he seems

somewhat resentful, understandably - it is apparent that the Indian-buffalo-vanishing landscape image could be regarded as a stereotype, stock image, but from Lindsay's and Sandburg's poems (and from a wealth of other literature, for that matter) it is also obvious that it contains poetical validity.

The conception and representation of the other in literature has been problematic and many-faceted, and resentment is justified where people have been disregarded and mistreated in the light of long-standing stereotypes and misconceptions, where past has been made pastoral so that some can feel safe from history. But it should also be known that what has been taken into the realm of Romantic Childhood is poetically true and just and ultimately valuable. One might do well to remember Travers's (1989:15) thoughts, in 'The World of the Hero', on 'how the mythmaking mind works, balancing, clarifying, adjusting, making events somehow correspond to the inner necessity of things.' In this light, the noble savage in his poetically valid aspect might be seen, not as stereotype, but as archetype, born from the inner necessity for another who is more than oneself, who speaks from the unknowing and who sees the world whole.

Atréju, the hero chosen by the Child Empress to save *Fantasia* in Ende's *Die Unendliche Geschichte*, is called forth from his home in the Grass Sea ('*Das Gräserne Meer*'), '*eine Prärie, die tatsächlich so weit und groß und flach war wie ein Meer*' [a prairie that was in fact as wide and big and flat as a sea]. This is how Ende (1990:45-6) describes Atréju's people of the prairie sea:

Das Volk, das hier lebte, hieß 'Die Grasleute' oder auch 'Die Grünhäute'. Sie hatten blauschwarze Haare, die auch von Männern lang und manchmal in Zöpfen getragen wurden, und ihre Haut war von dunkelgrüner, ein wenig ins Bräunliche gehender Farbe - wie die der Oliven. Sie führten ein äußerst genügsames, strenges und hartes Leben, und ihre Kinder, Knaben wie Mädchen, wurden zur Tapferkeit, zur Großmut und zum Stolz erzogen. Sie mußten Hitze, Kälte und große Entbehrungen ertragen lernen und ihren Mut unter Beweis stellen. Das war nötig, denn die Grünhäute waren ein Volk von Jägern. Alles, was sie zum Leben brauchten, stellten sie entweder aus dem harten, faserigen

Prärie gras her, oder sie nahmen es von den Purpurbüffeln, die in riesigen Herden über das Gräserne Meer zogen.

[The people who lived here were called 'the Grass People' or also 'the Greenskins'. They had blue-black hair, which also the men wore long and often in plaits, and their skins were of a dark green, brownish colour - like that of an olive. They led an extremely modest, austere and hard life, and their children, boys as well as girls, were brought up to be courageous, noble and proud. They had to learn to stand heat, cold and great privation, in proving their valour. This was necessary as the Greenskins were a hunter people. Everything they needed for their existence, they either fashioned out of the strong, fibrous prairie grass or took from the purple buffalo that roamed the Grassy Sea in enormous herds.]

One is presented with a description of the noble Plains Indians of Romantic conception, in different colours. These prairie people of Fantasia have perhaps a symbolic significance: As has been mentioned before, much - if not most - of the wisdom and lore of the preindustrial world have passed into the keeping of the Romantic Child as western man has 'progressed'. Primal peoples, in this context, are seen to hold earthly wisdom long lost by the western world - wisdom of an ancient, more fundamental way of life, a life closer to the living source of all things. Some drawing on the stereotype of the noble savage seems obvious when identifying Atréju's Grass People with the Romanticized Plains Indians. Atréju is not a stereotype, however; he is the chosen saviour of Fantasia, and in a place where good and evil are equally valid, he is truly noble. He champions the assertion that the noble savage, in its valid and valuable aspect, is not a stereotype, but an archetype and that it is for this reason it holds a rightful place in the Romantic Fantasia of childhood, a place independent of and oblivious to human strife and the injustices of history.

The saviour of Fantasia holds the suggestion of a further aspect of the noble savage that is of importance here - his godliness, the divinity of the other. The Cult of the Child sprang from the Romantic recognition of Childhood as a state of innocence lost elsewhere and with this, or because of it, a state of communion with

nature and of wonder at its mystery. The Child is nature's priest, as Wordsworth has it, and the same must be said of primal man, whose interaction with the natural world is so much more profound than that of postindustrial western man, and whose primeval unity with nature is - in Romantic conception, at least - intact. But there is more to the Child than his pastoral innocence, for he emerges from the Garden with a fearless sense of wonder which enables him to accept the shadow and see the world whole. Thus the Child knows the divine within nature by virtue of acknowledging its duality. As the very term 'noble savage' suggests, the primal man of Romantic conception reveals within his own being something of the duality inherent in nature - of the nobility of pastoral innocence and of the savagery of the shadowy wilderness, the forest edge and the woody past. And so it happens that the noble savage, because he harbours within his human self the more-than-human qualities of innocence and wildness, attains something of the stature of a man-god, whose otherness and sameness render him a saviour able to rekindle the unity lost between the human and the wild.

In Conkling's (1927:88) poem 'Little Papoose' something can be seen of how the godliness of the other lies in their unity with the natural forces in whose mystery they share. Indeed, in this poem a manifold vision is apparent, involving the child-poet's apprehension of the mystery that is known by the child in the poem, who projects his experience of the mystery that is his world onto the gods of that world - his mother and father, the strong ones who go before:

Little papoose
Swung high in the branches
Hears a song of birds, stars, clouds,
Small nests of birds,
Small buds of flowers.
But he is thinking of his mother with dark hair
Like her horse's mane.

Fair clouds nod to him
Where he swings in the tree,

But he is thinking of his father
Dark and glistening and wonderful,
Of his father with a voice like ice and velvet,
And tones of falling water,
Of his father who shouts
Like a storm.

The Romantic vision is that of a papoose who sees the world whole, and wholeness within the divine, the other mind. The mind of the godly savage is other, yet akin. Therefore he is one to be followed; with him the eternal Child of wonder lives within the Man of strength - a god who shouts like a storm.

From Conkling's poem it seems apparent that the images of powerful nature forces are harnessed to give expression to a sovereignty unbound by considerations of good and bad. Although there is destructiveness in a storm, the image of the shouting storm communicates the father's greatness and strength. Such a sovereignty seems to belong to the legendary Zulu king Shaka. In *Vengeance of the Zulu King* by Jenny Seed (1970:133), Shaka could be regarded as a cruel tyrant; however, it is not with resentment but with awe that his sovereign power is expressed when the protagonist, 'Bongiseni felt he must indeed be the greatest and most terrible king in the world, and he wondered that such a chief could still remain a man. Surely Shaka in his power must soon turn into a lion or a leopard as he was named in praise, or become some fearsome monster that would devour the earth!' Shaka, the founder of the 19th century Zulu empire and probably the greatest of African rulers, presents a controversial figure that has been subject to the varied and contrary faces of the other in literature. Carolyn Hamilton (1998:17) notes that 'in missionary texts Shaka was frequently represented as "the noble savage"; whereas in travellers' accounts it was more often his "barbarism" that was emphasized, but this pattern was not as invariant as some reviews suggest. The collections of historical documents and the oral accounts alike offer negative and positive views of Shaka.' Daniel Cohen (1973:xi), referring to the fact that Shaka

fascinated Europeans who came into contact with him, notes that 'he has fascinated man ever since. He has been portrayed as a genius and a madman, a hero and a devil incarnate. And the controversy continues.' During his lifetime, Cohen (1973:107) relates, 'Shaka was treated as an all-powerful god ... Shaka's own name was too awesome even to be spoken by ordinary people. They usually called him "The Great Elephant".' Noble savage, savage brute, or god, it can be seen from a few passages to be quoted here that Shaka's sovereignty, though terrible, is accorded a poetically expressed awe not unlike that found in passages cited throughout this study dealing with the unfathomable in nature. Vika, Seed's (1986:4) protagonist in *Voice of the Great Elephant*, remembers the day when his warrior father stood before 'the king who was called the hero who excels all other heroes - for all must avoid with awe the name of one as mighty as Shaka ... "The Mighty One smiled," he said softly, remembering. "He smiled upon *Baba!*" He felt a thrill of fearful pleasure go through him.' Later in the story, watching Shaka dancing, Vika 'saw that of all the men there the king was the most agile, his dress the finest, and his face the blackest. ... "He is a hero," thought Vika suddenly' (1986:37). But if Vika knew that 'Shaka was as great and strong as a leopard', he also knew that he was 'as savage as a leopard that loved to rip and tear and felt no tenderness' (1986:48).

In *Nada the Lily* by H. Rider Haggard, a book in which 'Shaka is portrayed as both a bloodthirsty tyrant and as a noble and able leader' (Hamilton, 1998:118), the power of the Zulu King is that of death and judgement. 'He is wise, he is great, his justice is bright and terrible like the sun,' his warriors praise him (Haggard, [1892] 1952:45). But, tells the narrator Mopo, 'in the days of Chaka the rivers ran blood ... People learned how to die then' (1952:39), for 'in the shadow of Chaka was nothing but death' (1952:56) and 'wherever his eye fell men turned grey with fear' (1952:71). On the day of his own death, his people 'ran this way and that, crying in their fear that now the heaven and earth would come together, and the race of man would cease to be, because Chaka, the king, was dead' (Haggard, 1952:187). After the

death of Shaka, 'people forgot how evilly he had dealt with them, and remembered only that he was a great man, who had made the Zulu people out of nothing, as a smith fashions a bright spear from a lump of iron' (Haggard, 1952:191). In Seed's *Vengeance of the Zulu King* the death of Shaka also brings about a sense of the loss of an animating spirit. For now the people of Zulu - the 'sky people' - 'no longer had the fire or the fierceness they had known before. When Shaka had danced he had looked, in his strength and courage, like a warrior, and when his people had danced it had seemed as if a battle raged' (Seed, 1970:157). Strangely, the legacy of the death-dealer is recognition of his life-giving spirit, so that this dancer makes one see life in death and death in life - a black Shiva of Africa.

This must be kept in mind, as well as Travers's words about what the Romantic mind necessitates, when one considers for a moment Léopold Sédar Senghor's conception of Shaka in his dramatic poem 'Chaka' (1965). For 'Senghor's Shaka becomes a symbol of Negritude and also a black Christ figure' (Burness, 1976:30). He is hailed as

... Zoulou par qui nous croissons dru, les narines par
quoi nous buvons la vie forte
Et tu es le Doué-d'un-large-dos, tu portes tous les peuples
à peau noire. (Senghor, 1991:383)
[Zulu by whom we grow densely, the nostrils through
which we drink vigorous life
And you are the One gifted with a broad back, you
carry all the people of black skin.]

He is '*l'amant de la Nuit aux cheveux d'étoiles filantes, le créateur des paroles de vie / Le poète du Royaume d'enfance*' (1991:384) [Night's lover with hair of shooting stars, maker of life words / Poet of the Childhood Kingdom]. Significantly, in his poet-aspect Senghor's *Shaka* '*n'es[t] plus le Lion rouge dont les yeux incendient les villages au loin*' (Senghor, 1991:382) [is no more the red Lion whose eyes set far-away villages to fire]. For he has entered the 'Childhood Kingdom' - '*Et comme il est splendide!*

C'est l'heure de la renaissance. / Le poème est mûr au jardin d'enfance' (Senghor, 1991:381) [And how magnificent he is! It is the hour of rebirth. / The poem ripens in the garden of childhood]. Donald Burness (1976:31) notes that 'throughout *Ethiopiennes* [the collection in which 'Chaka' appears] the theme of rebirth reappears, especially in 'Chaka' where the theme of a nascent purity and goodness is maintained throughout the poem. Shaka's death at the conclusion of the poem signals a resurrection of a new world.'

The Childhood Kingdom is the place where poetically charged pieces from the life of the world are reborn as archetypal eternal. Such things are seen as universal and Romantically valid, required to be true by the poet's mind. In *Anpao: An American Indian Odyssey*, as in some of his other work, Jamake Highwater, Blackfeet author of fiction – drawing on history and tradition – as well as studies on Native American art, culture and philosophy, seeks to illuminate the otherness of the Indian mind within its different vision of reality. Of the events in *The Sun, He Dies: A Novel About the End of the Aztec World* he states that he has 'presented these ancient memories neither as curiosities nor as naïve fiction, but as an alternative vision of the world and as an alternative process of history' (Highwater, 1980:298). The 'magic dogs' in *Anpao*, for instance,

are neither 'real' horses nor horses 'distorted' by surrealistic mannerisms. The magic dogs are facts from another scheme of reality. They are not products of a lavish imagination but products of the vision of a people whose experience is fundamentally different from that of white civilization. (Highwater, 1977:243)

And yet, although Highwater is intent upon offering a vision that is 'other', it can be shown that *Anpao* answers in various respects to some of the seminal Romantic premises set out in this study, in particular those pertaining to the hero in his quest for his own self, whereby he also revives his world, since what is in the outer world is in the inner world too. These things are taught by Mary Poppins and Aslan and they surely reveal something about the universality of the Childhood Kingdom,

where thoughts and images are ever reborn in response to the infallible intuition of the poet. And what rejuvenation could be more complete than that of the Sun's son, Anpao, the Dawn?

In *Anpao*, Highwater interweaves a rich and complex variety of traditional material as the life-story of a 'central dramatic character in the saga of Indian life in North America,' the character of Anpao (Highwater, 1977:240). 'Anpao ventures through his own boyhood ... At the same time he also journeys through history, for *Anpao* is itself a kind of chronicle of the Indians of America, though it is folk history rather than the presumably objective history of white men' (1977:240). In this sense the otherness of Anpao's story is sameness with regard to the quest of the Romantic hero, which begins as a search for individual identity, thus leading to a subjective vision of the world of the hero. In order to marry Ko-ko-mik-e-is, Anpao has to find the Sun, the 'great Above Person' and, as a sign of his consent, ask him to remove the scar from Anpao's face. He sets out on this journey with his twin brother Oapna, who is contrary and does everything backward. Anpao's quest also becomes a discovery of his own story. From the old swan woman he learns the tale of how the world came to be and of his own birth and childhood. He learns that he is in fact a son of the Sun and an earth woman, the woman who chose death. On his way to the lodge of the Sun Anpao has many adventures, recounted in 'The Lessons of Heaven and Earth'. In the World-Above-the-World Anpao meets Morning Star, son of the Moon and Sun, becomes his friend and saves him from terrible evil birds. Thus Anpao wins the favour of the Moon and the Sun, who removes the scar from his face so that he can return to claim the hand of Ko-ko-mik-e-is.

Anpao's life and being are cosmic in character and significance. Born of the union between the earth woman who chose an end to all living things in death and the Sun of supreme rejuvenation, he is man-god and god-man. After the earth woman Anpao's mother has chosen death, Old Man, the Creator - the 'all-spirit, ... alone and unthinkable forever,' who, in the beginning lived in the 'void' of the



Illustration by John Sibbick for 'Scar Face and the Sun Dance' (Wood, 1981:87)

'black world ... silently and without motion. For he was he' (Highwater, 1977:47) - also has to go. But 'before I sleep,' speaks Old Man,

'I will create one last thing so that women who weep for the dead will also be happy. From such women will come children, who hunger for the stars and who will climb the mountains to be close to them. From such women will come creatures of so vast a hunger that they will raise themselves in spirit until they fly above death in the memories of all their people.'

And Old Man fell to his knees in the newly turned soil of the Earth and, as the first light of the new day came into the sky, a great river began to flow from him and he was gradually covered by the water. His last word came from his watery mouth as his hand reached to take the glowing Sun into his palm.

'Anpao!' he whispered. 'It is the dawn of the world!'
And he was gone. (1977:57)

And so, Anpao is the first of the gods and heroes who lives to fly above death among the stars. But Anpao knows not who he is - 'Anpao and Oapna were strangers in the village. They had no father and they did not know their mother. They had nothing, not even memories of the land of their people' (1977:17-18). This is until the old swan woman has told him his identity and exclaims: '*Anpao, An-PAY-oh!* It is the dawn! It is the dawn! Ha, you do not know. You do not know your name and you do not know how the world began, and I do not think that you even know where you came from!' (1977:59).

For the man-god Anpao has to learn the ways of heroism. Travers (1989:16), it will be remembered, teaches that 'the hero is seeking not for something new but for something old, a treasure that was lost and has to be found, his own self, his identity. And by finding this, by achieving this, he takes part in the one task, the essential mythical requirement: the reinstatement of the fallen world.' 'Anpao, you must find yourself,' says the swan woman (Highwater, 1977:31). Grandmother Spider, who teaches Anpao to see the world whole in its beauty and its terror by telling him to 'look well, my child, at whatever you see' (1977:73)

warns: 'The Evil Ones will tell you that you must be something which you cannot be and ridicule you when you fail to become what you cannot become. That is why they are evil' (1977:78). Evil is that which bars the way to the self and the reinstatement of the fallen world. Snake Boy urges that 'we must accept whatever it is we are becoming ... That is the way it is and that is the way it was intended to be' (1977:110-11). And Anpao has to experience his humanness to the full, also in its weakness,

for it is through his human failings and human triumphs that the hero serves his purpose, which is to make himself a channel for the gods to come down to men. In the process of discovering his own identity, he becomes for us, mythologically, the mediating or reconciling element and indeed the pattern,

says Travers (1989:17), the weakness of the man and the strength of the hero are both in the god Anpao. 'I do not have great teeth or powerful talons,' he tells the swan woman,

I have no wings or quills. I am just a naked fellow with a thin brown skin ... My talons are in here, old woman - they are in my head. And my wings, do you see, they are also inside me. Here in my breast. I am afraid, but still I will go where everyone else is afraid to go. Because these wings upon which we poor naked brown people fly will not let us rest. They beat frantically within us. And my talons reach out toward whatever remains unseen, toward whatever remains unknown. (Highwater, 1977:36)

In his search for his identity - an assertion of his divinely human nature - Anpao becomes the archetype that escapes the stereotypical poles of evil and innocence. Anpao is to become 'the first person in whom the power of the Sun, the Moon, and the Earth of his mother are united' (Highwater, 1977:214), but first he has to go back to the very beginning and relive, by the magic of the swan woman's sacred pipe, his childhood, from a time when he is 'tinier than the tiniest of things. Anpao is a child-seed, a tiny seed and nothing more' (1977:60). He has to learn 'of his descent from the sky where his father lived... about the death of his mother and about

Grandmother Spider... how he had become two and then become one again, and how he had come to possess a vision through a fearful lesson from the Moon' (Highwater, 1977:100). The hero has to be One, even in the contrary aspect of his self. 'Without your brother you are only half a boy!' warns the swan woman Anpao when Oapna is captured by the Moon (1977:31).¹⁹

'No one understands the Moon. She has no reasons - only wishes ... No one has ever looked at the dreadful lodge of the Moon and lived. It is the dark side of the Moon, the one she hides from us' (Highwater, 1977:36-7). That in Anpao's being is to be included the power of the Moon points to the validity and significance of the experience of both beauty and terror in the world of the hero. Oapna enrages the Moon by his contrariness and Anpao has to rescue him from her lodge. Swan woman helps him, because 'I like him!' she says, 'He is a smart one, that Contrary boy!' (1977:30). After this ordeal Oapna is absorbed into Anpao's being and they are One. "I am not afraid of the Moon," he exclaimed to his father, the Sun. "Because terror and torment are as imperfect as courage and contentment ... I have found a vision from the dark side of the Moon. Now I can see light through the imperfections of darkness. And I have become a person with a memory of the past and with a vision of the future" (1977:87). The hero must know that he has everything within, 'like the place in the acorn which imagines the tree' (1977:47) and like 'the salty green water in which everything that would ever be already was' (Highwater, 1977:52). 'This is no ordinary child,' says the holy woman grandmother Spider of the little boy Anpao, 'I can feel his great power and I can see

¹⁹ It seems apparent that contrary Oapna represents the sacred clown of Native American tradition, upon whom 'people look with amusement and respect, for he represents a duplicity which Indians grasp as fundamental to life' (Highwater, 1981:175). Anpao's scared clown aspect is even more significant in the light of Travers's (1989:17) assertion that by finding his identity, the true hero becomes mediator, 'a channel for the gods to come down to men'. For Highwater (1981:181) states that the clown's 'specialness provides a human connection between the accessible and the inaccessible. As the people of Acoma Pueblo say of their first clown: "He knew something about himself." ^{space} Arrestingly, in Charles Williams's novel *The Greater Trumps* it is the tarot figure of the Fool that represents Christ: 'Earth and air and fire and water - the lesser elements pouring down from below the Greater Trumps, but these also in the dance, and in each of those four cataracts...the figure of the Fool, leaping and dancing in joy' (Williams, 1964:141).

his future like the rings of an ancient tree' (1977:72). Already Anpao has within all that he is to be; son of the immortal Sun and the earth woman who chose death, he is the eternal man, the man-god eternally rejuvenated. Rejuvenation is timely, but also timeless - like the sun. Of Christ's ultimate sacrifice, C.S. Lewis (1971:42) says, 'the old myth of the Dying God, without ceasing to be myth, comes down from the heaven of legend and imagination to the earth of history.' That place in the acorn that imagines the tree is the eternal moment of timelessness, the mythological time of the unknowing, the place whence comes and goes the hero who quests for that which has already been found.

In Highwater's structuring of *Anpao* it is clear that the linear conception of time is of little consequence in this world. Time in *Anpao* attests to Highwater's (1981:90-1) statement that 'all of primal peoples' meaningful relationship to their world is thus not history, not causality in a scientific sense, but a mythical ordering of life that has not deviated and will not in the future deviate from the traditions of immediacy.' Anpao states that 'inside me there is another land ... I have come so far that I have become my journey and my journey has become me. Without it I am nothing. When I pause I forget who I am or why I exist' (Highwater, 1977:123). In the hero's quest for himself lies the seed of his finding, since he himself becomes his way and his way becomes he. To the waiting Ko-ko-mik-e-is, her father, the wise chief, advises: 'You must follow your ways, no matter how difficult, and you must make loneliness a willing companion' (1977:228). When Anpao returns the old chief is 'happier than anyone, for he had known all along that those who follow their own ways, even in the face of the bitterness of fools, are those in whom the Sun shines and to whom the mysteries of the Moon are known and the newness of the Morning Star radiates forever' (1977:231).

To deviate from the story of Anpao for a while, one should mention another god child who fulfils a divine destiny through human weakness and suffering. Pretty Pearl the god child embarks on a journey that will lead her to lose her divinity, only to find it again in an unlikely place - the mortal life of a human

being. 'One long time ago, ' tells Virginia Hamilton (1983:5) in *The Magical Adventures of Pretty Pearl*, 'Pretty Pearl yearned to come down from on high. One clear day it was, she daydreamed of leaving her home on Mount Kenya'. So she goes forth to follow the slaves across the sea to America and eventually – it must be remembered that for a god time is not as it is for us – comes to live with a band of free black people, the 'inside folks', hidden deep in a forest. Hamilton (1983:i) in the 'Author's Note' of 1997, describes this book as a 'historical folk fantasy, based on African American folklore, historical fact, and life experience' from which its affinity to Highwater's work is apparent. In her 'attempt to bring history and folk material together' Hamilton (1983:i) creates what she calls 'a hopescape of characters, both young and old. They are black, white, Native-American; gods, god children, and spirits. I call them my Cast of Heroes. ' And these heroes, like all heroes, 'tell important truths. And they speak of the longings and needs of many peoples to know where they come from, who they are, where they are going, and what it is we should remember about them' (1983:i). That Pretty Pearl is designated a hero among heroes is significant in the light of her ultimate fate, for she has to partake of absolute human wretchedness – to the point of losing her immortality – in order to become the kind of god she is destined to be. For this reason Hamilton (1983:ii) bids the reader 'enter this world in the manner in which it was created – with respect and admiration for all things human and divine'.

Pretty's older brother, best god John de Conquer warns her that humans 'be work for de lesser gods' and that they had best be left alone, 'because they got winnin' ways...You can't fool around de human bein's too long, else you commence actin' human youself' (Hamilton, 1983:9). And it is in acting human that a dual propensity lies for dealing pain, but also love and joy. 'To be human is about worth de whole world,' (1983:277) declares John Henry Roustabout, Pretty Pearl's eldest brother who has long since gone to live among humans and has to face death for it.

If the seeming indifference of the high gods of Mount Kenya is to be taken as a mark of their duality, it is rendered even more poignant by virtue of constituting an ultimate good that is either given or withheld. (Dealing not only in good, but also in malice is 'actin' human'). Best god de Conquer is persuaded to come down and see the plight of his people in America, and gives and intimation of the gifts he is able to bestow:

All at once John de Conquer sat up, laughing. He caught hold of the helpless child Hunger had been chasing and hugged her in his arms. He held her tight a moment to calm her, and he breathed the high, cool places of Mount Kenya in her face.

'Remember me, little Dora, ' he murmured, for Dora was the child's name. 'Keep close de breath of John "de Con-care". And you always be free. '

'I'll remember you, de Con-care, ' the child whispered. She laughed happily. John gave her a gentle toss in the air. She tumbled for two miles to a place where a widow woman lived in a cave. The widow woman needed a child to love. (Hamilton, 1983:28)

De Conquer breathes freedom and that is his gift; he also kindles remembrance, which freedom demands. Hamilton (1983:i) states that 'memory is the golden key to this precious tale' - and it is a tale about freedom. In her dedication she binds freedom and remembrance together: 'For The Inside Folks: They broke loose, escaped, flowed away, slipped away; they hid, *disappeared* and were forever free. Power to your generations.' Born of an enslaved people, the girl Dora can be free by grace of the remembrance of the cool, high places, the liberating knowledge that she and her people are spiritual heirs of the shadow of Mount Kenya, and the quickening breath of John de Conquer.

Godhood entails freedom and de Conquer suffers Pretty Pearl to go where she wishes, but she disregards his warning. When in a foul mood she summons spirits to frighten the children of Freedom Lane, her divinity forsakes her, leaving a mere shadow behind. Now 'life was a toil and life was a trouble for Pretty Pearl

Perry, formerly of Mount Kenya' (Hamilton, 1983:214). Her ebony bow falls and breaks 'into pieces that [get] smaller and smaller until they [are] no bigger than grains of sand' (1983:214); the powerful de Conquer root around her neck 'wither[s] and die[s]' (1983:215). 'Tsk, tsk, de god chile is lost. 'Tis most strange how de world turn. Tsk, tsk,' goes Mother pearl, the mother-aspect of the divine Pretty Pearl (in a way that is not made clear and probably not to be understood); 'All she could do was to keep an eye on the child, keep Pretty Pearl near her until de Conquer came' (1983:214-5). And 'so the days passed with Pearl always cold, never playing, looking like an old, shrivelled something...She looked awful. Her eyes were dulled. Her shift was soiled and shabby' (1983:216). It seems that for acting in a darkly human way, Pearl has to go the way she has chosen and partake to the full of the mortal side of reality, a place of death and decay. And Pearl has chosen death.

One night the de Conquerlight appears, summoning. 'It was not sunlight, or lamplight, or twilight. It had a fruity scent and a taste of tropical flowers' (Hamilton, 1983:250). The light 'massed over them and around them and under them, like a shell. They stood there unable to think or move' (Hamilton, 1983:251). And then

He was there. John de Conquer, the great, good bringer of hope and help. The earth below the forest mast opened and de Conquer rose out of it seated in a chair made from the trunk of an African baobab tree.

His ebony crown shone black, shiny and pure. His long robe of spun gold and black African cotton was perfect in its gleam and glow. The slippers he wore looked comfortable. They were gold and black and well worn, shaped to his feet tenderly. (1983:254)

De Conquer has come to judge, to 'weigh their lives among humans on a scale of Mount Highness gods' (1983:254). And Pretty Pearl has failed. When John Henry Roustabout tries to defend Pearl on the ground that 'she ain't but a baby still'

(Hamilton, 1983:255), 'the look on de Conquer's face [grows] darker. His eyes [are] luminous coals...' 'Sis Pearl a god chile! *A god chile*' (1983:255). Roustabout whispers to Pearl not to look into de Conquer's eyes, but 'LOOK AT ME!' de Conquer [cries] out in the voice of the god he [is]. "SIS PEARL!" (1983:255). De Conquer restores Pearl's beauty, but it is a mortal beauty now, for Pearl is not to be a god child any longer. 'Instead of an ebony bow, a calico ribbon held her smooth, combed hair in place' (1983:260).

Perhaps Pretty Pearl is destined to be a different kind of goddess. Perhaps de Conquer has known all along that her office will require a calico ribbon rather than an ivory bow. For how else can she teach the holy in the common? And what would better symbolize her 'human failings' and 'human triumphs', as P.L. Travers (1989:17) has it, that make her a hero - 'a channel for the gods to come down to men'? Pretty Pearl becomes storyteller - thus, teacher - to her people. She tells them of the great best god who keeps them safe, and teaches them of the good luck de Conquer root. Mother Pearl - probably wishing to bestow the gift of oblivion, so that Pretty will not mourn for her lost divinity - has told her a new story of de Conquer, one in which the god child Pretty Pearl has no part. Yet, significantly, she does remember her origin, in the way that the storyteller does, who sees the world whole and for whom nothing is lost. Having lost the ivory bow and gained the calico ribbon, she speaks innocently out of experience; she is her own channel, for she herself has come down to live (and die) among men.

About the Storyteller it is said that 'something...made all the inside folks look at her solemnly, respectfully. She held herself most proud. But she held herself inward, and they were never sure what would come out of her, how she would begin' (Hamilton, 1983:306). As on the day she tells the de Conquer tale differently: 'One long time, ...de god came down from on high. Came down from Mount Kenya on a clear day' (1983:306). Her listeners are stirred when they learn that 'in that one long time, de Con-care weren't de only god come down', for the Storyteller proceeds: 'One long time, Pretty Pearl came down from on high...' (1983:306).

Pretty Pearl does not know where she gets her story from, but it makes her happy to tell it – probably because she feels it to be true somehow. In this way her tale is like the other tales discussed in this study: remembered truths from some deep, deep inner place; tales about gods and goddesses, the holy and the common, ivory bows and calico ribbons, that fill the heart with mystery and hope. For 'they loved best when Pretty turned serious about de Conquer':

John de Con-care lives in de southern soil. Him albatros, him manlike and him best god of Mount Kenya. Anytime we need him hard, he hit that hypocrite. *Ta-ta-tum*. It singin' freedom. *Ta-ta-tum*. Teachin', "Know him by de Conquer, secret root". *Ta-ta-tum*. Him comin' home to us, hold us safe. *John de Conquer!*

'Yea, Lawd, 'the folks murmured, and sat there, satisfied, enjoying themselves.

So it was that Pretty Pearl came down from on high. Yes, she did. Say it was one long time ago. (Hamilton, 1983:309)

To return now to the tale of Anpao and his people, it seems fitting to note Hamilton's interesting treatment of the Indians in her tale of Pretty Pearl. The 'Real People' are the only ones to know the gods for what they are. Once, 'Salt [the leader of the Inside Folks] looked into John Henry's eyes and saw what he could not name. ' "Who you?" he murmured. "Who is you, really, John Henry?" ' (Hamilton, 1983:236). But apart from that, no one knows their true identity, except for Old Canoe and the Ani-yun' Wiya, who 'knew the powers of black folks were there...They felt the presence of ones who were more than humankind. They would respect all those inside. But they would not look at three of them. ' (1983:129). The Real People know the gods Mother Pearl, Pretty Pearl and the Spirit Dwahro for what they are. As the spirit Dwahro explains to Pearl about the Real People: 'they know spirits when they see them, for they see them all de time. Live every day with spirits of de woods, de sky and they own people gone over de way' (Hamilton, 1983:103). That the Indians are portrayed as having an innate knowledge about the mystery of the black gods that the black people themselves do

not have, attests to their mystical ability to see and experience the world whole. This might be seen as the tribute of a black author to a suffering fellow people, whose land has been taken from them as the black people have been taken from their land. The spiritual awareness attributed to the Real People is further illumined as we follow the god child Anpao into the realm of spirit.

When Anpao returns to the village of Ko-ko-mik-e-is, he returns with a warning; he brings tidings of the coming of the white man: 'Sickness and death and greed are coming down upon us' (Highwater, 1977:231). Once more, however, Anpao and Ko-ko-mik-e-is have to go their way by themselves, for the people of the village will pay no heed. The wise chief also must follow his way: 'I am old,' he says,

and I am the chief of all these foolish people who only know laughter and wonderment. If I were to leave my people alone to face whatever is coming to us, it would be very wrong. They are like beautiful butterflies - how will they live if what you say is coming descends upon them? How can they bear the ugliness and the greed, they who are children of this fertile Earth and own nothing and give everything away as children do? (1977:232-33)

One is reminded of the sad truth of Hürlimann's (1959:84) words about the Indians, that

gerade die Eigenschaften, die sie zu so einzigartigen Helden der Literatur machten, ihr Stolz, ihre Kindlichkeit, ihre religiös bedingte Naturverbundenheit und ihre Unabhängigkeit machten sie nach ihrer Niederlage unfähig, sich den neuen Gegebenheiten anzupassen. Sie, die Kinder der Natur, waren dem Untergang geweiht.

[exactly those characteristics that made of them such unique heroes of literature, their pride, their childlikeness, their religiously conditioned solidarity with nature and their independence, incapacitated them to adapt to their conditions after their defeat. They, the children of nature, were doomed.]

So Anpao and Ko-ko-mik-e-is have to leave alone for the village below the great water, returning, it seems, to the beginning in the great water which Old Man 'filled to its depths with all that he knew' (Highwater, 1977:48). Travers (1989:82-3), speaking of the 'intimations that the Unknown is continually sending back to us, as a river at its sea-mouth sends back news of the sea to its source,' asserts that 'the secrets of the runes, the megalithic stones, the mysterious process we call language - our ancient forefathers understood them - are there in the flowing blood, witnessed to, equivocally but veraciously, by such oracles as myth, symbol, tradition, parable, fairy tale, ritual, legend.' In this bloodstream of atavistic wisdom, legacy to those who see the world whole, Anpao and all heroes live in the universal truth of otherness and sameness. For 'there is no end of us,' Anpao whispers before entering the water,

... Our lives are like the rings on an ancient tree. We are the rivers and we are this land. We are the ancient ways of our fathers' fathers, from the days when the rivers were clear and the prairie was covered with buffaloes, when the giant redwoods were saplings in the first frail dawns of this vast land. (Highwater, 1977:234)

Anpao has gone to the Childhood Kingdom, for there is the place where they remember the ancient ways of our fathers' fathers.

Anpao has gone to the Childhood Kingdom, for he is a great dancer, as all great heroes happen to be great dancers - is not the All-Great the Lord of the Dance? Anpao's father the Sun, who '[throws] down his ferocious blessings' (Highwater, 1977:125) and 'dazzle[s] the entire world with his great strength and virility' (Highwater, 1977:194), is of 'unfathomable power. If you looked upon him, you would be blinded - until he sank to his knees and washed his golden face in the river' (1977:114). But after his terrible fight with the evil birds to save Morning Star, who cried then, 'The Sun is dying! A snake has come up from under the world and

is swallowing my father!' (Highwater, 1977:211) and 'it was darker than any night of the world' (1977:212), Anpao dances back the Light:

While Morning Star crouched in the terrible darkness, Anpao slowly rose and began to make music by striking his iron weapons against each other. And he began to dance and to sing, throwing back his head and chanting with great passion in his voice. He danced and he danced. He sang and he sang. Soon a tiny rim of light began to appear in the sky ... Anpao danced harder and sang louder and louder. The light in the sky grew larger and larger, until the whole blazing Sun slowly came back into the sky and the world was alive again. (Highwater, 1977:212)

Anpao has to find his 'other' in Oapna and be united with him before he can find himself. As the Son of Light he has to encounter his other in Darkness in order to fulfil his quest by reinstating his world. Every hero needs his others to be himself and to dance his world to life. It is a duality that brings forth unity, for the Other shows the way to the One. Anpao fulfils the ultimate end (but ends are beginnings) of his quest: he dances the fallen world to life. But it remains for those who hear the song and would be heroes: to follow the dancers on the way of the Dawn. Theirs is the prayer the old swan woman offers to Anpao at the beginning of his journey:

'This prayer I offer you:
May your road be fulfilled
reaching to the house of your Sun father.
When your road is fulfilled,
in your thoughts may we live.
May we be the ones whom your thoughts embrace.
On this day,
to our Sun father,
we offer prayer meal
To this end:
May you help us all to finish our roads well.'
(Highwater, 1977:41)

And to follow the heroes to the green green sky where the butterflies fly.

There are great names in the story, my father. Yes, many have heard the names: when the Impis roared them out as they charged in battle, I have felt the mountains shake and seen the waters quiver in their sound. But where are they now? Silence has them, and the white men write them down in books.

- Henry Rider Haggard
from *Nada the Lily*

EPILOGUE

'To Hear Music that Ceased'

He was tired and sad, he longed for something - for what?
To hear music that ceased...

- Ursula Le Guin

In the place that Ursula Le Guin describes in 'Darkness Box' there is no death and no end to anything, there are no shadows, for there is light, but no sun; there is no time, for the hands of the clock never move and always say 'ten minutes of ten' (Le Guin in Hartwell, 1994:139). This is the time for Prince Rikard, 'white-armored on a white horse' (1994:142) to go to fight and slay the enemy from the sea, his exiled brother of the black ships, 'a tall, grim-faced man in gray' (1994:142). Afterwards the enemy returns to sea and Rikard to the palace in the city to report to his father. Then all of this must happen again, for it is ten minutes of ten. But one day a little child - ever the guide and the messenger - brings the prince a gift from the sea, that magical cauldron of plenty, of things rich and strange, where all things have their beginning. It is a box filled with darkness. For the prince 'was tired and sad, he longed for something - for what? To hear music that ceased, to speak to his brother once before they fought ... he did not know' (1994:145). What he does not know is that his longing calls for the gift in the box. When Rikard pours out the darkness, the music stops, the clocks strike ten, and the gryphon, his battle companion and 'one unquestioning friend' (1994:145) attacks him and he has to kill her. 'It's dead,' the cat tells him, 'once and for all' (1994:146). And Rikard has to go to battle, for the cat further informs him that

'There'll be an afternoon today, ... and a twilight, and night will fall. At nightfall one of you will come home to the city, you or your brother. But only one of you, prince.'

Rikard stood still a moment. 'Is the sun shining now, outside?'

'Yes, it is - now.'

'Well, then, it's worth it,' the young man said, and opened the door and strode on out into the hubbub and panic of the sunlit halls, his shadow falling black behind him. (1994:146-7)

A true encounter between the brothers is needed to establish a valid, living world - a world of light and shadow, sound and silence. The wisdom of contraries and paradox has been at work in the gift from the sea that heals and

reinstates a fallen world. It brings light contained in darkness and life in death. For a temporal world cannot be whole without endings, nor a mortal hero without death. In death lies immortality, as in ends endlessness. The Prince - finally granted the gift of seeing his world whole - knows this, for he bows to the Sun, and the Sun is a dual god.

The world that lives by the light of the Sun is a world of life and death, beauty and terror. The archetypal essence of the living world is to be found in the mythical reality of the hero. In 'The World of the Hero', Travers (1989:15) speaks of the 'tension, the uncompromising insistence on both ends of the stick - black and white, good and evil, positive and negative, active and passive - that gives the myths their ambivalent power.' And the mystery of the world under the Sun requires all that would see it whole to take the path of the hero. 'Myth,' says Travers (1989:86), 'by design, makes it clear that we are meant to be something more than our own personal history. It places us - and it is not a comfortable position - squarely between the opposing forces that keep us, and the world, in balance - the two Earth Shapers, benign and malignant, checking and disciplining each other to produce a viable whole.' The duality inherent in the natural world eludes human understanding and, through the awe that it inspires, intimates a sense of the numinous and manifests the ineffable and unfathomable quality of the Divine Presence. Acceptance of the contraries brings about a vision of the world whole and a recognition of the One, the divine and cosmic unity of all things. Cycles of death and rebirth constitute life, so that shadow is ever an aspect of the sun's light. Yet, light and shadow both serve the ongoing process of life; without darkness the world is not whole. In *African Genesis*, Robert Ardrey (1961:242) illustrates the evolutionary significance of the coming of death to a world of long, long ago:

With the advent of death, paradoxically, came all that we think of as life. It was as if the streets were swept nightly, the rubbish burned daily, the books balanced regularly. Now the cockle could

find his rocky ledge, and jawless fishes their deep blue sea; crabs could explore the tidal inlets, and spiders the sandy shore. At the risk of death, all could be free of immortality's slimy prison. A world was born.

'Without death the pond, the forest, the prairie, the city could not exist' (Shephard, 1991:207). In the context of life, death and darkness are not ultimate threats, but needful counterweights in the poise of being.

In Ende's *Unendliche Geschichte* the world of Fantasia - its good and its evil both equal in the eyes of the Child Empress - is threatened by the Nothing. For the Sufis, states Idries Shah (1964:264), 'evil ... exists only as not-being. Being itself, if attained completely, removes the possibility of the negation, so-called evil.' A character in Charles Williams's (1947:145) novel, *War in Heaven*, testifies to the nihilism of evil:

In the end there is nothing at all but you and that which goes by. You will be sick at heart because there is nothing, nothing but a passing, and in the midst of the passing a weariness that is you. All things small grow fainter, all desire cease in that sickness and the void that is about it ... I am weary beyond all mortal weariness and my heart is sick and my eyes blind with the sight of the nothing through which we fall.

Dorothee Sölle (1975:172) asserts that '*Religion ist der Versuch, keinen Nihilismus zu dulden und eine unendliche (endlich nicht widerlegbare) Bejahung des Lebens zu leben*' [religion is to tolerate no nihilism and to live an unending (ultimately irrefutable) affirmation of life]. Those who can see the world whole in its beauty and its terror are ever the heroes of life's unending story. A true hero is the Romantic child of the nursery meadows and the sinister forests, the garden and the wilderness, who apprehends the One and the mystery of a complete world. The way of the hero is taught by such luminaries as Mary Poppins, Aslan, Frith and Northwind, who reveal in their own being that Good is not always gentle and kind; and in the poets - Blake, de la Mare, Rossetti, Conkling - who know that the passing quality of life in this world perpetuates its beauty.

Prince Rikard longs to hear music that ceases, for evanescence is an element of beauty in a world seen whole. Nothing is complete without an end. The fifth of Wallace Stevens's (in Allison *et al.*, 1983:932) 'Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird' reads:

I do not know which to prefer,
the beauty of inflections
Or the beauty of innuendoes,
The blackbird whistling
Or just after.

In nature's beauty and wildness lies that which stirs awe and wonder in human hearts, but the dark and wild places also harbour primeval fears and terror, for people are frail and life is precarious. Yet here too, paradox is to be found: 'Without wilderness', states Robert Pack (1993:281), 'our humanity is diminished because we fail to perceive the beauty inherent in our ephemerality; we fail to acknowledge ourselves as creatures among other creatures, among other evolving and vanishing forms.' Ardrey (1961:33) also stresses the fact that

we are part of all things. We stand upon creatures lost in pre-Cambrian slimes. Our genes still reflect their ambitions. We may anticipate species unborn, times beyond prediction, sovereignties beyond *Homo sapiens*, and beings that we shall never know. But we shall be part of them, influencing their destinies as others have influenced ours.

Attacking what he calls the 'Romantic fallacy' - involving ideas springing from a vision of man as fallen angel rather than risen ape, Ardrey (1961:169) extends this imperative of unity to the soul of man:

It partakes either of all living things, all that has come before and all that will ever come after, all that exists on this particle, Earth, and all that exists in the most speculative pastures of unknowable space beyond the last red shift: either that, or it partakes of man's

estate and span alone, which read on any mathematical scale must come very near absolute zero, and we are minor beings bowing before gods as appropriately insignificant as our own imagination; we are transitional species, nature's first brief local experiment with self-awareness, a head above the ancestral ape and a head below whatever must come next.

It seems apt that, if this study presents a Romantic vision of nature and if this vision is a dual one, an anti-Romantic statement such as the above should also find a place. Yet, in the face of Ardrey's assessment of divinity and imagination, Romantic reality must be asserted anew, for eternal childhood knows the unity of the One that is One and all alone, that of child and serpent, star and stone. And as for our insignificance, it must be remembered that in this reality of light and shadow, where the holy resides in the everyday, great strength lies in human weakness. 'It is through his human failings and his human triumphs that the hero serves his purpose, which is to make himself a channel for the gods to come down to men,' says Travers (1989:17). And when God comes down to men, it is as a suffering man that Jesus saves the world and bears its burden. For the ultimate paradox is in Him, Lord of the Dance, who makes the world whole; Madeleine Caron Rock (in de la Mare, 1973:500) writes of how

The Wounded Greatness of the World
In silence lies -
And death is shattered by the light from out
Those darkened eyes.

People hurry by so quickly
Don't they hear the melodies
In the chiming and the clicking
And the laughing harmonies

Songs to aging children come
Aging children, I am one

Some come dark and strange like dying
Crows and ravens whistling
Lines of weeping, strings of crying
So much said in listening

...

Songs to aging children come
This is one

- Joni Mitchell
from 'Songs to Aging Children Come'

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ABSTRACT

This thesis argues that the human mind recognizes within the natural world a dimension of reality that is beyond its knowledge and understanding. Nature confronts it with an ineffable power the source of which is often sensed as a numinous presence. But the divine manifested by nature also assumes the qualities exhibited by nature, and this implies beauty as well as terror. Indeed, in the literature considered in this study duality can be seen to constitute a mark of the divine. To accept the dual forces of nature as a whole, both the beauty and the terror, light and dark, as a unity, one needs the vision of the Romantic Child.

The Child of Romantic conception is able to accept the dynamics of the dual forces, because he has the ability to wonder; he has not been sundered from his natural environment like modern man. The realm of Romantic Childhood is seen as a timeless place where the Child experiences a profound communion with nature. Ever since the industrial revolution this place has become a repository of ideas, tradition and literature discarded by a technologically advancing civilization that scorns the link with the past and with nature, which is in the custody of the poet, the true hero, and the Romantic Child.

For this reason, the ideas germane to this study are significantly represented in works of so-called 'children's literature'. The duality of the divine is explored within various contexts – as manifested in the natures of god and goddess figures, the cycles of life and death, the dual conceptions of the man-centred pastoral garden and the god-centred wilderness, or the mind of the cultural other. From a wide array of sources, dating from different periods of time and written by authors of divergent backgrounds and stances, a seemingly unified and coherent body of Romantic teaching emerges. These sources include works by P.L. Travers, C.S. Lewis, Walter de la Mare, Richard Adams and Jamake Highwater. The coherence of their teaching attests to the poetical validity of their timeless archetypal thoughts.

SAMEVATTING

Hierdie tesis beweer dat die mens in die natuur 'n dimensie van die werklikheid herken wat buite sy kennis en begrip lê. In die natuur kom hy te staan voor 'n onsegbare krag die oorsprong waarvan dikwels ervaar word as 'n goddelike teenwoordigheid. Die goddelike wat hom laat blyk in die natuur neem egter ook die eienskappe aan wat die natuur vertoon, en dit hou skoonheid in sowel as verskrikking. In die literatuur beskou in hierdie studie kan gesien word hoe so 'n dubbelheid die goddelike kenmerk. Om die tweeledige natuurkragte as 'n geheel te aanvaar, die skoonheid en die verskrikking, die lig en die donker daarvan as 'n eenheid, is die deursig van die Romantiese Kind nodig.

Die Kind in Romantiese voorstelling aanvaar die werking van die dubbelkragte omdat hy hom daarvoor kan verwonder; hy is nie geskei van sy natuurlike omgewing soos die moderne mens nie. Die ryk van die Romantiese Kindertyd word beskou as 'n tydlose plek waar die kind 'n diepgaande gemeenskap met die natuur ervaar. Sedert die industriële rewolusie het hierdie plek 'n bewaarplaas geword vir idees, oorlewering en literatuur verwerp deur 'n tegnologies voorstkryende beskawing wat die verbintenis met die natuur en die verlede smaad, 'n verbintenis wat onder die voogdy van die digter, die ware held en die Romantiese Kind staan.

Om hierdie rede word die gedagtes verwant aan hierdie studie betekenend voorgestel in sogenaamde 'kinderliteratuur'. Die tweeledigheid van die goddelike word binne verskeie kontekste nagespoor - soos laat blyk in die nature van god- en godinfigure, die kringlope van lewe en dood, die tweërlei voorstellings van die mensgesentreerde pastorale tuin en die godsgesentreerde wildernis, of die gemoed van die kulturele ander. Uit 'n wye bronneveld, daterend uit verskillende tydperke en deur skrywers van uiteenlopende

agtergronde en stande, tree 'n oënskynlike samehangende en eenvormige Romantiese lering na vore. Hierdie bronne sluit werk deur P.L. Travers, C.S. Lewis, Walter de la Mare, Richard Adams and Jamake Highwater in. Die samehang van hulle lering getuig van die digterlike geldigheid van hulle tydlose, oertipiese gedagtes.

KEYWORDS

Children's literature

Conkling, H.

Divinity

Duality

Fantasy

Hero

Highwater, J.

Lewis, C.S.

Nature

Pastoral

Romanticism

Travers, P.L.