

Thesis

Analyzing Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking-Glass* from a psychological stance allows readers to explore the meanings of certain characters and concepts in his stories. Carl Jung's concepts of archetypes and the collective unconscious in particular offer a fruitful way to interpret Carroll's work. Using a Jungian psychological perspective, this project argues that archetypes of water, the quest, the trickster, and the wise old man are present in *Through the Looking-Glass* and then outline their ultimate purpose.

Archetypes

According to Jung, "The archetype is essentially an unconscious content that is altered by becoming conscious and by being perceived, and it takes its colour from the individual consciousness in which it happens to appear" (5).

Water

According to Jung, "water is the commonest symbol for the unconscious" (18). Ann Dobie explains that "water is often used as a creation, birth, or rebirth symbol, as in Christian baptism. Flowing water can refer to the passage of time. In contrast, the desert or lack of water suggests a spiritually barren state" (66).



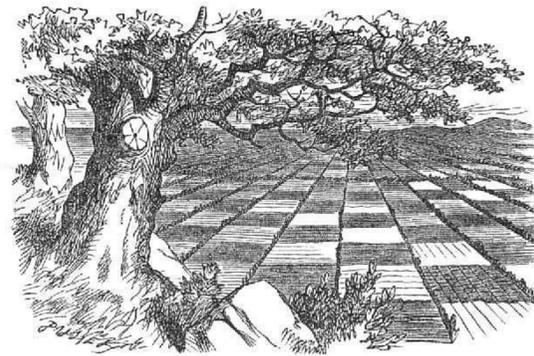
John Tenniel, *Alice Rows the Sheep*

Water appears in some form in nearly every chapter right before a dramatic shift in the scene or plot happens and indicates the passing of time:

"In another moment she felt the carriage rise straight up into the air, and in her fright she caught at the thing nearest to her hand, which happened to be the Goat's beard. [asterisks appear] But the beard seemed to melt away as she touched it, and she found herself sitting quietly under a tree- while the Gnat (for that was the insect she had been talking to) was balancing itself on a twig just over her head, and fanning her with its wings" (Carroll 129).

The Quest

"The quest usually involves a difficult search for a magical or holy item that will return fertility and abundance to a desolate state. A related pattern is that of the need to perform a nearly impossible task so that all will be well. Often found as part of both these situations is the journey, suggesting a psychological, as well as physical, movement from one place, or state of being, to another" (Dobie 67).



John Tenniel, *Chess Board*

Alice embarks on a journey across the chessboard world outside of Looking-Glass House in order to reach the Eighth Square and become a queen. She undergoes physical and psychological movement, as she moves from square to square, meeting new characters and performing new and unusual tasks:

"It's a great huge game of chess that's being played - all over the world - if this *is* the world at all, you know. Oh, what fun it is! How I *wish* I was one of them! I wouldn't mind being a Pawn, if only I might join - though of course I should *like* to be a Queen, best" (Carroll 122-23).

The Trickster(s)

This figure is known to be mischievous, disorderly, foolish, and able to outwit many. In some folktales, the trickster figure works to corrupt, lead others astray from their morals, and has even been described as "demonic" (Jung 255).



John Tenniel, *Tweedledee and Tweedledee*

Tweedledee and Tweedledum are the foolish, silly trickster figures seen in this story. They speak in riddles, waste Alice's time with dancing and poems, ignore her questions, and tease her relentlessly:

"You know very well you're not real.'
'I *am* real!' said Alice, and began to cry.
'You wo'n't make yourself a bit realler by crying,' Tweedledee remarked: 'there's nothing to cry about.'
'I know they're talking nonsense,' Alice thought to herself: 'and it's foolish to cry about it'" (Carroll 142-43).

The Wise Old Man

The wise old man is also known as "the enlightener, the master and teacher," and this archetype has also been referred to as the archetype "of meaning" (Jung 37), as it "symbolizes the pre-existent meaning hidden in the chaos of life" (Jung 35).



John Tenniel, *Humpty Dumpty*

Humpty Dumpty serves as an enlightener and teacher to Alice. He attempts to bring meaning to many of the things confusing Alice, thus living up to the archetype "of meaning" (Jung 37):

"When I use a word, ... it means just what I choose it to mean- neither more nor less.' Alice refutes that by saying, 'The question is, ... whether you *can* make words mean so many different things.' Humpty then goes on to demonstrate his true, superior intellect by saying 'The question is, ... which is to be master- that's all'" (Carroll 161).

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