

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

BEARERS OF DREAMS

**A STUDY OF ARCHETYPAL SYMBOLISM IN FANTASY
AND SCIENCE FICTION**

BY

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DEDICATION

Bearers of Dreams is dedicated to my father, Dr Ellis Fasser, who set me roaming through those mysterious inner and outer spaces, so many, many years ago.

ABSTRACT

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this dissertation is threefold: to suggest that archetypal symbols are present in much fantasy and science fiction literature; to isolate and explore these symbols, demonstrating how they contribute to the attractions of these genres; and to 'place' and assess fantasy and science fiction within the broader context of the literary mainstream.

Various problems are confronted: difficulties inherent in defining the genres; conflicting and confusing perceptions regarding the nature, purpose and value of these modes, both from within and without the fields; and the manner in which each may interpenetrate the other. Also discussed is the close connection of these genres with the language of mythic symbolism.

The study is, thereafter, confined to an analysis of various archetypal symbols, as identified by Carl Gustav Jung. The discussion argues for a reassessment of archetypal criticism, emphasising that such images are essentially symbols of transformational and metaphoric power. Several key themes and *motifs* are isolated and explicated, revealing how they expand and lend significance to narrative material by virtue of conscious and subliminal resonances, and showing why they call up sensations of wonder and revelation.

The symbols analysed are those which, in the Jungian mode, point the way towards the achievement of personal (ontogenic) and racial (phylogenic) individuation. Some of

these archetypal images are, for instance, the shadow, the threshold, the forest, the mandala, the desert or wasteland, the labyrinth, the beast and the green man. The focus is on their ubiquitous appearances and ramifications in the work of writers as diverse as, for example, Ursula Le Guin, Alfred Bester, Brian Aldiss and J. G. Ballard, and how such images can become vehicles for the passage towards redemption and revelation. The genealogy and importance of each symbol is analysed, revealing how the writer's vision can transform these ancient images and impart to them idiosyncratic meaning and beauty as well as general contemporary relevance.

Finally, in synthesis, this study will show how and why fantasy and science fiction literature may, in certain instances, rise above the merely popular, escapist and artistically mundane to achieve beauty and gravity equal to much mainstream literature.

SAMEVATTING

Die doel van hierdie skripsie is drieledig: om te kenne te gee dat argitipiese simbole teenwoordig is in talle verbeeldings- en wetenskapsverhaalliteratuur; om hierdie simbole af te sonder en na te vors, aantonende hoe hulle bydra tot die bekoring van hierdie genres en om verbeeldings- en wetenskapsverhale binne die breër verband van die literêre hoofstroom te plaas en te evalueer.

Verskeie probleme word aangespreek: struikelblokke eie aan die verklaring van die twee genres; botsende en verwarrende waarnemings rakende die aard, doel en waarde van verbeeldings- en wetenskapsverhale, sowel binne as buite hierdie terreine. Die noue verband van hierdie twee genres met die taal van fabelsimbolisme word ook aangespreek.

Die studie word daarna gewy aan die nadere ontleding van verskeie argitipiese simbole soos deur Carl Gustav Jung uitgesonder. Die bespreking dui op 'n herwaardasie van argitipiese kritiek, met die klem daarop dat sodanige beelde wesenlik simbole is van omskeppende en metaforiese krag. Verskeie sleuteltemas en grondidees word uitgesonder en verduidelik, wat aan die lig bring hoe hulle ontwikkel en betekenis gee aan verhalende gegewens deur middel van bewuste en verhewe weerklanke, en wat aantoon hoekom hulle 'n gevoel van wonder en openbaring te voorskyn bring.

Om Jung se voorbeeld te volg, is die simbole wat ontleed word, daardie wat dui op die pad na bereiking van persoonlike (ontogeniese) en ras (filogeniese) individuasie. Sommige van hierdie argitipiese simbole is die skadu, die drumpel, die woud, die

mandala, die dorsland, die doolhof en die 'groen man'. Die klem is op hul alomteenwoordige verskynings en vertakkings in die werke van skrywers soos, byvoorbeeld, Ursula Le Guin, Alfred Bester, Brian Aldiss en J. G. Ballard, en tot watter mate sulke simbole dui op bevryding en openbaring. Die genealogie en belangrikheid van elke simbool is ontleed wat aan die lig bring hoe die outeur se opvatting daardie antieke beelde kan vervorm en idiosinkratiese betekenis en skoonheid, asook algemene asmede eietydse toepaslikheid daaraan kan verleen.

Sintese wys ten slotte in hierdie studie hoe en waarom verbeeldings- en wetenskapsverhaalliteratuur in bepaalde gevalle bo die blote gewilde ontvlugtings en kunstig alledaagse uitstyg om skoonheid en erns gelykstaande aan die meeste hoofstroomliteratuur te bereik.