MYTH IN THE FICTION OF C. S. LEWIS

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Clive Staples Lewis (1898-1963) is perhaps most widely known as the author of *The Screwtape Letters*, an entertaining yet disturbing book of advice from a senior devil to his protégé; among literary scholars he is well known for *The Allegory of Love: A Study in Medieval Tradition* for which he received the Hawthornden Prize. As a fellow of Magdalen College at Oxford and after 1955 as occupant of the Chair of Medieval and Renaissance Literature at Cambridge, Lewis produced an amazing variety of books of literary criticism, Christian apologetics, autobiography, allegory, and fantasy. His virtuosity as a writer enables him to attract readers of widely differing backgrounds and interests.

Lewis's literary ability is especially evident in his fiction. His fiction is not extremely popular although it does seem to be gaining admirers. Perhaps one reason for this unpopularity is that his fiction seems to be out of the mainstream of contemporary fiction. Rather than using realistic or naturalistic techniques, Lewis creates myth;¹ rather

¹Chapter II contains an extended definition of myth as it will be used in this thesis.
than presenting the values of secularism or humanism, Lewis's perspective is Christian.

Although Lewis's fiction is not part of the most noticeable literary trends of the 1930's to the 1950's, certain elements of his writing connect him with several writers of fiction who are his contemporaries. These writers, as Marjorie Wright states, use religion, "either in its theological or in its mystical aspect," as a theme for literature. And in line with the interest of anthropologists and psychologists in myth, some writers began to make use of myth in fiction. Lewis is one such writer who presents his ideas in the form of myths. These ideas are largely based on Christian doctrine; thus he uses religion in its theological aspect for literary themes. For Lewis, Christianity is a means of turning a chaotic and senseless world into a meaningful and orderly one, and he presents this view, through myth, in his fiction.

In both his fiction and his non-fiction, Lewis comments on myth, its characteristics and strengths, and its relation to Christian doctrine. His use of myth to examine and to

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2His work has some things in common with the works of Charles Williams, J. R. R. Tolkien, Aldous Huxley, and Graham Greene, to name a few.

illustrate Christian ideas is most important in the space trilogy, the Narnia series of children's books, and Till We Have Faces. These books are the primary sources for this thesis, and they will be examined in chronological order. (Reference will be made to his works of literary criticism or theology only when they illustrate something relevant to his fiction.) The purpose of this study is to formulate Lewis's concept of myth, to relate this concept to his use of myth in fiction, and to suggest how his use of myth enriches his fiction.

The secondary sources about Lewis are still relatively limited in number and in scope. Most of the available material is devoted to criticism of the space trilogy; the Narnia series and Till We Have Faces are often neglected.

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4. Some explanation may be necessary for the inclusion of children's books in this study. The books are ostensibly children's books, but as Chapter IV points out, Lewis did not write the chronicles of Narnia solely for children. He chose the fairy tale because that form is suited to what he wanted to say; and these books, like most of the best fairy tales or fantasies, refuse to be contained in the category of children's books. They have something to say which may be appreciated by anyone who is receptive to fantasy. Also, since the books were written after the space trilogy and before Till We Have Faces, they reveal something about Lewis's growth as a mythmaker and about the continuity of his images and themes.

5. The Space trilogy includes Out of the Silent Planet (1938), Perelandra (1943), and That Hideous Strength (1945). The Chronicles of Narnia are The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobes (1950), Prince Caspian (1951), The Voyage of the Dawn Treader (1952), The Silver Chair (1953), The Horse and His Boy (1954), The Magician's Nephew (1955), and The Last Battle (1956). Till We Have Faces was published in 1956.
The earliest book concerned solely with Lewis is Chad Walsh's *C. S. Lewis: Apostle to the Skeptics* (1949); it was published before Lewis wrote the chronicles of Narnia or *Till We Have Faces*, and its emphasis is on Lewis's work as a Christian apologist. Clyde S. Kilby's *The Christian World of C. S. Lewis* (1964) discusses all of Lewis's fiction and semi-fiction as well as most of his non-fiction. Roger L. Green's *C. S. Lewis* (1963) is quite brief, but it is important for its emphasis on the Narnia series; it does briefly refer to Lewis's other fictional works. Three helpful dissertations, which discuss Lewis along with other writers, are Clinton W. Trowbridge's "The Twentieth Century British Supernatural Novel" (1958), Robert J. Reilly's "Romantic Religion in the Work of Owen Barfield, C. S. Lewis, Charles Williams, and J. R. R. Tolkien" (1960), and Marjorie Wright's "The Cosmic Kingdom of Myth: A Study in the Myth-Philosophy of Charles Williams, C. S. Lewis, and J. R. R. Tolkien" (1960). These studies include discussions of all of Lewis's fiction; a briefer discussion of his fiction is to be found in Edmund Fuller's "The Christian Spaceman: C. S. Lewis," *Books With Men Behind Them* (1959).

Several discussions of Lewis's work are concerned with only the space trilogy. Two books which examine Lewis's use of Arthurian material in the space trilogy are Charles Moorman's *Arthurian Triptych: Mythic Materials in Charles Williams, C. S. Lewis, and T. S. Eliot* (1960) and Nathan C.
Starr's *King Arthur Today: The Arthurian Legend in English and American Literature, 1901-1955* (1954). Perhaps the most helpful articles on the trilogy are Patricia M. Spacks's "The Myth-Maker's Dilemma: Three Novels by C. S. Lewis," published in *Discourse* II (October, 1959); Philip Dassy's "God, Space, and C. S. Lewis," published in *Commonweal*, LXVIII (July 25, 1958); and Wayne Shumaker's "The Cosmic Trilogy of C. S. Lewis," in *Hudson Review*, VIII (Summer, 1955). There are few articles on the Narnia series or *Till We Have Faces*, and these few are generally superficial.

This thesis is divided into six chapters. Following this introductory chapter, Chapter II discusses Lewis's concept of myth and defines myth as it will be used throughout this thesis. Chapters III, IV, and V survey Lewis's space trilogy, his series of seven children's books, and the single novel *Till We Have Faces*, respectively. Each chapter discusses the specific mythical elements in each novel or group of novels. The books are examined by setting, plot, characterization, and imagery for the mythical qualities which they contain, and then the major themes of the books are discussed. Chapter VI offers the conclusion that Lewis uses myth to entertain and to present spiritual truths. His work is enriched because his use of myth gives his themes imaginative life and enables him to provide fresh insight into Christian doctrine.
CHAPTER II

DEFINITION OF MYTH

Since the word myth has a number of different meanings, it is essential to define myth as it will be used in this discussion and to eliminate certain other meanings. Myth is often used to mean something untrue and in defiance of facts; for example, the popular, but untrue, idea that the American colonists were wholly united in their opposition to England may be called a myth. Myth may also be used to refer to someone or something having an imaginary or unverifiable existence, such as Santa Claus, or it may refer to early stories about the gods, beliefs, and practices of a group of people, such as the Greek myth about Demeter and Persephone.

For Lewis and for this study, myth is not used to refer to something untrue; on the contrary, Lewis believes that myth is a powerful means of presenting truth. He does not, of course, consider myth the only such agent. He is well aware of the value of such instruments as philosophical propositions and scientific formulae for presenting truth, but he considers myth also to be an important means of revealing certain truths. Philip Wheelwright expresses Lewis's idea when he says that myth is able to reveal truth which cannot be learned by means of scientific procedures; "science
and myth are basically incommensurate ways of experiencing" since they use different languages and ask different questions. Myth is not limited to the use of historical fact, scientific experiment, or philosophical abstraction, although it may use these in disguised form. Myth has the ability to depict characters who arouse sympathy for themselves or for all men, to express the experiences of men so that readers find them relevant and meaningful to their lives, and to arouse a feeling of unity among men by reference to their common heritage and experiences of life. Thus, this fictional quality enables myth to present truth to both the imagination and the reason of man. Myth is distinct from other kinds of fiction primarily in its emphasis on preternatural events, superhuman beings, and a sense of the numinous.

Lewis developed his ideas about myth over a long period of time. His youthful encounters with it influenced his adult discussions and creation of myths: they helped to form his basic attitude toward myth. In Surprised by Joy Lewis discusses his first fascination for myth; at about age eight he read a poem about the Norse gods and became acquainted with the name of Balder. He says,

I knew nothing about Balder; but instantly I was uplifted into huge regions of northern sky, I desired

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with almost sickening intensity something never to be described (except that it is cold, spacious, severe, pale, and remote) and then . . . found myself at the very same moment already falling out of that desire and wishing I were back in it.  

This emotional reaction soon passed, but at about age fifteen an intense feeling for Norse mythology was renewed by his reading the title *Siegfried and the Twilight of the Gods* and seeing one of Arthur Rackham's illustrations for this volume. He began a poem based on Wagner's version of the Nibelung story, he collected recordings of Wagner's music, and finally he was able to obtain the book which had renewed his interest in mythology, *Siegfried and the Twilight of the Gods*. He states that "... at the time, Asgard and the Valkyries seemed to me incomparably more important than anything else in my experience . . . ."  

Lewis's feelings for the Norse gods, whom he did not believe in, were closer to adoration than his feelings for the God whom he had tried to believe in as a child; from his preoccupation with stories about the Norse gods he gained a capacity for adoration which he had not learned from religion. In the next few years he learned to enjoy Celtic and Greek mythologies in addition to Norse mythology, and he continued writing poetry and drama about the mythical heroes and gods.  

The Norse myths formed some of Lewis's most enduring

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associations with myth and legend, but Celtic and Greek mythological influences are also used in his fiction.1

Lewis's reading of myth gave him considerable pleasure, it provided material for his youthful as well as his adult writing, and it also helped prepare him to accept Christianity. His love for myth enabled him to appreciate Phantastes by George MacDonald. In reading this book he met what he calls "Holiness," and he says, "... my imagination was, in a certain sense, baptised; the rest of me, not unnaturally, took longer. I had not the faintest notion what I had let myself in for by buying Phantastes."5 Lewis was first converted to theism, and then he searched for a particular religion to which he could commit himself. Influenced by an atheist friend who remarked that Frazer's stories of the Dying God seemed actually to have happened once and influenced by Owen Barfield's urging that he cultivate a more respectful attitude toward pagan myth, Lewis began looking for a religion which had fulfilled paganism and thereby reached maturity. He found this in the Christian Gospels which, according to Lewis, contain

... precisely the matter of the great myths. If ever a myth had become fact, had been incarnated, it would be just like this. And nothing else in all literature was just like this. Myths were like it in one way. Histories were like it in another. But nothing was simply like it... Here and here only in all time the myth must have become fact; the Word, flesh; God, Man.6

5Ibid., p. 181. 6Ibid., p. 236.
With his love for myth and with his view of Christianity as a fulfillment of pagan myth, it is not surprising that Lewis should closely associate his Christian experience with his imaginative experiences. He states,

I think that all things, in their way, reflect heavenly truth, the imagination not least. . . . This lower life of the imagination is not a beginning of, nor a step toward, the higher life of the spirit, merely an image. In me, at any rate, it contained no element either of belief or of ethics . . . . But it still had, at however many removes, the shape of the reality it reflected. 7

His early imaginative experiences and his sense of adoration for mythical gods served as a preparation for his conversion, and often in his later writings he was to relate Christianity to imaginative experiences.

Certainly Lewis's appreciation of myth was not the only factor in his conversion to Christianity. He was also concerned with the importance of human reason in perceiving truth; he had given considerable attention to the philosophical and rational approaches to Christianity. Eventually he found that he could combine reason and romance in Christianity. Wright suggests that his encounter with MacDonald's books helped him to accept Christianity as a power which could unify reason and romance. She further suggests that MacDonald's work may have given Lewis the idea of creating a mythical world with a Christian framework. MacDonald inspired Lewis and " . . . became the link between Lewis's whole

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7Ibid., p. 167.
imaginative vision of myth and legend and romance, and the spiritual world as he later came to perceive it."8 This connection of spiritual truth and myth is basic in Lewis's fiction; spiritual truth for Lewis is to be found in Christianity, which fulfills early myth and may itself be discussed in terms of myth. Knowing from his own experience that myth can be used to evoke religious responses, Lewis uses it as a potent means for embodying spiritual truth in fiction.

Lewis often borrows previously existing myths for his fiction, and he often creates his own myths; he also frequently discusses his ideas about what myth is and what it can be used for. It is important to understand these ideas in order to understand Lewis's fiction fully. In An Experiment in Criticism he has defined what he means by myth. He states that he does not limit the term myth to those stories which were slowly developed by many people in an early period of history. For Lewis certain other stories which are not myths in this anthropological sense may appropriately be called myths. Whether they are invented by individuals in modern times or were developed by many people centuries ago, myths are those stories that have certain characteristics, all making up a "mythical quality."

First, a myth is independent from its embodiment in a literary work. In this sense, it is extra-literary; the

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8 Wright, pp. 26, 21-22.
experience it gives is not bound up in its being told by any one author in certain words. For example, even in bare outline form the story of Orpheus is capable of making a powerful impression on a reader. Second, the pleasure given by myth is not dependent on suspense; usually the ending is well known, and it may be inevitable. There may be very little narrative element, but even a first reading introduces the reader to an object of contemplation. For example, the Hesperides with their apple tree and dragon present a potent myth even without the action of Heracles. Third, in myth human sympathy is at a minimum; the reader does not identify strongly with individual characters because he is aware of them primarily as symbols. The experiences of these characters in another world have relevance to the life of the reader, but he tends to sympathize with all men rather than to project himself into the lives before him. For example, the story of Orpheus may make the reader sad, but he tends to feel less sympathy for Orpheus than for men in general. Fourth, myth always deals with "impossibles and preternaturals." Fifth, myth is always serious and momentous, although it may be either sad or joyful; in this sense, there is no comic myth. Sixth, myth is awe-inspiring; it gives the reader a numinous experience while it communicates something of great consequence.9

9C. S. Lewis, An Experiment in Criticism (Cambridge, 1961), pp. 41-44.
Lewis is concerned with the effect of myth on modern man and not with its effect on earliest man or with how the first myths arose. He is primarily interested in myths which are "... contemplated but not believed, dissociated from ritual, held up before the fully waking imagination of a logical mind." He suggests that such myths affect different men differently and that what is myth to one man may not be myth to other men.\(^\text{10}\) In discussing Lewis's ideas about myth Clyde S. Kilby notes that for Lewis mythmaking is not only one of man's great accomplishments but also one of his deep needs. For Lewis there is "... a great, sovereign, uncreated, unconditioned Reality at the core of things, and myth is on the one hand a kind of picture-making which helps man to understand this Reality and on the other hand the result of a deep call from that Reality."\(^\text{11}\)

Throughout his work Lewis makes an important distinction between myth as "an account of what may have been the historical fact" and as "a symbolic representation of non-historical truth." He states that the story in Genesis is a richly suggestive story about a magic "apple" of knowledge, but the doctrine developed from it has omitted the apple to give simply a story of disobedience. He suggests that the version emphasizing the magic apple contains "deeper and subtler

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\(^{10}\text{Ibid., p. 45.}\)

\(^{11}\text{Clyde S. Kilby, The Christian World of C. S. Lewis (Grand Rapids, 1964), pp. 80-81.}\)
truth" than the version which uses the apple as merely a pledge of obedience. To those who object to this emphasis on myth Lewis says that if one is to believe in myths, he finds it easier to believe in myths of gods and demons than in myths of "hypostatised abstract nouns," and he suggests that the mythology which man possesses may be closer to literal truth than most men realize.12 In Miracles Lewis further describes his view of myth by saying,

... just as, on the factual side, a long preparation culminates in God's becoming incarnate as Man, so, on the documentary side, the truth first appears in mythical form and then by a long process of condensing or focussing finally becomes incarnate as History. This involves the belief that Myth in general is not merely misunderstood history (as Euhemerus thought) nor diabolical illusion (as some of the Fathers thought) nor priestly lying (as the philosophers of the Enlightenment thought) but, at its best, a real though unfocussed gleam of divine truth falling on human imagination. ... Just as God is none the less God by being Man, so the Myth remains Myth even when it becomes Fact. The story of Christ demands from us, and repays, not only a religious and historical but also an imaginative response. It is directed to the child, the poet, and the savage in us as well as to the conscience and to the intellect.13

In his fiction and semi-fiction (The Pilgrim's Regress, The Great Divorce, and The Screwtape Letters) Lewis not only creates myth but also has his characters talk about myth. In The Pilgrim's Regress John, the pilgrim, is told by Wisdom that his adventures are mere mythology. Then John hears a

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voice telling him that what he has thought and experienced

"... is mythology. It is but truth, not fact: an
image, not the very real. ... But this is My invent-
ing, this is the veil under which I have chosen to
appear even from the first until now. For this end I
made your senses and ... your imagination ... ."14

In the space trilogy Ransom learns much about the similari-
ties between myth, truth, and fact, and he thinks it possible
that "... the distinction between history and mythology
might be itself meaningless outside the Earth."15 Later, on
Perelandra he asks himself, "Were all the things which
appeared as mythology on earth scattered through other worlds
as realities?"16 Thus, even as he creates myth, Lewis com-
ments on the nature of myth. In Lewis's books, whether
fiction, criticism, or theology, his ideas about myth are
presented both in direct statement and in illustrative
incident.

Some critics have questioned the accuracy of calling
Lewis's fiction myth and have considered romance a better
label.17 However, in this study the term myth will be used
to refer to stories, ancient or modern, which have certain

14C. S. Lewis, The Pilgrim's Regress (London, 1944),
p. 171.

15C. S. Lewis, Out of the Silent Planet (New York, 1962),
pp. 144-145.


17See Northrup Frye, Anatomy of Criticism (New York,
1966), pp. 33, 117, 137-140; W. R. Irwin, "Thence and Back
Again: The Romances of Williams, Lewis, and Tolkien,"
qualities that Lewis himself attributes to myths: preternatural events and supernatural beings, an atmosphere of gravity, a sense of the numinous or awe-inspiring, and some important concept about the nature of man.

There are certain inherent disadvantages as well as advantages in using myth in fiction. First, there is the problem of getting an audience to take such a work seriously rather than to dismiss it as escapist literature. Through subtitles and prefaces Lewis seems to warn potential readers about the nature of his books so that they may avoid his work if they are not interested in children's books, science fantasy, or a myth retold. His reputation as a Christian apologist helps to counteract this charge of escapism for many readers, and the spiritual implications of his fiction might seem to clear away the charge entirely. But Patricia Spacks points out that because Christianity is often not accepted by the modern reader, Lewis's work may still be called escapist literature. Lewis tries to avoid the escapism of science fiction and children's books by making his books relevant to religious concerns; but Spacks says that he then appears merely to move into another kind of unreality because in the twentieth century the religious novel is likely to seem as unrelated to most men's lives as are science fiction and children's literature.18

It is clear that many people may not like Lewis's books, but escapism or failure to deal with life's problems hardly seems to be a valid objection to his work. It is precisely his concern with the complexities of life which determines Lewis's choice of themes, but he chooses to treat them in terms of man's spiritual nature and on an individual rather than a social basis. Wright suggests that the charge of avoiding the complexities of modern life may be partly dealt with by the reminder that myth is not supposed to give sociological or psychological analysis. The archetypal seems simple, and modern thought is somewhat suspicious of the simple. Lewis does not deny that man is a part of modern society, but he treats him primarily as a part of the universe. When he discusses social and religious relationships in terms of courtesy and humor, he is making "an attempt to achieve proportion and perspective."19

Another problem for the mythmaker may be getting readers to understand myth. For example, as Wright states, myth with scope must have a cosmic pattern, or a scientific and philosophical theory of the universe and its laws, yet the modern mythmaker cannot assume that any single cosmology will be understood by his readers. He may use a Christian cosmic structure, but Christianity is not always accepted by modern readers, or if it is accepted, it is "usually not thought of

19Wright, p. 163.
as having much to do with cosmology. . . . Christian cosmology is generally associated with the medieval period." Therefore the modern mythmaker has to explain his cosmology and make it convincing. Still another problem involves the relation of that which is supernatural to that which is realistic. In Lewis's work this becomes a problem only in That Hideous Strength, where, as Wright points out, his contemporary setting at times results in "too melodramatic a juxtaposition" of these two. Wright grants that Lewis's work may be limited in appeal because of subject matter, although those who like it are usually vigorously in favor of it. But the mythmaker's skill, even when great, is not sufficient to get his vision accepted unless the reader is able to accept the presentation of the nature of ultimate reality in imaginative form.²⁰

When a religious attitude is an integral part of myth, as in Lewis's work, the matter of didacticism must also be considered. Spacks says that Lewis has the powers of a mythmaker, but his work falls short of mythic stature because his intent is didactic; he creates myth to teach morality whereas it is the nature of myth to be beyond the merely didactic. According to Spacks, in using mythic elements to serve a moral scheme Lewis removes the "cloudy, vast significance" which belongs to myth, and his characters and adventures are

²⁰Ibid., pp. 158-159.
hard to take seriously when they seem to be presented as merely an excuse for homily.\textsuperscript{21} Much of this protest is answered by making a distinction between that which is narrowly didactic and that which is a mythic embodiment of a view of man's place in the cosmos. There are a few passages in Lewis's novels which lack subtlety in the presentation of religious ideas, are unnecessarily long, and damage the immediacy of the narrative. But, as Wright says, on the whole Lewis's primary aim is to tell a good story within a mythic framework, and his total work is not didactic but offers a vision rather than a message, a revelation rather than a sermon.\textsuperscript{22}

Whether the writer creates his own myths, borrows from previously existing myths, or reworks well-known myths for his own purposes, the use of myth has at least as many advantages as it has disadvantages. Moorman points out that myth offers "a complete and ordered cosmos" and a "system of coherent belief" upon which a writer can build ordered and meaningful work. Myth also offers "a meaningful and coherent symbolism" to the writer. When the writer borrows from well-known myths, he is able to take advantage of

\begin{itemize}
  \item a special sort of symbol at once more complex and more meaningful than the symbol of the poet's own making. Myth, when used as symbol, brings with it the complexity of its own milieu, which becomes free to operate on its own terms . . . .
\end{itemize}

\textsuperscript{21}Spacks, pp. 239, 242. \textsuperscript{22}Wright, pp. 168, 175.
Thus by the use of myth as symbol the poet not only increases the richness and fullness of his own ordering of experience, but the reader as well comes to understand the poet's statement more thoroughly, since he need not rely wholly upon the poet's arbitrary metaphorical pattern but can bring to the poem the general knowledge of the myth referent which he already possesses.

In addition, myth enables the writer to unify the disordered world he sees around him with the ordered world represented by myth by imposing that order upon the chaotic structure of his own experience.

For example, an allusion to Christian symbols has the advantage of getting a stock response. However, Moorman states that in the trilogy Lewis only occasionally makes such allusions. Instead he usually avoids these responses so as not to repel many of the readers he is trying to reach, and he creates new myth, which translates Christian concepts into fresh mythical terms. Besides creating myths Lewis also borrows from previously existing myths by using such things as centaurs, unicorns, and dwarfs; and Till We Have Faces is a reworking of a well-known myth.

Myth offers the writer other advantages. As Wright suggests, myth is a means of autonomy, and it allows the writer to use his own cosmology. In telling a story about supernatural beings a writer may use myth to create the environment he wants and thereby avoid associations which

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24 Ibid., pp. 107-111.
would accompany such a story if set in a realistic framework.
Myth provides a self-contained world which can impose its own
system of reality; it leaves historical reality, and by means
of magic, fantasy, or the numinous, it takes the reader to
this remote and independent world. Myth is an attempt to
"relate history to universal reality." A non-verifiable
world is chosen in order to present the mythical universe so
that it will be properly interpreted. A mythic framework
allows a writer to dissociate certain ideas from that which
is topical so that he may comment on such things as govern-
ment or religion without referring to a local government or
a particular sect. 25

Furthermore, myth strengthens archetypal associations.
As Wright states, the simple structure of myth allows many
objects or events to stand out, and that which is numinous
"... gives its quality to archetypal objects, creating an
atmosphere of illumination which would in other circumstances
be characteristic of mysticism or vision." The mythmaker has
the advantage of being able to give psychological depth to
his work through the archetypal associations of myth; these
associations are able to give objects significance which
communicates "more effectively to man than the strictly
practical or scientific modern world with which man has lost
touch." Man becomes aware of "the universal and personal

25 Wright, pp. 38-40.
relationships in the natural world," and the cosmic order of myth offers man a function and an identity in universal order. In addition, myth allows a writer to reveal that part of reality which cannot be shown in mere reporting of things done by real people. As Edmund Fuller says, such reporting does not necessarily portray the reality of life; even at best it leaves out glimpses of who, what, and where men are. Reality which is beyond what men can see, hear, feel, taste, or smell may be approached better through fantasy and symbol than through "realism." It is this part of reality with which Lewis is primarily concerned.

Lewis seems to be able to overcome to a great extent most of the disadvantages involved in the use of myth. Except to readers who are unprepared to accept a view of reality presented in imaginative terms, Lewis's skill presents his vision clearly. In the space trilogy there are a number of didactic passages which lessen the imaginative impact of the books; there is also a problem in That Hideous Strength in relating the supernatural and the realistic, but the books which follow the trilogy show much improvement; in the last novel, Till We Have Faces, these problems do not arise. His fiction may be limited in appeal because of his

26 Ibid., pp. 41, 160.

subject, but it rises above the charge of escapism: in depicting individuals growing to spiritual maturity his work relates to the basic problems of men. Lewis's works profit from those advantages which myth offers: an ordered cosmos, a dissociation from the merely topical, and meaningful symbols with strong archetypal associations.
CHAPTER III

THE SPACE TRILOGY

Lewis's space trilogy--Out of the Silent Planet (1938), Perelandra (1943), and That Hideous Strength (1945)--combines many elements, of which the most notable are science fantasy, Arthurian myth, and Christian theology. These elements are combined to form Lewis's own myth--the silent planet myth or the myth of Deep Heaven. This myth gives imaginative life to spiritual themes, which are illustrated rather than discussed; and the three novels render attractive a complex of ideas from Christian theology.

In order to present Christian doctrine Lewis needed, according to Shumaker, "... a fictive analogue for a prepared worldview--an analogue ... which would have at least a semi-realistic credibility ...." With such an analogue he could bring to human perception that which is usually outside normal experience--timeless, spaceless, and non-sensory reality. He found this counterpart in science fantasy, in which the fictive universe can be expanded beyond the usual limitations of human perception. In this expansion Earth may be seen from a cosmic perspective.

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Lewis, therefore, chooses Mars, or Malacandra, as the setting for *Out of the Silent Planet*; Venus, or Perelandra, as the setting for *Perelandra*; and Earth, or Thulcandra, as the setting for *That Hideous Strength*. The time period of the first two novels is contemporary to the time in which Lewis was writing them—just before and during the first part of World War II. The third novel, written in 1945, is set in the relatively near future, or after the war.

In *Out of the Silent Planet* Elwin Ransom, a Cambridge philologist, is captured by Weston, a scientist, and Devine, his financial backer, and taken to Malacandra in a spaceship. There Ransom escapes his captors and lives among the three types of rational creatures, or mnau, of Malacandra: the ñorni (singular, ñorn), the brossa (singular, bross), and the pfifltriggi (singular, pfifltrigg). Besides these creatures there are many eldila (singular, eldil), or creatures like angels. Ransom also meets the Qyarsa (plural, Qyârsâ), or tutelary deity, who rules Malacandra and tells him of Weston’s plans to claim the planet for Earthmen. Ransom then learns that Thulcandra, or Earth, the silent planet, has no communication with the rest of the universe. This separation is a result of the rebellion of Earth’s planetary intelligence, the Bent Qyarsa (Satan) against Meleldil (God). Ransom returns to Earth in the spaceship with Weston and Devine.
Perelandra begins with Ransom's being sent on a special mission to Perelandra in a coffin-sized box supplied by the Oyarsa of Malacandra. Ransom is Maleldil's agent, and he must oppose Weston, the servant of the Bent Oyarsa. In an analogue to the temptation of Eve, they attempt to influence Tinidril, the Green Lady, who is the first woman created on Perelandra. After much disputation, there is a physical battle in which Ransom is victorious although he receives a wound in his heel. Because Ransom defeats Weston, the Green Lady is able to freely choose to obey Maleldil. After a reunion of the Green Lady and her husband, the King, there is a ceremony of thanksgiving for Ransom and of adoration of Maleldil. Then Ransom returns to Earth.

In That Hideous Strength Ransom lives in the village of St. Anne's, where he heads a company formed to oppose the National Institute of Co-ordinated Experiments at Belbury, the N.I.C.E., an organization of scientists used by the Bent Oyarsa. While Mark Studdock, a young sociologist, is drawn into the N.I.C.E., his wife, Jane, joins Ransom's company and uses her psychic powers to help locate the Merlin of Arthurian myth. At Maleldil's bidding Merlin has been kept in a state of suspended animation for centuries in order to allow him to participate in this struggle. Filled with the powers of the planetary intelligences, Merlin brings the curse of Babel upon the Belbury scientists, and they are destroyed. Ransom is then taken back to Perelandra, Mark
and Jane are reunited, and the work of the Bent Oyarsa is temporarily retarded.

Christian theology provides Lewis with themes, and science fantasy provides him with a technique. Fantasy may be defined as "a conscious breaking free from experienced reality"; the term is applied to works which present "unreal characters" in non-existent worlds. Fantasy deliberately presents improbabilities in time, place, character, or object. Science fantasy may be defined as a work which contains "a situation that could not arise in the world we know, but which is hypothesised on the basis of some innovation in science or technology, or pseudo-science or pseudo-technology, whether human or extra-terrestrial in origin." Lewis uses the real planets Mars, Venus, and Earth, but the reader gets a mythical version of them; therefore, Malacandra and Perelandra are unverifiable places. The setting of That Hideous Strength in the future provides an unverifiable time, and supernatural characters and scientific or pseudo-scientific innovations appear in all three novels. Ransom's means of transportation to Malacandra is a type of spaceship that did not exist when Lewis wrote the book, and his means of transportation to Perelandra is a coffin which is "extra-terrestrial


in origin." Also the experiments of the Belbury scientists
in That Hideous Strength produce some scientific innovations,
such as keeping alive the head of an executed man.

In reading science fantasy Lewis found that the world of
outer space, as Wright says, offers the writer a "world of
'otherness,' having its own definable quality just as Norse
myth did." But although science fantasy provided Lewis with
a framework for the trilogy, his version of that form is
unusual in its treatment of space as a place of radiant life
and warmth. 4 A universal background is used to place Thulo-
andra, the silent planet, in perspective and to explain why
it is out of harmony with the rest of the universe. Only in
the setting of another planet is Ransom, the main character
of the trilogy, able to understand that Earth is unique in
the universe because of its fallen state and that, beyond the
orbit of Earth's moon, harmony and joy exist in Deep Heaven.

Once a reader becomes accustomed to the strangeness of
Malacandra, he is apt to feel, as Marjorie Nicolson suggests,
"none of the grotesquerie of Swift's Brobdingnagian world,
none of the terror of Wells' Cavor and Bedford"; he, like
Ransom, is able to feel respect and affection for the intelli-
gent creatures on Malacandra. 5 These attitudes are encouraged
by Lewis' realistic presentation of detail. Lewis gives so

4Wright, p. 23.

5Marjorie Hope Nicolson, Voyages to the Moon (New York,
many facts about the flora and fauna, history, geography, and language of Malacandra that the reader almost feels as if he has lived there.

Throughout the trilogy Lewis is able to use realistic place descriptions to suggest something about the characters associated with those places. Shumaker notes that this is demonstrated in the first chapters of Out of the Silent Planet, when Ransom is captured by Weston and Devine. The house of Weston and Devine contains expensive furniture but no curtains or carpets, and it has stained walls and cluttered rooms; empty champagne bottles, cigars, opened sardine tins, and bread crumbs litter the tables. The description of their house shows how unsatisfactory their lives are. Also, in That Hideous Strength the descriptions of Belbury and St. Anne's reveal much about the people connected with them. At St. Anne's there are beautiful trees and flowers, and the house is comfortably, though not expensively, furnished. There emphasis is given to both beauty and comfort. On the other hand, the Belbury grounds are formal but gaudy and functional without being attractive. The building is furnished in expensive but tasteless furniture, and everywhere the emphasis is on efficiency. Through such descriptions Lewis gives meaning without giving detailed explanations.

The setting of Perelandra, an unfallen world, is an important element in the novel. The sensuous beauty of the

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6Shumaker, pp. 249-251.
planet reveals the joys of an unfallen world—joys which, as Lewis continually reminds the reader, Earth has lost. The setting is in this way symbolic of a way of life. One of the outstanding features of the novel is the description of the planet. As Spacks says,

Lewis has the poet's ability to convey sharp visual scenes; he seizes upon the most vivid elements of Christian legend as well as those of classical mythology... He has the power to visualize brilliantly and to inform his visions with a sense of deep significance...?

One example of this descriptive ability of Lewis is to be found in Ransom's first impressions of Perelandra.

The sky was pure, flat gold like the background of a medieval picture. It looked very distant—as far off as a cirrus [sic] cloud looks from earth. The ocean was gold too, in the offing, flecked with innumerable shadows. The nearer waves, though golden where their summits caught the light, were green on their slopes: first emerald, and lower down a lustrous bottle green, deepening to blue where they passed beneath the shadow of other waves.?

Not all critics are intrigued by Malacandra and Perelandra, however. Sprague De Camp finds Malacandra and Perelandra insipid because of their perfection. He prefers That Hideous Strength because its environment lacks this perfection and because in it Lewis spends less time on description. In contrast to the first two novels, That Hideous Strength is set on Earth, and it has a realistic

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7Spacks, p. 259. 8Lewis, Perelandra, p. 35.
beginning. The first two chapters are so realistic, in fact, that Lewis warns readers in the preface not to be misled by this realism.

I have called this a fairy-tale in the hope that no one who dislikes fantasy may be misled by the first two chapters into reading further, and then complain of his disappointment. If you ask why—intending to write about magicians, devils, pantomime animals, and planetary angels—I nevertheless begin with such hum-drum scenes and persons, I reply that I am following the traditional fairy-tale. We do not always notice its method, because the cottages, castles, woodcutters, and petty kings with which a fairy-tale opens have become for us as remote as the witches and ogres to which it proceeds. But they were not remote at all to the men who made and first enjoyed the stories.10

Events of the novel take place in the area around Bracton College and the English village of Edgestow. This setting is closely associated with the symbols used to carry the meaning of the story. The Arthurian myth11 is connected with the area of Edgestow through the figure of Merlin, who is buried in Bragdon Wood, property of Bracton College.

Despite the realism of the first part of *That Hideous Strength*, the book is not a realistic novel but a myth like *Out of the Silent Planet* and *Perelandra*. In the whole trilogy, including *That Hideous Strength*, the presence of the Oyéreu and the eldila gives "the effect of a timeless and spaceless existence which takes precedence over the


11In this novel the Arthurian myth supplements the silent planet myth because Lewis's cosmic machinery cannot operate fully on Earth without sacrificing credibility. Moorman, pp. 112-113.
contemporary setting. This effect helps to clearly place the trilogy in a mythical context. Lewis has said,

No merely physical strangeness or merely spatial distance will realize the idea of otherness which is what we are always trying to grasp in a story about voyaging through space: you must go into another dimension. To construct plausible and moving 'other worlds' you must draw on the only real 'other world' we know, that of the spirit.

It is this other world of the spirit which Lewis brings to life in these three novels.

In the mythical world to which the setting introduces the reader, events occur that would seem impossible in the world of ordinary time and place. Lewis, a master storyteller who can evoke both suspense and immediacy, makes the story of the trilogy interesting even for those who do not appreciate his themes. Most of Lewis's critics agree that these books have the thrills and suspense of conventional science fantasy. Taken only at this level the trilogy provides enthralling adventure; but this is not all the trilogy has to offer.

The greatness of the theme and the universal application of the basic struggle make the adventures far more real and personal than the merely mechanical perils of John Carter or Professor Cavor: taken on this level . . . the books are in a different class from any other space flight stories...

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12 Wright, p. 60.


The background of this basic struggle is given in *Out of the Silent Planet*, when the Oyarsa of Malacandra tells Ransom of the conflict between the Bent Oyarsa of Earth and Maleldil. The continuing struggle becomes more prominent in *Perelandra* as Ransom and Weston oppose each other. This conflict on *Perelandra* foreshadows the battle in the third novel. Through Weston the Bent Oyarsa tries unsuccessfully to infect Deep Heaven with his evil; after Weston's death, the Bent Oyarsa works through the Belbury scientists and through his eldila. There is an apocalyptic battle between good and evil when the eldila from Deep Heaven come to thwart the Bent Oyarsa's schemes, which defy the order of the cosmic hierarchy.

In *That Hideous Strength* the opposition of good and evil is centered on the conflict between Ransom's company at St. Anne's and the National Institute of Co-ordinated Experiments. The scientists of the N.I.C.E. at Belbury claim to promote state efficiency and remedial treatment of criminals, but they plan to sterilize or liquidate backward groups, establish a police state, and make an intellectual elite the rulers of all. The forces of evil have chosen this group to do their work. Ransom's company has been chosen to serve Maleldil. Lewis still maintains as a primary plot element the opposition of the eldila of Maleldil and the bent eldila, but he narrows this in expression to the opposition between the N.I.C.E. and Ransom's group. A still narrower and more concentrated symbol of this conflict exists in the relationship
of Mark and Jane as they are separated by their involvement in opposing organizations.

The Arthurian myth becomes incorporated into the conflict because both the N.I.C.E. and Ransom's company want the aid of Merlin, who is soon to come out of his long trance. As Wright states, since Arthurian stories suggest that Merlin was put to sleep by enchantment, it is easy to incorporate him in a new story. The Arthurian and silent planet myths are further linked by the suggestion that Arthur's resting place of Avalon is on Perelandra. And Ransom is linked to Arthurian myth by being renamed Mr. Fisher-King. Because of their earthly settings the Arthurian stories lend themselves to adaptation to a fictional situation on Earth. At the same time they can be fitted to Lewis's silent planet myth through the character of Ransom-Mr. Fisher-King.

Moorman notes that the mythical pattern of death and rebirth explains the transformation of Ransom into Mr. Fisher-King. On Perelandra he receives a wound, paralleling the Fisher King's wound, which will not heal, and he is from there on a new person. By using such elements as

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15 Wright, pp. 59, 151.

16 In Arthurian myth the Holy Grail was guarded by the descendants of Joseph of Arimathea. Because of his sins, one of these descendants received a wound which could not be healed. Thereafter the guardian of the Grail was called "Le Roi Pêcheur"—the Sinner King or the Fisher King. Thomas Bulfinch, The Age of Chivalry (New York, 1962), pp. 155-158. See also Jessie L. Weston, From Ritual to Romance (Garden City, 1957), pp. 113-116.
Hansom's being both Fisher King and Pendragon,17 Merlin's involvement with Ransom's company, and the spiritual society of Logres, Lewis by indirection suggests the whole history of the Round Table and a contrast between Logres and Britain. The conflict between the religious society of Logres and the secular society of Britain dominates both the Arthurian stories and That Hideous Strength. The presence of Arthurian characters suggests a search for grace with which to redeem civilization from the secular materialism of the N.I.C.E. Lewis implies that the moral problems of Jane and Mark Studdock are not all that is at stake; instead the issues are of cosmic importance.18 Thus the Arthurian myth is used to suggest the gravity of the conflict and to give magnitude to the struggle.

The adventures of the trilogy are part of a conflict of great importance. As Wright says, in this struggle between good and evil, evil is not just an abstract principle but something with physical characteristics, something which can be met in battle. In a myth which presents the cosmic order in the form of a kingdom, evil is "apocalyptic evil, a final, complete, demonic challenge to the kingdom," but it

17Pendragon is a title rather than a name, meaning "chief leader in battle" or "chief dragon"; it was given to military leaders who exercised kingly powers. Herbert S. Robinson and Knox Wilson, Myths and Legends of All Nations (New York, 1961), p. 199.

18Moorman, pp. 122, 125-126.
is not as strong as divine power, and it never attacks the
supreme powers of the cosmos directly.\textsuperscript{19} The basis for
Lewis's view of the universe at war is found in \textit{Mere Christianity}.

Christianity agrees with Dualism that this universe is
at war. But it does not think this is a war between
independent powers. It thinks it is a civil war, a
rebellion, and that we are living in a part of the
universe occupied by the rebel.

\begin{quote}
\text{Enemy-occupied territory--that is what this world
is. Christianity is the story of how the rightful king
has landed, you might say landed in disguise, and is
calling us all to take part in a great campaign of
sabotage.}\textsuperscript{20}
\end{quote}

All three books of the trilogy are adventure stories
using the mode of science fantasy, but besides providing
excitement the adventures present Christian theology relat-
ing not only to Earth and man but also to the entire universe.
Gilbert Highet finds it entirely appropriate that Lewis's
science fantasy should have moral and intellectual content.
The exploration of space and other worlds is necessarily
involved with religious questions about the Creator, His
purposes in creation, His relation to man and any other intel-
ligent creatures, and man's relation to any other intelligent
creatures.\textsuperscript{21} Lewis has much to say about these questions
through the experiences presented in the trilogy.

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\textsuperscript{19}\textit{Wright}, pp. 103-104.
\textsuperscript{20}\textit{C. S. Lewis, Mere Christianity (New York, 1960)}, p. 36.
In Lewis's cosmic myth the God of the universe is named Maleldil. He is often called Maleldil the Young and is said to live with his father, the Old One. There is also a Third One, but he is known only by name to the inhabitants of the unfallen worlds of Malacandra and Perelandra. Maleldil created all the worlds and made an Oyarsa ruler of each planet. An Oyarsa is an intelligent spirit who, unless confined by Maleldil, lives in Deep Heaven, or space, rather than being restricted to a planet. He is assisted in his rule over a planet by a multitude of eldila, or angel-like creatures.

Ransom learns on Malacandra that the earthly conceptions of the gods Mars and Venus are blurred reflections of the actual Oyaresu as they appear when they assume human forms. The earthly conception is distorted, but it retains such characteristics as the cold, metallic quality of Mars and the warm, maternal quality of Venus. Mercury, Saturn, and Jupiter appear briefly in *That Hideous Strength*, and they, too, are seen as the full statements of the distorted earthly images of them. Ransom learns from the Oyarsa of Malacandra that Earth's Oyarsa

"... became bent. That was before any life came on your world. Those were the Bent Years... when he was not yet bound to Thulcandra but free like us. It was in his mind to spoil other worlds besides his own."

22 The Third One, a parallel to the Holy Spirit of the Christian Trinity, is not needed by these unfallen creatures, who communicate with Maleldil.
He smote your moon . . . and brought the cold death on my harandra before its time . . . We did not leave him so at large for long. There was great war, and we drove him back out of the heavens and bound him in the air of his own world as Maleldil taught us. There doubtless he lies to this hour, and we know no more of that planet: it is silent. We think that Maleldil would not give it up utterly to the Bent One, and there are stories among us that he has taken strange counsel and dared terrible things, wrestling with the Bent One in Thulandra.23

The Bent Gyarsa of Earth has demons or bent aldils to help him carry out his plans; they are the forces of evil, which fight Maleldil and his servants.

Elwin Ransom is the most prominent character in the first two books of the trilogy. Kilby points out a number of similarities between Ransom and Lewis. Both were sedentary scholars, philologists, and bachelors,24 who had war wounds, were fond of swimming, and were opposed to vivisection. At times Ransom's speeches read like Lewis's non-fiction comments, so that when Ransom speaks, the reader may think that he hears a thinly disguised Lewis.25 Lewis perhaps tried to minimize this resemblance26 by having a

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23 Lewis, Out of the Silent Planet, p. 121.
24 Lewis, however, did subsequently marry Helen Joy Davidman Gresham in 1957. See Kilby, pp. 21-22.
25 Ibid., p. 100.
26 Not only is there much of Lewis in Ransom, but also Lewis has said that "tho he did not even realize it at the time, there is much of Charles Williams in his picture of Ransom." Nathan C. Starr, King Arthur Today (Gainesville, 1954), p. 203. Charles Williams (1886-1945) was a British critic, poet, novelist, dramatist, biographer, and theologian. He was a close friend of Lewis and an influence on him.
philologist friend of Ransom, named Lewis, narrate the first two novels.

But whatever resemblance Ransom may have to Lewis is overshadowed by his associations as a Christ figure and as Pendragon and Fisher King. On Perelandra Ransom learns that Maleldil plans to save the planet "not through Himself but through Himself in Ransom" and that even the meaning of his name, Ransom, was planned as part of the pattern in which he is involved.\(^{27}\) Ransom's fight with Weston enables Perelandra to remain unafallen, and as Kilby notes, Ransom's wound from the struggle with Weston parallels Christ's wounds.\(^{28}\)

Ransom's wound is not to be healed until he is taken to Perelandra after the battle in That Hideous Strength. On Thulcandra Ransom will never age or die, but his wound will continue to bleed as long as he remains there. Moorman says that in the silent planet myth Ransom's wound is a symbol of his humanity and a sign of his conflict with evil, and that in the Arthurian myth it connects him to the Fisher King, who was wounded because of his sins. Both Ransom and the Fisher King have roles as spiritual leaders and superior men. In the person of Ransom-Mr. Fisher-King, Lewis shows the relation between Logres and the Eldila.\(^{29}\)

As Maleldil's servant and leader of the company of the faithful in That Hideous Strength, Ransom is called both Mr.

\(^{27}\) Lewis, Perelandra, pp. 145, 147.

\(^{28}\) Kilby, p. 100.

\(^{29}\) Moorman, p. 117.
Fisher-King and Pendragon of Logres. Wright suggests that this joining of Fisher King and Pendragon indicates not only that Ransom is related to Arthurian myth but also that he is a successor of Arthur.\textsuperscript{30} In \textit{That Hideous Strength} Ransom no longer dominates the action; he is withdrawn so as to become more an influence than a participant in the action. Though withdrawn, Ransom is not weak. As Nathan C. Starr points out, Ransom is a man of great power. His contact with the planetary intelligences gives him strength and confidence. But he is not "a disembodied spiritual symbol"; his spiritual importance is balanced by his humanity.\textsuperscript{31} Ransom-Mr. Fisher-King is a representative of Maleldil's power on Earth; his travels enable him to communicate with those in the outer universe. As Moorman states, in this novel Ransom is half-human and half-divine, and his agelessness and strength establish him as an almost mythical character. He is not only the Fisher King of the Grail myth but also the Pendragon, and "his household is the remnant of Logres,"\textsuperscript{32} the ancient Christian society within secular Britain. In his position of leadership of this company Ransom is Arthur's mystical successor.

The impression which Jane Studdock has of Ransom illustrates his mythical qualities.

Of course he was not a boy—how could she have thought so? The fresh skin on his forehead and cheeks and,

\textsuperscript{30}Wright, p. 152.  \textsuperscript{31}Starr, pp. 186-187.  
\textsuperscript{32}Moorman, pp. 112-114.
above all, on his hands, had suggested the idea. But no boy could have so full a beard. And no boy could be so strong. She had expected to see an invalid. Now it was manifest that the grip of those hands would be inescapable, and imagination suggested that those arms and shoulders could support the whole house. ... It came over her, with a sensation of quick fear that this face was of no age at all. She had ... disliked bearded faces except for old men with white hair. But that was because she had long since forgotten the imagined Arthur of her childhood. ... 33

Ransom has a charismatic effect on Jane which immediately breaks through her wish to stay uninvolved. The members of the company and even the animals they keep are somewhat awed by Ransom and are obedient to him.

Just as Ransom has mythical qualities, so has Merlin, who appears only in That Hideous Strength. Both Ransom's company and the N.I.C.E. want the supernatural power that Merlin possesses. For the destruction of his enemies Maleldil plans to work through a man, and the man best suited for this work is Merlin. As Ransom explains to Merlin, Maleldil wants to send the power of the Gyeresu through

"... a man whose mind is opened to be so invaded, ... one who by his own will once opened it. ... [It] if were my task, I would not refuse it. But he will not suffer a mind that still has its virginity to be so violated. And through a black magician's mind their purity neither can nor will operate. One who has dabbed ... [in magic] in the days when dabbling had not begun to be evil, or was only just beginning ... and also a Christian man and a penitent. A tool ... good enough to be so used and not too good. In all these Western parts of the world there was only one man who had lived in those days and could still be recalled. You—"34

33 Lewis, That Hideous Strength, pp. 142-143.

34 Ibid., p. 291. The fourth and fifth sets of ellipses are Lewis's.
Merlin's magic is insufficient by itself, but combined with the forces of the Oyarsa, it is vitally important in confounding the satanic conspiracy. (Although these forces give him additional strength, he is not merely the pawn of the planetary intelligences.) Not only Merlin's magical powers but also his earthiness is emphasized, and his knowledge of the properties of herbs and his influence over animals are indicative of Merlin's close contact with nature. Moorman says that Merlin is a representative of the power of nature both in his physical appearance and in his ability to make nature work for him. Because of his physical vitality and his magical power, Merlin is able to become an active force of good, as Ransom, with a physical wound and a half-divine character, becomes a passive force.35

In the first two novels of the trilogy Edward Weston is the Bent Oyarsa's chief representative and Ransom's opponent. He is a brilliant physicist, whose goal is for man to colonize the universe. The Oyarsa of Malacandra tells Weston that his evil nature could be cured; but Weston rejects this idea, and on Perelandra he delivers himself completely into the power of the Bent Oyarsa. As Weston calls on the demon to possess him, Ransom sees him fall into convulsions, screaming and rolling on the ground. Later Ransom becomes convinced that "...this, in fact, was not a man: that Weston's body was

35Moorman, pp. 119-121.
kept, walking and undecaying, in Perelandra by some wholly
different kind of life, and that Weston himself was gone. 36
Weston is referred to thereafter as "the Un-man." Walsh says
that Weston is Lewis's "full-length portrait" of damnation.
If Lewis does not concentrate on evoking a feeling of pity
for Weston, it is because Weston reaches his doom by the
accumulated choices of his entire life. 37

Clinton W. Trowbridge disagrees with Walsh, saying that
Weston is not a picture of human damnation but a picture of
Satan; he says that Weston is a complete villain for whom the
reader feels no compassion because he does not see Weston's
damnation resulting from acts of free will. 38 However, Lewis
seems to suggest that Weston is satanic only because he has
chosen to be satanic through his own free will. At his first
appearance Weston has already lost much of his humanity, but
he completes the process on Perelandra. Ransom explains what
has happened to Weston when he says,

Up till that moment, whenever he had thought of Hell,
he had pictured the lost soul as being still human; now,
... pity was almost swallowed up in horror . . .
If the remains of Weston were . . . speaking through the
lips of the Un-man, then Weston was not now a man at
all. The forces which had begun, perhaps years ago, to

36 Lewis, Perelandra, p. 110.

37 Chad Walsh, C. S. Lewis: Apostle to the Skeptics (New

38 Clinton W. Trowbridge, "The Twentieth Century British
Supernatural Novel," unpublished doctoral dissertation,
Department of English, University of Florida, Gainesville,
Florida, 1958, p. 309.
eat away his humanity had now completed their work. The intoxicated will which had been slowly poisoning the intelligence and the affections had now at last poisoned itself and the whole psychic organism had fallen to pieces. 39

After Weston's death on Perelandra the Bent Cyarsa works through the scientists of the N.I.C.E. Of these, only the individuals in the inner circle know that their orders come from the revitalized head of an executed man. Within the inner circle only a few know that this head is controlled by demons. The two leaders of the N.I.C.E., Wither and Frost, like Weston, are symbols of a loss of humanity. Their names are descriptive. Frost is referred to as a clocklike figure, cold, unemotional, inhuman. Wither progresses to damnation, like Weston and Frost, by choice:

What had been in his far-off youth a merely aesthetic repugnance to realities that were crude or vulgar, had deepened and darkened, year after year, into a fixed refusal of everything that was in any degree other than himself. 40

The Belbury scientists are cold, mechanistic, and materialistic; they are true representatives of the Bent Cyarsa whom they serve. They show on a human level what Lewis considers hell to be like; greed, fear, hatred, and lust for power are the predominant emotions, and extreme egoism leads each person to seek the destruction of all outside himself. This egoism destroys all human relationships and eventually makes its victims inhuman.

39 Lewis, Perelandra, p. 130.
40 Lewis, That Hideous Strength, p. 353.
The ordinary mortals of the trilogy vary widely from book to book. In *Out of the Silent Planet* the mortals of Malacandra are the hrossa, who are hunters and poets; the séroni, who are scientists and philosophers; and the pfif-triggi, who are mechanical workers and inventors. Although these creatures look like beasts rather than humans, they are not monsters but rational creatures with immortal souls. These inhabitants of Malacandra are made to seem credible chiefly because of Ransome's attitude toward them. His sensitivity and perceptivity lead him from fear to acceptance of these rational creatures so physically unlike man. Ransome's attitude helps the reader to accept these creatures as natural inhabitants of Malacandra.

In *Perelandra* the only major character besides Ransome and Weston is Tinidril or the Green Lady, the "Eve" of Perelandra. As Tinidril talks with Weston and Ransome, she reveals both her innocence and intelligence. She is a partially symbolic figure, since she represents all the rational creatures of Perelandra who will be her descendants and since she is responsible for the decision that will make her world a fallen one or leave it unfallen. The "Adam" of Perelandra, the King, Tor, who appears only in the last chapter, is also a partially symbolic figure. Not only is he a parallel of the earthly Adam but also he reminds Ransome of Christ.

For the resemblance was, in its own fashion, infinite, so that almost you could wonder at finding no sorrows in his brow and no wounds in his hands and feet . . . .
But here, where His live image, like Him within and without, made by His own bare hands out of the depth of divine artistry, His masterpiece of self-portraiture . . . walked and spoke before Ransom's eyes, it could never be taken for more than an image.\textsuperscript{41}

\textbf{That Hideous Strength} contains many characters, of which two of the most important are Mark and Jane Studdock, a young married couple. Mark is a sociology instructor who wants desperately to be accepted by the important people of Bracton College and of the M.I.C.E. Jane is a woman of modern ideas on marriage and women's rights. Both characters are presented sympathetically and realistically in their youth and inexperience, their vanity and presumption. They are perhaps the most individualized and most complex of the characters in the trilogy; they are dynamic characters who are changed by the events of the novel. Walsh calls Mark "the epitome of all nervous and ambitious young instructors" and says that Lewis is at his best portraying instructors, scholars, and scientists.\textsuperscript{42}

Many readers find that \textbf{That Hideous Strength} reveals more skillful characterization and treatment of human relationships than the first two novels.\textsuperscript{43} W. R. Irwin suggests, however, that in the trilogy as a whole most of the characters are simple. There is a variety of characters,

\textsuperscript{41}Lewis, \textit{Perelandra}, pp. 205-206.

\textsuperscript{42}Walsh, pp. 145, 148.

especially in *That Hideous Strength*, but most of them are not complex. They are typical of characters in myth in that they are generally acceptable or repellent at sight, and their allegiances largely determine their natures.\(^4\) Mark and Jane are the primary exceptions to this general tendency because they are in the process of conversion throughout the novel, and their allegiances change.

Some of the characters of the trilogy are to a large extent symbols of ideas and attitudes. For example, Andrew MacPhee of Ransom's company represents an excess of rationalism. As symbols, many of Lewis's characters serve quickly to suggest whole ideas. Most of the characters are, however, more complex than flat allegorical figures; most of them are at least two-dimensional in that they are symbols of ideas or groups of people and at the same time individuals. For example, MacPhee is not just an epitome of the rationalist; he is also a loyal friend of Ransom who is able to support the plans of the company although he does not fully understand or approve of the methods they must use in their fight.

Lewis not only has mythical settings, adventures, and characters but also makes use of archetypal imagery and plot patterns. *Archetypal imagery* may be defined as follows:

Some literary symbols are associated with what seem to be universal human experiences, and they act as archetypes of those experiences: day and night, for instance, or summer and winter, representing vitality

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\(^4\)Irwin, p. 573.
and stillness, youth and age. Great typical images like these are the stuff of myths...\textsuperscript{45}

According to Thrall and Hibbard, the term \textit{archetype} may be applied to

\ldots an \textit{image}, a descriptive detail, a \textit{plot} pattern, or a character type that occurs frequently in literature, \textit{myth}, religion, or folklore and is, therefore, believed to evoke profound emotions in the reader because it awakens a primordial image in his unconscious memory and thus calls into play \ldots strong responses.\textsuperscript{46}

Wright finds that the use of archetypes is one of the major patterns in Lewis's myth and that the archetypes he uses include "the quest, the company, the ring, the stone, \ldots the forest, the western islands \textit{or} the numinous place.\textsuperscript{47}

The archetype of the forest is central, according to Wright, on the level of the vegetable world; it is "the symbol of the living earth, the primal state of creation." In \textit{That Hideous Strength} Merlin has been under Bragdon Wood during his trance. This forest is extremely old and seems to have a life of its own, which is unchanged by what happens around it; it seems to be "part of the original, archetypal woods.\textsuperscript{48}
The attitude of the N.I.C.E. scientists toward the trees in Bragdon Wood in particular and forests in general is revealed by Filostrato, an N.I.C.E. official.

\textsuperscript{45}Marlies K. Danziger and W. Stacy Johnson, \textit{An Introduction to Literary Criticism} (Boston, 1961), p. 31.
\textsuperscript{46}Thrall and Hibbard, p. 32.
\textsuperscript{47}Wright, pp. 143-144, 95-96. \textsuperscript{48}\textit{Ibid.}, pp. 117-118.
"The forest tree is a weed. But I tell you I have seen the civilized tree in Persia... It was made of metal... No leaves to fall, no twigs, no birds building nests, no muck and mess... I foresee nothing but the art tree all over the earth. In fact, we clean the planet."49

The rejection of the forest, a symbol of living, productive nature, is an indication of the demonic characteristics of the members of the N.I.C.E. On the other hand, the members of Ransom's company show their love of nature by their concern for the animals that live at St. Anne's and by their care for the trees, flowers, and vegetables which grow there.

Another archetype relates to the local centers of cosmic activity scattered throughout the hierarchy. According to Wright, the image of the company in Lewis's myth denotes such a center. When there is a threat to the kingdom, a group of people forms to end the danger. These people do not choose their leader, and their leader does not choose them; rather the deities they serve choose them all as a core of believers who are faced with a particular task.50 Ransom and the company he leads represent the remnant of Logres. Fuller identifies Logres as "the ancient Christian realm in the heart of England."51 Greennan says that Logres represents "... that traditional wisdom and goodness inherent in England, which from time to time in her history must rise to

49Lewis, That Hideous Strength, p. 172.

50Wright, pp. 99-100.

51Fuller, p. 159.
rescue her from her less attractive propensities represented by the 'Spirit of Britain.'

Logres, represented by Ransom's company at St. Anne's, is in conflict with Britain, represented by the N.I.C.E. scientists at Belbury. The company at St. Anne's upholds Christian virtues and doctrines, has a respect for individual human worth and a love of nature, and has an appreciation for both the natural and the supernatural. The Belbury scientists reject God and attempt to make a few men supreme; they care nothing for individuals, animals, or any other form of life. In their mechanization they become inhuman, and they make everything they touch unnatural. As Moorman says, Lewis borrows the conflict between Logres, or the Arthurian ideal, and Britain, or secular reality, from Arthurian myth. (However, it comes to him through the poetry of Charles Williams rather than the usual Arthurian sources.) In Lewis's work this conflict becomes a manifestation of the war between good and evil on Thulcandra. Although there is no distinct or prominent image of the company in the first two novels of the trilogy, it is very important in That Hideous Strength.

Although the cosmic kingdom is unified, it is so huge that the individual is usually unable to see the meaning of each activity within the pattern of the universe as it forms a part of the Great Dance. The Great Dance is the harmonious

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52 Grennan, p. 393.  
53 Moorman, pp. 113-116.
movement of heavenly bodies and living creatures to which all things are ultimately gathered; Ransom is told that it has gone on from the beginning of the universe and that each world is a principal part of the Great Dance and every movement is a master movement. As Wright points out, the individual may be able to see only one small part of that total pattern in the form of a personal quest. This quest is an archetypal pattern of action. Ransom has a quest, or perilous journey, on Perelandra when he must defeat Weston's efforts to make Perelandra a fallen world like Thulsandra. His deed becomes a part of the Great Dance. In That Hideous Strength Merlin has a quest through time. He has been preserved in a trance for hundreds of years so that he may return to receive the eldilic forces because of his strength as both a magician and a Christian.54

Jane and Mark Studdock may also be said to have quests. Each has a perilous journey in his progression from a state of unbelief to an acceptance of Maleldil. In an attempt to win Mark's allegiance, the members of the inner circle of the N.I.C.E. take Mark into their confidence. But this fails, and as he faces death, he rejects all that the N.I.C.E. stands for. Jane also must go through danger before she is able to reject her selfishness and learn obedience. They feel that they are unable to search directly for Maleldil's

54 Wright, pp. 110-112.
will: Mark needs Jane's help and Jane needs Ransom's help as a preparation for obedience to Maleldil. All of these quests and deeds make up part of the Great Dance.

Another archetype used by Lewis is the numinous place, a place which arouses in the beholder wonder, awe, and a sense of inadequacy because of its association with divinity. Although it is not of great importance in the trilogy, this archetype is found throughout Lewis's fiction. Wright states that usually in Lewis's myths such centers are located beyond the sea. Little attention is given to the sea as a symbol, but there is an aura of magic associated with lands beyond the sea. Europeans' fascination for western lands, such as "the Islands of the Blessed or the lost continent of Atlantis," is evoked by these associations. Numinor, called "the true West" in That Hideous Strength, is a land which was at height before magic became associated with evil. It was not a home of the gods, but there the gods were well known and the lore of Deep Heaven was talked about. Numinor may possibly be equated with Atlantis.55

Another land beyond the sea is mentioned in That Hideous Strength when Ransom says that Arthur is on Perelandra in the land of Abhalljin, which is beyond the seas of Lur. This is a realm where death is unknown. As Wright states, the image of the land beyond the sea has the qualities of remoteness.

55Wright, pp. 95-96, 59.
and mystery. "It is thus well suited as a place for numinous beings to dwell, while yet allowing the possibility of contact with the lesser ranks of the hierarchy."\textsuperscript{56}

Although Perelandra is not solely the abode of the gods, Lewis suggests that it has a numinous quality by linking it with the garden of the Hesperides, which has associations of gold, green, and red apples, of the far western islands, and of a garden of the gods. While on Perelandra Ransom sees

\ldots a strange heraldically coloured tree loaded with yellow fruits and silver leaves. Round the base of the indigo stem was coiled a small dragon covered with scales of red gold. He recognized the garden of the Hesperides at once.\textsuperscript{57}

Perelandra not only has a numinous quality but also has the qualities of a paradise; it is, therefore, a version of the archetype of an Eden or paradisal world. Northrup Frye states that a literary Eden before the fall has wooded landscapes, valleys, and brooks, and its predominant colors are green and gold.\textsuperscript{58} Mircea Eliade adds that in Paradise, animals and men are at peace, and they understand each other's languages. There is food in abundance, and because of the accessibility of the gods, men have highly spiritual lives.\textsuperscript{59}

\textsuperscript{56}Ibid., pp. 97-98. \textsuperscript{57}Lewis, \textit{Perelandra}, p. 95.
\textsuperscript{58}Frye, pp. 200-201.
Perelandra has these characteristics of the paradisiacal world. Its floating islands are heavily wooded, and valleys and hills are formed as the waves change the shapes of the islands. The islands have abundant supplies of exotic food, and the water of the ocean is drinkable. The Green Lady is attended by animals that she can communicate with, and she hears the voice of Maleldil guiding and teaching her. Some of Ransom's first impressions of this world are of gold and green colors, but he thinks that the "very names of green and gold . . . are too harsh for the tenderness, the muted iridescence, of the warm, maternal, delicately gorgeous world."

Along with other archetypes, Lewis refers to an archetypal language, which he calls Old Solar. Wright states that such an archetypal language is more basic than archetypal objects because it is the essence of all relationships; in this language "every image is an archetype." The power of an archetypal language is demonstrated in That Hideous Strength when Dr. Dimble, one member of Ransom's company, speaks in Old Solar, the original language of the universe:

... great syllables of words that sounded like castles came out of his mouth. . . . it was as if the words spoke themselves through him from some strong place at a distance—or as if they were not words at all but present operations of God, the planets, and the Pendragon. For this was the language spoken before the Fall and beyond the Moon and the meanings were not given to the syllables by chance, or skill, or long tradition, but

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60 Lewis, Perelandra, p. 36. 61 Wright, pp. 122-123.
truly inherent in them . . . This was Language her-
self, as she first sprang at Maleldil's bidding . . . .

Language in general is given attention all through the
trilogy. For example, Weston gains eloquence as he gives
himself over to the Bent Oyarza, and the members of the
N.I.C.E. deliberately misuse language so as to hide their
motives and aims from the public while they are gaining
power. The Un-man knows how to use language effectively; at
the beginning of his death struggle with Ransom he tells
Ransom to expect no help from Maleldil, and then he shouts,
"Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani." As he hears these words
Ransom is sure that this is

. . . perfect Aramaic of the First Century. The Un-man
was not quoting; it was remembering. These were the
very words spoken from the Cross, treasured through all
those years in the burning memory of the outcast crea-
ture which had heard them, and now brought forward in
hideous parody . . . .

In addition, Merlin knows some of Old Solar because he was a
member of an organization of magicians called the Atlantean
Circle. These magicians at times contacted images of the
planetary deities and learned secrets from them. In this way
Merlin knows Old Solar and the names of the Oyéreau. Finally,
the Belbury scientists are defeated by the confusion of lan-
guage which Merlin, empowered by the Oyéreau, creates at the
N.I.C.E. banquet when he invokes the curse of Babel.

62 Lewis, That Hideous Strength, pp. 228-229.
63 Lewis, Perelandra, p. 153.
In using the archetypes of the forest, the numinous place, the quest, the company, and Eden, and the complex of images suggested by an archetypal language, Lewis relates his fiction to a whole body of previously existing literature and clarifies his themes.

Lewis's choice and depiction of setting, events, characters, and imagery all serve to bring his themes to life. The themes he is concerned with are important because they concern some of the fundamental choices and decisions of all men. Certainly many people do not agree with Lewis's ideas about the universal hierarchy of order and its system of values or of the relation of myth to reality or of man's relation to God as a creature of free will; however, Lewis does suggest through fictional incidents and characters some of the problems which men must face. As Wright says, religious concepts and problems are necessarily involved in any myth which possesses a cosmic framework. Even when a mythmaker is primarily concerned with telling an entertaining story, he still finds that theological principles are an integral part of a hierarchic cosmos. Lewis's themes are to be found frequently in other myths, such as those about Prometheus and about Pandora. Lewis's version of these themes may differ from many other versions, but in each treatment, religious implications are important.

\(^{64}\) Wright, pp. 168-170.
Just as the problems which Lewis deals with are not new, neither are the ideas he expresses about these problems. He draws on Christian theology as shaped and illustrated by St. Paul, Augustine, Aquinas, Dante, Milton, and a host of other theologians and poets. But he does add something to these ideas through his presentation. As Shumaker says,

Lewis succeeds in making a body of reasoned theological doctrine perceptually available in quasi-realistic fiction. By embodying the doctrines in meaningful situations which coalesce as myth . . ., he has contrived to transpose his opinions into images and thus to resist a temptation to which many propaganda novelists succumb, the urge to drive every perception home by logical assertion.65

Lewis discusses some of his ideas about these themes in such books as The Abolition of Man, The Problem of Pain, and Mere Christianity; in the trilogy he enhances these same ideas by presenting them in imaginative form. As Moorman says, Lewis translates Christian concepts into mythical terms without distorting the Christian ideas. His silent planet myth allows him to present in fictional form basic Christian doctrines without reference to Christian symbols.66

One of the themes which runs through the trilogy is the idea that myth is based on reality. The experiences of Ransom and of Jane and Mark Studdock lead them to accept Lewis's own view of myth as a means of presenting truth. Ransom learns that the distinctions between myth, history, and fact are to be found only on Earth, where man has lost a universal

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65Shumaker, p. 254.  
perspective. On Perelandra Ransom feels that he is a part of what would be called myth on Earth. Instead of stating his views about the relation between myth and reality, Lewis lets his characters become aware of these ideas. And just as the characters' awareness increases, so the reader's awareness may also increase. As Nicolson states, Lewis produces myth of such descriptive credibility and intellectual vitality that he often convinces the reader of the reality of the myth.\textsuperscript{67}

In the trilogy Lewis demonstrates how evil comes from the abuse of free will. He presents characters making the choices which inevitably determine their situations for the rest of eternity, and these choices reflect the will of the individual in his emphasis on either self or God. On Perelandra there are fixed lands on which the King and the Green Lady may not stay overnight because of the command of Maleldil. Kilby states that this command may suggest that certain things are commanded by God so that individuals may learn obedience. Or the fixed lands may represent man's reliance on himself whereas the floating islands represent man's reliance on God's direction.\textsuperscript{68} In Weston's temptation of the Green Lady, Lewis is presenting views about the significance of free will, the fall experienced on Thulcandra, and the redemption of man after the fall. Because Ransom stops

\textsuperscript{67}Nicolson, p. 254. \textsuperscript{68}Kilby, pp. 99-100.
Weston, the Green Lady is free to choose whether to obey Maleldil. Ransom tells the Green Lady that because of the fallen condition of Earth, redemption was necessary; though good came from this action, much was lost. He says,

"Whatever you do, He will make good of it. But not the good He had prepared for you if you had obeyed Him. That is lost for ever. The first King and first Mother of our world did the forbidden thing; and He brought good of it in the end. But what they did was not good; and what they lost we have not seen."69

Lewis creates a myth which accounts for the fall of man, and the failures of Earth are revealed by contrast with the un-fallen worlds of Malacandra and Perelandra.

Ransom is able to see Earth in its true state only after he is in another world. Earth is out of harmony with the rest of the universe because it has lost sight of the universal hierarchy of order and system of values. One indication of Earth's misplaced values is man's elevation of science to the position of a god. Many readers misinterpret Lewis's myth and think that he is attacking science as something that is entirely evil. For instance, De Camp says that Lewis has

"... a mystical, anti-scientific point of view ... His favorite cockshies are materialists, people who deem themselves 'modern' or 'progressive,' and most of all scientists, to whom he attributes a frightful set of bizarre beliefs, perverted ideals, and sinister intentions."70

Deasy states that Lewis attacks all science because the only kind of science he depicts is godless and dehumanizing, and

69Lewis, _Perelandra_, p. 121. 70De Camp, pp. 82-83.
because he nowhere suggests Christianizing the N.I.C.E.

Furthermore, Lewis seems to be against progress. He deals in monolithic simplicities, and his inclusion of the Arthurian element in That Hideous Strength indicates Lewis’s nostalgia for another age.\footnote{Philip Deasy, "God, Space, and C. S. Lewis," Commonwealth, LXVIII (July 25, 1958), 422-423.}

There are several misinterpretations in these statements. Lewis does not suggest Christianizing the N.I.C.E. because such a project could only be done on an individual basis, and Weston and the Belbury scientists are individuals who have deliberately chosen the lives they lead; they have called on the macroses, or demons, to give them leadership. They have rejected God for so long that they are almost inhuman. Lewis’s emphasis on individual morality and decision is demonstrated when Mark Studdock rejects the N.I.C.E. and is rescued by the forces of good. Also, Lewis’s desire is not for a return to a past age but a return to virtues which may be more clearly seen in times other than the present. If Lewis seems to deal in monolithic simplicities, it must be remembered that he is writing myth rather than realistic or naturalistic fiction.

Finally, godless science is not the only kind Lewis presents. As Victor Hamm states, the sacerd are Lewis’s ideal intellectuals. They know much about science, but they are not pompous nor do they try to wrap science in a magical and esoteric atmosphere. Science is a means to an end for them,
not an end in itself. Malacandra is not primitive; but as it has developed, it has maintained the proper hierarchy of values.\textsuperscript{72} This proper integration of all kinds of knowledge has not been maintained on Earth. Therefore, the Bent Cyar'sa is able to influence some men to consider knowledge an end in itself. And then through his leadership their lust for power and for self-exaltation is apt to replace spiritual values.

According to Spacks, because of the modern "exaltation of science to a myth," the novelist wishing to object to something in this view must find a counter-myth; Lewis draws upon the Christian tradition for the basis of his counter-myth.\textsuperscript{73} As Walsh explains, Lewis is not anti-scientific, and he does not suggest that scientists are undermining humanity. But he does suggest that enemies of humanity would "claim the prestige of science." It is also important to note that the Belbury scientists do very little scientific research; their actions are closer to those of a political conspiracy or "a convention of witches."\textsuperscript{74} Lewis does suggest that science must not be an end in itself but should be subordinate to ethical values.

Rather than dismissing science as a manifestation of evil, Lewis suggests that science might even provide a solution for the problems it presently creates. A regenerate

\textsuperscript{72}Victor M. Hamm, "Mr. Lewis in Perelandra," Thought, Fordham University Quarterly, XX (June, 1945), 285-288.
\textsuperscript{73}Spacks, p. 237.
\textsuperscript{74}Walsh, pp. 129-133.
science would remember the distinction between "Thou" and "It," and it would "buy knowledge at a lower cost than that of life." In the trilogy the idolatry of science is merely an example of how Earth has misplaced values because it has been cut off from the rest of the universe by its fallen state.

In addition to the deification of science, Lewis presents other examples of warped values prevalent on Earth. According to Lewis, there is "... a real Right and Wrong. People may be sometimes mistaken about them, ... but they are not a matter of mere taste and opinion ... " Lewis presents a number of characters who reject this idea as a result of sins of pride and selfishness. The Belbury scientists want to make a few men gods, to dominate the universe, and to live forever while killing other species and most men. Jane wants to live her life without involvement with God or other people; she is unwilling to share herself with anyone. Mark suppresses his ideas and principles because his supreme goal is to be accepted by the inner group of any larger group of which he is a part.

Lewis elevates the story of the conversion of Mark and Jane into a cosmic battle between good and evil. As Moorman states, their frustrations and dilemmas are related to

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75 C. S. Lewis, The Abolition of Man (New York, 1947), pp. 47-49.
76 Lewis, More Christianity, p. 6.
universal moral issues. When they learn spiritual obedience, they are able to understand each other and to sacrifice for each other.77 The struggle between good and evil is fought on several levels and in several ways. Maleldil and the elders fight the Bent Oyarsa and his demons, Ransom's company, or Logres, opposes the Belbury scientists, and Jane and Mark are separated so that they may be brought back together and to God.

Lewis is primarily concerned with the individual, and he largely ignores Christianity in society. According to Walsh, Lewis feels that he is not the one best qualified to treat this topic. He considers the survival of individual Christian commitment in a non-Christian world more crucial than bringing Christianity to bear on broad social problems. He suggests that individuals should each work at applying Christian principles to whatever they do because it is only when many individuals become Christians that there will be a Christian society.78

Although the trilogy is ostensibly removed from the modern world, it has much to reveal about that world. Lewis sees Christianity being replaced by secularism, and he wants a return to an emphasis on religious values and the doctrines and practices of the Christian faith. He reveals modern man living in uncertainty and without stable ethical values.

77Moorman, pp. 152, 155. 78Walsh, pp. 372-373.
With subtlety and symbolic power he reveals his convictions through the experiences of his characters, and his mythopoetic imagination is so inventive and perceptive that his view of the cosmos comes to life.
CHAPTER IV
THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA

The seven volumes of the chronicles of Narnia, published from 1950 to 1956, are The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe, Prince Caspian, The Voyage of the "Dawn Treader," The Silver Chair, The Horse and His Boy, The Magician's Nephew, and The Last Battle. The first four volumes form a cycle of consecutive adventures. The Horse and His Boy is a story emphasizing Narnian characters rather than the English children of the other books, and it is set in the days depicted at the end of The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe. The last two books, The Magician's Nephew and The Last Battle, form a frame for the other stories in their description of the creation and the destruction of Narnia, Lewis's mythical country.

The books are called children's books, but Lewis's comments indicate that in his opinion they are not for children only. He objects to the convention of apologizing for adult enjoyment of children's literature by saying,

No book is really worth reading at the age of ten which is not equally (and often far more) worth reading at the age of fifty—except, of course, books of information. The only imaginative works we ought to grow out of are those which it would have been better not to have read at all.

Lewis points out that it is a recent idea that fantasy is

1Lewis, "On Stories," p. 100.
just for children; most of the great fantasies and fairy tales were written not for children but for everyone. He says that books for children should contain the elements of adult imagination which are shared with children; children should be treated as equals, and what is written with them in mind should be worthy of the attention of adults. When he wrote the Narnia series he chose to write fairy tales because that form seemed ideal for what he had to say about Christian events and doctrine. He thought that stories in this form could remove Christianity from "stained-glass and Sunday school associations" and make its power evident. Thus it could appeal to both children and adults without the inhibitions of a reverent atmosphere and stock responses about religious feelings.

Narnia is not a mythical version of a planet or a country somewhere on Earth but a separate world which exists in a different dimension from Earth. Narnia is a world in itself. It may be in a sense an echo or reflection of Earth, although it is not a reproduction of it. One critic has called it a dream country which is "a simplified and ennobled version of the human world . . . ."

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2 Lewis, An Experiment in Criticism, p. 70.
In *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* the four Peven-sie children, Peter, Susan, Edmund, and Lucy, find an old wardrobe in the home of their uncle, Professor Digory Kirke. They climb into it to hide from some visitors, and suddenly they find themselves in Narnia. To prevent the fulfillment of a prophecy about four human children setting things right in Narnia, the White Witch, who tries to rule Narnia, manages to tempt Edmund to betray his brother and sisters into her power. This plan is not fully carried out, so she plans to kill Edmund and leave only three children. Then Aslan, the golden lion who is creator and lord of Narnia, offers to die for Edmund. Aslan is killed by the witch and her monsters, but he returns to life; a battle follows in which the witch is defeated. The four children rule Narnia for several years; then on a hunting trip they explore some territory which they vaguely remember, and suddenly they are back in the wardrobe in their uncle's house.

In *Prince Caspian* the four children are pulled by supernatural forces into Narnia while sitting at a railway station a year after their Narnian adventures. There they find in ruins the castle they had inhabited many years ago by Narnian time. They soon learn that they are to help Prince Caspian replace his uncle, the usurper King Miraz, as ruler of Narnia. After a battle in which Caspian's forces are victorious, Aslan explains that Caspian is a descendant of the Telmarines, a group of humans who entered Narnia from a
cave on Earth and became Narnian rulers. Aslan then returns the Pevensie children to Earth.

In *The Voyage of the "Dawn Treader*" Lucy and Edmund Pevensie and their disagreeable cousin Eustace Scrubb find themselves drawn into a picture of a ship at sea. They are then on the *Dawn Treader* with Caspian, who is sailing to the world's end to find seven noblemen sent out by King Miraz. A series of adventures leads them to all seven men. Also during the trip Eustace is turned into a dragon. He is then able to recognize his human faults, and when Aslan returns him to a human form, Eustace has been transformed spiritually as well as physically. As they reach the world's end, one of Caspian's subjects, Reepicheep the Mouse, is allowed to enter Aslan's country, and Lucy, Edmund, and Eustace are returned to Earth by Aslan.

In *The Silver Chair* Eustace Scrubb and a schoolmate, Jill Pole, go through a gate in a stone wall behind their school and enter Narnia. They soon learn that they must find the son of Caspian, Prince Rilian, who is under an enchantment. With Puddleglum the Marsh-wiggle as guide they go through the country of the giants and then under the city of the giants. There under the ground they find Rilian and a host of gnomes enchanted by the witch. They help free Rilian and destroy the witch, thus freeing all the gnomes too. Rilian is returned to Narnia, and Jill and Eustace are returned to Earth.
The events depicted in *The Horse and His Boy* take place during the reign of the four Pevensie children, which is described in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*. The Narnian talking horses Bree and Hwin help a young Calormene girl, Aravis, and a young boy, Shasta, escape from Calormen to Narnia. In their escape they learn of the attack planned by Prince Rabadash of Calormen against Narnia and its neighboring ally, Archenland. Upon arrival in Narnia, Shasta warns the people of Archenland and Narnia and then helps them fight Rabadash. After the defeat of the Calormenes, Shasta learns that he is really the son of King Lune of Archenland; he had been kidnapped as a baby and taken to Calormen. Now named Cor, he is welcomed back by his father and twin brother, Corin, and Aravis is adopted into their family.

In *The Magician's Nephew* young Digory Kirke and Polly Plummer accidentally stumble into the attic study of Digory's Uncle Andrew. The cowardly old man, a magician, takes advantage of the children to carry out an experiment he does not dare try himself. He gives them brilliant yellow and green rings which take them from one world to another. First they find themselves in a wood between the Worlds. Then they go to the old, dying world of Charn, where they awaken Jadis, the evil queen of Charn, from an enchantment. In spite of their efforts to leave her behind, she returns to London with them. And as they grab her to return her to Charn, Digory and Polly find themselves in Narnia with Jadis, Uncle Andrew,
a London cabby, and his horse. Aslan is just creating Narnia as they arrive. Because humans have brought evil, in the form of Jadis, into Narnia, Aslan decrees that they must help restrain that evil. Digory is sent to get a special apple from which a tree will grow that will limit Jadis's power for a while. The wife of Frank, the cabby, is then brought to Narnia, and they are crowned King and Queen. Polly, Digory, and Uncle Andrew are then returned to Earth.

In *The Last Battle*, Shift the Ape forces Puzzle the Donkey to wear a lion's skin. In this disguise, Puzzle is used by Shift and some men from the country of Calormen to the south of Narnia to represent Aslan and issue commands to entice the Narnians into slavery to the Calormenes. Prince Tirian of Narnia, a descendant of Caspian, prays for the assistance of Earth children, and Eustace and Jill soon arrive. They try to recruit Narnians to fight, but most of them will not oppose the Calormene soldiers. With few forces, Tirian attempts to rid Narnia of the enemy. The battle seems to be going against Tirian when Aslan appears. Then there is a Judgment Day with the faithful being taken into Aslan's country. At the time of their deaths on Earth, Peter, Edmund, Lucy, their Uncle Digory, and "Aunt" Polly join the Narnians in Aslan's country. (Susan cannot join the others for she has lost all interest and belief in Narnia.)

Narnian time and space are not correlated to Earthly time and space, but when one is summoned to enter Narnia,
there is no problem about getting there. On one occasion
the Pevensie children enter Narnia through a wardrobe, at
another time a picture frame provides a means for getting to
the mythical land, and at another time magic rings are used.
The ways to Narnia are many, but they are not always open.

As Professor Kirke tells the Pevensie children,

"I don't think it will be any good trying to go back
through the wardrobe door . . . . You won't get into
Narnia again by that route . . . . Yes, of course
you'll get back to Narnia again some day . . . . But
don't go trying to use the same route twice. Indeed,
don't try to get there at all. It'll happen when
you're not looking for it."5

There is no way of predicting where one will arrive in
Narnia or how much time has passed there since an earlier
visit. For example, when Peter, Susan, Edmund, and Lucy
return to their own world from their first trip to Narnia,
they have been gone less than an hour, but they have lived
in Narnia for years. They return to Narnia a year later by
Earthly time, but many years have passed in Narnia.

One of the main connections between Narnia and the
human world, according to Wright, seems to be human beings,
for Narnia must be ruled by them because they helped bring
evil into Narnia. The full time span of Narnia from crea-
tion to destruction is given, but everything between is not
fully described. All the major events of Narnian history
are bound up in the stories of the children. But gaps of

5C. S. Lewis, The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe (New
time between these events are skipped over.\textsuperscript{6} The children help keep order in Narnia, but the ways in which they help change with each particular threat to Narnia.

The last time the children enter Narnia, they go at the moment of their deaths on Earth. At the same time the historical Narnia has ended, and Aslan establishes an ideal Narnia in his eternal land. Historical Narnia was but a preparation for the ultimate Narnia, but without that preparation, the qualities of the true Narnia could not have developed. Aslan's land is not just for Narnians; it connects all worlds. As the children enter Aslan's country, they see that they are in a Narnia more wonderful than the first one, and they see another, containing England, there also. They are told that they are looking at

"... the England within England, the real England just as this is the real Narnia. ... That country and this country—all the real countries—are only spurs jutting out from the great mountains of Aslan."

As Wright notes, the mythic world of Narnia is well enough established to allow many extensions. Other parts might be added to the pattern. \textit{The Horse and His Boy} is

"... less a part of the overall structure of the myth than an episode fitting into the established framework."\textsuperscript{8} Much of this framework is made up of familiar elements. For

\textsuperscript{6}Wright, pp. 48, 125.

\textsuperscript{7}C. S. Lewis, \textit{The Last Battle} (New York, 1956), p. 172.

\textsuperscript{8}Wright, p. 155.
instance, fauns, dryads, and centaurs from classical myth and red and black dwarfs from Norse myth are used, and there are Persian and medieval touches. Christian symbolism is also prominent. But the mythical kingdom of Narnia, the land of talking beasts and human rulers, is Lewis's unique creation.

Lewis's juvenilia included stories of dressed animals and knights in armor in a land called Animal-Land, which had a full history and geography. He states that in writing these stories he was unconsciously training himself to be a novelist. Although Animal-Land had none of the "wonder" or romance of Narnia, its anthropomorphic beasts and the complete nature of the invented world reappear in Narnia.9 The completeness of the invented world is illustrated in the Narnia books, as in the space trilogy, by vivid descriptions of scenery and details of flora and fauna. As Green states, Narnia is described so that it seems real, and the reader may well feel as if he has been to Narnia.10 This is partly accomplished by the use of familiar creatures such as fauns, satyrs, and centaurs; recognizing these, the reader may feel that Narnia is as much a rediscovery as an invention. This attitude is promoted also by Lewis's use of realistic details of setting, characters, and events. For example,

Narnia is given a definite geography. The children enter Narnia for the first time at Lantern Waste, where the White Witch had her kingdom. Beyond this is the Western Wild. They rule as kings and queens at Cair Paravel, the seaside capital of Narnia, in the east. Narnia is near the countries of Archenland and Calormen to the south and the land of the giants to the north. Also the quarrels of humans and animals, the creatures' doubts about Aslan, the realistic battles, and the final exclusion of Susan from the remade Narnia make the stories quite believable and relevant to life on Earth even though many of the characters are not human beings.

The Narnia books are written in fairy tale form with commonplace events and people at the beginning followed by remarkable things which surprise characters and readers. Usually there is a return to the commonplace at the end of each book, but as Wright points out, The Last Battle has an exaltation or eucatastrophe at the end. A eucatastrophe gives the consolation of a happy ending, but it is more than just a happy ending. It usually denotes a beginning in eternity rather than an end, and there is a supernatural or numinous quality in the happiness. The Last Battle ends with the best that is in Narnia being taken into Aslan's land for the rest of eternity.11

11Wright, pp. 174-175.
Lewis has said that he had no scheme for the whole Narnia series before he wrote *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*. The earliest sketch of that book was made in 1938, but it was quite different from the final form, which was finished in 1949; the early sketch did not have Asian in it. The next few stories followed easily, and then Lewis began working out the origins of the witch and the wardrobe. *The Magician's Nephew* was the product, and it is "... perhaps the most symmetrically perfect story of the series."\(^1\)

According to Lewis, his method of writing is first to see images of a common nature which join together and then to fill in the gaps between sets of images, doing "... some deliberate inventing ... to contrive reasons why these characters should be in these various places doing these various things."\(^2\) As Green suggests, Lewis's ability to see images and to make the reader see them gives his writing vitality. But between these images at times there are gaps which make for "... the slightly episodic nature of the earlier books, and the brilliant scenes and incidents which occasionally hang together rather than growing out of each other."\(^3\) This seems to be a problem at times in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*. In *The Voyage of the "Dawn Treader"* Lewis handles this problem well since the story is intended to be

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\(^1\)Roger Lancelyn Green, *C. S. Lewis* (New York, 1963), p. 48.

\(^2\)Ibid., p. 37.

\(^3\)Ibid., p. 58.
a series of adventures which occur while the *Dawn Treader* sails toward the World's End. The *Silver Chair* and The *Magician's Nephew* have more unity because incidents grow out of each other and develop coherently. The *Last Battle* does not demand an involved plot; it is like "... the final surge of... music rising to a solemn climax and fading away into a hushed and awe-filled silence."15

On the most obvious level the seven books of the Narnia series are adventure stories. External action, danger, and excitement abound, and clear descriptions make all of these vivid and distinct. But there is a deeper level to these books. As Green says, although the witches and King Miraz the usurper may represent evil whereas Aslan and his followers represent good, the real villains and heroes are the children who are drawn into Narnia.16 The children help bring about external catastrophes, but their internal battles become more important than the external adventures. Edmund is tempted by the witch with magic Turkish Delight and promises of power, and he betrays his brother and sisters only to learn that selfishness brings bitterness and frustration. His suffering and repentance help him grow spiritually. *Rustace's* sins are less serious, but he, too, learns the evils of selfishness and the joys of repentance.

15ibid., pp. 58-59.  
16ibid., p. 39.
Thus, these books follow a pattern similar to that used in the space trilogy: Christian theology is illustrated through fantasy. Lewis effectively merges themes drawn from Christian doctrine and events created from the world of fantasy. As Charles A. Brady suggests, Lewis transforms Christian theology and the historic facts of Christendom into a new set of images without damaging the facts or the message of Christianity. Readers tend to respond to the narrative sweep and the heroic mood of the books, and by means of these Lewis "evangelizes through the imagination." 17

Although the Narnia books are based on Christian themes, Green states that some readers object to the "violence" which occurs in some of the adventures as being unfit for children. Likewise some object to unpleasant characters, such as Eustace, even though the spiritual growth of these characters is a prominent element in the stories. By such critics Lewis is accused of a lack of tenderness and of a contempt for the human race. Lewis's reaction to this criticism is to say that it is deceptive to hide from a child the fact that he lives in a world of "death, violence, wounds, adventure, heroism and cowardice, good and evil." 18 Although it is mythical, the Narnian world reveals these things. There are physical battles, conspiracies, treasonous acts,

17 Charles A. Brady, "Finding God in Narnia," America, XCVI (October 27, 1956), 103-104.

18 Green, C. S. Lewis, pp. 51-53.
wounds, and deaths. The characters face problems that demand bravery, honor, and loyalty from them. And through these adventures the children learn to face hardships maturely.

The characters of the Narnia books include gods and demons, villains and heroes. Aslan, the golden lion, is the son of the Emperor-Beyond-the-Sea; he is a counterpart to Maleldil of Lewis's space trilogy. Both are analogous to Christ as the second person of the trinity; both create the worlds their subjects inhabit. Aslan is the lord of Narnia and the possessor of great power, but he does not remove all difficulties for his followers by this power. They must make choices, face problems, and learn from their struggles. But when only his power can help them, he is prepared to sacrifice his life for his followers. The children feel that Aslan is both "good and terrible," and they are told, "He's wild ... Not like a tame lion." He is much more than the king of the beasts and even more than the lord of Narnia. In *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader* Aslan tells the children that they can find him in their own world.

"But there I have another name. You must learn to know me by that name. This was the very reason why you were brought to Narnia, that by knowing me here for a little, you may know me better there."20

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19Lewis, *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, p. 149.

In The Last Battle people from Calormen and Narnian traitors confuse Aslan with the false Calormene god, Tash. They agree that neither Aslan nor Tash is real, and they combine the names into Tashlan to trick the Narnians and undermine faith in Aslan. The difference between Aslan and Tash is revealed when Aslan explains to one young Calormene why his righteous service to Tash will be accepted by Aslan. Aslan says,

> Not because he and I are one, but because we are opposites, I take to me the services which thou hast done to him, for I and he are of such different kinds that no service which is vile can be done to me, and none which is not vile can be done to him. . . . Beloved, . . . unless thy desire had been for me thou wouldst not have sought so long and so truly.21

Tash is one example of a false god or a corrupted version of the true god; but a more common example of the power of evil in Narnia is found in the witches. As Wright says, the witches, descendants of Lilith and the Djinns, are not human. And like all evil, they are counterfeits of good. They use deceit and illusion because reality is intolerable to them.22 The first witch is present at the beginning of Narnia because Digory could not restrain his curiosity when he saw the bell which would wake her from an enchanted sleep. Because of his choice, evil enters Narnia in the form of the witch. Although her power is restrained somewhat, it is not

22Wright, pp. 105-106.
broken until Aslan sacrifices himself many years later. In their attempts to rule Narnia the witches are assisted by ogres, wolves, hags, incubuses, and evil spirits of all kinds.

The mortals of Narnia include several humans who are brought into Narnia from their own world. There are eight children who become heroes and heroines while living in Narnia; they are Peter, Susan, Edmund, and Lucy Pevensie; their cousin Eustace Scrubb; his schoolmate Jill Pole; Digory Kirke, an uncle of the Pevensie children; and a friend of his, Polly Plummer. Polly and Digory enter Narnia many years before the other six go there. As Trowbridge states, the children of the books are "relatively individualized," but Lewis is interested in their moral natures almost to the exclusion of the rest of their personalities. At times the good children seem too good and the bad ones too bad to be true. Still, the external characteristics of the children seem to be credible, and the internal struggles which most of them experience are true to life.

There are also some adults who enter Narnia. As Green notes, Uncle Andrew of The Magician's Nephew is slightly caricatured as the vain, selfish, evil magician, and Frank the cabby is a picture of simple goodness. But the adults are much less significant than the eight human children.

The spiritual development of these children is of primary

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importance throughout the seven books. All have ordinary failings, and none is extremely brave or strong, but each becomes powerful with Aslan's help.

Besides the human beings there are other mortals—fauns, beavers, mice, centaurs, giants, dwarfs, and a host of other creatures. The Narnian animals talk, and they have spiritual natures. They share with the Malacandrians the distinction of being rational creatures though they are not human beings. Several of these are vividly presented for their brief appearances: Mr. Tumnus the Faun, who is punished by the White Witch for sheltering Lucy, Puzzle the Donkey, who is used by Shift the Ape and the Calormenes to undermine faith in Aslan, and the horses Bree and Hwin, who flee with two children from the slavery of Calormen to the freedom of Narnia, are all endearing animals. The skepticism of the dwarf Trumpkin, the pessimism of Puddleglum the Marsh-wiggle, the pride of Reepicheep the Mouse, and the disloyalty or evil natures of animals like Shift the Ape are all touches of realism which enliven these animals. As talking, thinking animals they are mythical creations as clearly as are the god Aslan and the evil witches.

The archetypal images and patterns which are important in these books are the lion, the forest or the tree, the numinous place, Eden, the company, the quest, the ring, and the stone. (Of these, the forest, the numinous place, Eden,
the company, and the quest were also found in the space trilogy.)

The archetype of the lion is quite important in the Narnia myth. Aslan, the golden lion, is the king of beasts and the supreme archetype of the animal world. Brady states that for Aslan, Lewis borrows from Eliot's tiger, Blake's tiger, Spenser's dame Nature, the lion of Judah, and medieval bestiaries. Aslan is an animal with a physical body, but he is also the god and creator of Narnia. In The Voyage of the "Dawn Treader" when Reepicheep the Mouse enters Aslan's country, Aslan appears to the children in the form of a lamb, "... stressing the apocalyptic identification of the two animals which is familiar from Biblical imagery." On this occasion as he returns them to Earth, he tells them that they must seek the door to his country from their own land; and as he talks, he turns into a lion.

Another archetype used in these books is the image of the forest or the tree. As Wright states, the forest seems to be related to "the unbroken and changeless unity of the cosmos," and the single tree seems to be "... the image of the continuity and relationship to the whole [cosmos] of a single province [within the cosmos]." Thus, the tree may symbolize the health of a kingdom. There is such a tree.

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25 Brady, p. 103.  
26 Wright, p. 116.  
27 Ibid., pp. 118-119.
in Narnia. After the witch has entered Narnia, an apple from the tree in the garden across the Western Wild is planted in Narnia; as long as the tree that grows from this apple is healthy, the witch cannot harm Narnia. The fruit from this tree may either heal or hurt the one who eats it. It heals Digory's mother because Aslan gives the fruit for this purpose, but when the witch steals an apple, she brings misery upon herself. In addition to this tree there is a wood between the Worlds, which seems to be an archetypal forest. The forest is warm, quiet, and so alive that "... you could almost feel the trees growing." In this wood are pools leading back to Earth, to Narnia, to Charn, and to all other worlds. The wood seems to unify all the worlds that exist.

In the Narnia myth the numinous place is Aslan's country, referred to as the Utter East, beyond the eastern sea. In the space trilogy the numinous places are associated with western islands. But Narnia's Utter East does not seem to be a true opposite to the space trilogy's Far West; they seem to become the same place ultimately. For instance, as the faithful enter Aslan's land, they move westward; and his country is a chain of mountains surrounding all countries, so west and east are joined there. Wright notes that as with other lands beyond the sea, no one can go to Aslan's

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land unbidden. The image of Aslan's land as a numinous place is related to all the other lands beyond the sea recorded in myth so that it becomes a universal as well as a particular symbol.29 And as Trowbridge states, in Aslan's country fact, symbol, and myth combine, and there is "... spiritual reality in which all that is good exists in its essence forever, in which matter and spirit are fully joined, in which lives New Man amidst New Nature."30 Aslan's country is truly the home of the gods.

The Narnia series, like the space trilogy, gives a view of an Eden. This is seen in the creation of Narnia described in The Magician's Nephew. Narnia is brought to life through Aslan's song; the grass and trees grow at his bidding, and animals come up from the ground. While the witch is kept out of Narnia by the tree from the Western Wild, a London cabby and his wife are crowned King Frank and Queen Helen and given a blissful kingdom to rule. Also the garden in the Western Wild with golden gates facing due East is a paradisel garden, and here Digory is tempted by the witch to eat the apple he is to take to Aslan. She tells him that it is an apple of youth and of life and urges him to eat it or take it to his mother immediately. Digory resists temptation and returns to Aslan, thus helping to keep the newly created Narnia a paradise for a while.

29Wright, pp. 98, 42. 30Trowbridge, p. 376.
The image of the company, the local center of the cosmos, is found in the Narnia series as well as in the space trilogy. Again, the members of the company are chosen by their deity rather than by their companions. Each time there is a threat to the kingdom, Aslan draws human children into Narnia to lead the faithful to victory. These companies fight the White Witch, help Caspian win his throne from King Miraz, defeat Rabadash the Calormene Prince, and fight the Calormenes and Narnian traitors in The Last Battle. Those who make up these companies are allowed to enter the "real Narnia" in Aslan's land because they, like those who make up Logres, are the core of believers who represent the best that is in their secular world.

The archetypal quest is an important plot pattern in the Narnia myth. One critic says that each book is a quest or pilgrimage which is part of the battle between good and evil.\(^31\) All of the children are called to journeys through time and space in order to get to Narnia, and often they have quests as part of their Narnian adventures. These quests help end the threat to the kingdom, and they benefit the children. In The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe Edmund has to undergo pain and threats before he is able to subdue his selfish nature; his is a quest for salvation. In Prince Caspian there is a quest for Caspian's rightful place on the

throne. In The Voyage of the "Dawn Treader" Caspian and his companions seek Aslan's land. In this book, also, Eustace has a quest for salvation; only when he is turned into a dragon is he able to face himself honestly and to reject his selfishness for obedience to Aslan.

In The Silver Chair Jill and Eustace have a quest for Prince Rilian to save him from the witch, but they also learn obedience to Aslan. In The Horse and His Boy Shasta makes a perilous journey in order to go to Narnia; he gains maturity from his experiences and finds a home and his father, whom he had never known of. In The Magician's Nephew Digory is sent on a quest for an apple from the tree in the center of the garden in the Western Wild; here he faces temptation and rejects it. In The Last Battle there are many quests for the real Aslan because a false Aslan has confused the Narnians. Those who are faithful find Aslan; one young Calormene, Emeth, who had served the false god Tash, finds Aslan because he had always sought goodness rather than evil. Each quest ties together external adventures and internal struggles.

Another important archetype is the ring, such as the rings used for the earliest human entrance into Narnia. The rings were made of dust from the wood between the Worlds; this dust, in an Atlantean box, was passed from person to person until it reached Digory's Uncle Andrew. From this
dust he made yellow and green rings, one attracted to the
Wood and the other repelled by it. As Wright states, it is
significant that they are composed of some kind of first
matter.  

Closely related to the ring is the archetypal stone.
The table of stone in The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe
may be such an image. On it is written the Deep Magic of
Aslan's father, the Emperor-Beyond-the-Sea, and on it Aslan
is killed by the White Witch. The table is broken into two
pieces by a crack down the middle when Aslan lives again.
He tells the children that the witch did not know that
"... when a willing victim who had committed no treachery
was killed in a traitor's stead, the Table would crack and
Death itself would start working backwards." Thus this
stone shaped into a table is a symbol of the power of the
Emperor-Beyond-the-Sea over evil. Later in a cave under a
mound called Aslan's How there is a magic stone which is
possibly a part of the Stone Table.

The stories in the Narnia myth are enjoyable entertain-
ment, but, as has been noted, they also present spiritual
truths through the experiences of the characters. Lewis's
themes are not presented merely as authorial comment; instead
the characters' internal and external struggles give these

\[32\] Wright, p. 121.

\[33\] Lewis, The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe, p. 133.
themes imaginative life. As Kilby states, in the Narnia series Lewis wanted to tell a good story and suggest analogies to Christianity, but "... there is seldom the sense of contrived situations for didactic purposes."\textsuperscript{34}

As in the space trilogy, one important theme in the Narnia myth is that the individual grows more into himself or more into God's will according to the choices he makes over many years; Lewis suggests that good and evil become more clearly separated as time goes by and moreover that there is an absolute right and wrong. The attempts of the Calormene plotters to destroy faith in Aslan illustrate Lewis's idea of a basic right and wrong in the cosmos rather than a variety of roads all leading to God. Those who reject both Tash and Aslan tell Aslan's followers that both gods are the same and that their worshipers all "mean the same thing." Lewis demonstrates his rejection of this idea by making it clear that Tash is a demon and Aslan is a god.

One example of the importance of individual choices in leading one to what is right is found in The Silver Chair when Jill at first fears Aslan so much that she will not drink of the water near him. He tells her that there is no other water than that which he guards, and her choice to drink the water begins her spiritual development. In The Magician's Nephew the choice of Digory to ring the bell in

\textsuperscript{34}Kilby, pp. 116, 136.
the world of Charn brings evil to Narnia in the form of the witch Jadis; Aslan tells him that because "Adam's race has done the harm, Adam's race shall help to heal it." Later Digory develops spiritually as he resists Jadis's temptation. On the other hand, the witches have chosen self for so long that they are thoroughly evil. And Digory's Uncle Andrew, having chosen black magic as a means of satisfying his vanity, is incapable of recognizing or appreciating good because of his continued choice of self and evil. As the children serve Aslan, they recognize the evil in themselves and reject it; they also learn of the evil in Aslan's enemies as they fight them in physical and spiritual battles.

The children learn to recognize truth and reality even in disguised forms. In Narnia they serve Aslan and work and play with creatures who would be called mythical characters in the human world. They learn how myth may reveal truth and how reality may be hidden in myth. Reality is forgotten at certain stages of Narnian history, and the most important people and events of Narnia are called "old stories" and doubted or disbelieved. The stories of Aslan himself, his role as creator, the White Witch, the four human children who were made kings and queens together, and the talking animals are all regarded as being untrue when evil undermines the spiritual life of Narnia.

35Lewis, The Magician's Nephew, p. 121.
In *The Magician's Nephew* Uncle Andrew is present at the creation of Narnia, but it means nothing to him because he refuses to believe that Aslan, a lion, is singing. "He soon did hear nothing but roaring in Aslan's song. Soon he couldn't have heard anything else even if he had wanted to." Uncle Andrew chooses unreality and then is incapable of recognizing reality. The same thing happens to the dwarfs in *The Last Battle*. They refuse to believe in Aslan, and then they cannot recognize the difference between darkness and light or tell good foods or smells from bad. Aslan explains,

"They will not let us help them. They have chosen cunning instead of belief. Their prison is only in their minds, yet they are in that prison; and so afraid of being taken in that they can not be taken cut."

But with Aslan's power, his followers can choose truth and reality. In *The Silver Chair* Puddleglum rejects the witch's world for Aslan's world. He says,

"Suppose we have only dreamed, or made up, all those things--trees and grass and sun and moon and stars and Aslan himself. . . . Then all I can say is that . . . the made-up things seem a good deal more important than the real ones. . . . That's why I'm going to stand by the play world. I'm on Aslan's side even if there isn't any Aslan to lead it. I'm going to live as like a Narnian as I can even if there isn't any Narnia."

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Puddleglum breaks the spell of the witch's enchantment, and reality is restored.

The demonstration of redemption in Aslan's sacrifice in The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe provides another theme. The witch claims Edmund as her possession because he betrayed his brother and sisters to her and because all traitors belong to the witches. Aslan agrees to die in Edmund's place so that the boy may be spared. The witch and her servants muzzle and shave Aslan and jeer at him. He is tied to the Stone Table, and the witch stabs him with a stone knife. After Aslan's resurrection and a battle, Lucy sees Edmund

... looking better than she had seen him look—oh, for ages; in fact ever since his first term at that horrid school which was where he had begun to go wrong. He had become his real old self again and could look you in the face.39

Aslan has not only saved Edmund's physical life but also given him new spiritual life.

Another picture of salvation occurs in The Voyage of the "Dawn Treader." Edmund turns into a dragon and learns how his selfishness had troubled his companions. Aslan comes to him and tells him to undress by pulling off his scales. He tries, but Aslan has to tear the skin off. He then washes Edmund and dresses him in new clothes. Thus, through Aslan's power he is turned back into a human being, and with his dragonish shape he loses his selfishness and

39 Lewis, The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe, pp. 146-147.
unpleasantness. The picture of this physical conversion clearly shows what happens in a spiritual conversion.

Through knowing Aslan and living in Narnia the children learn of the cosmic hierarchy of order. They learn that obedience to Aslan is more important than doing as they please. In fighting Aslan's enemies they learn that loyalty and honor are important. They learn, too, that animals should be treated with kindness. Their attitudes toward animals tell much about the human characters. Uncle Andrew and most of the Calormenes are cruel to animals. Eustace, before conversion, prefers dead insects pinned on cards or stuffed animals in museums to live animals. The human children and Frank, the London cabby who becomes the first king of Narnia, are kind to animals. Kilby suggests that there is an implication in Lewis's work that man's mistreatment of nature has caused nature to hide its reality, \(^4^0\) therefore, there are no talking animals even in Narnia unless the Narnians worship Aslan and respect all of his creatures.

Also when the forms of government of Narnia and Calormen are contrasted, values of the cosmic hierarchy are further revealed. Narnians are free, even though they have kings, because each individual is respected; but Calormenes are slaves because all people beneath the aristocracy are considered worthless, and the Tisroc, or ruler, is a tyrant.

\(^4^0\) Kilby, p. 73.
Wright suggests that political power is linked to spiritual power in these stories because political and spiritual power are ultimately joined in the universal hierarchy; political power is just one manifestation of archetypal order, and it should be used in accordance with the values of the whole cosmic order. The misuse of political power in Calormen is a manifestation of the rejection of these cosmic values.

As Green suggests, the strength of Narnia is in "the cast of Lewis's mind," the mind of a scholar, a superb storyteller, "... a thinker, logician and theologian who has plumbed the depths of the dark void of atheism and come by the hardest route on his pilgrimage back to God." All of these qualities enable Lewis to effectively give imaginative life to his ideas in the myth of Narnia. Whether he uses science fiction or the fairy tale as the form for his myth, Lewis presents spiritual truths through imaginative stories. His themes are made potent by vivid illustration of material not ordinarily associated with Christian doctrine.

\[41\] Wright, p. 178.  \[42\] Green, C. S. Lewis, p. 61.
CHAPTER V

TILL WE HAVE FACES

Till We Have Faces (1956), subtitled by Lewis A Myth
Retold, is his version of the story of Cupid and Psyche as
told by Apuleius in The Golden Ass. Lewis has called Till
We Have Faces a

"... straight tale of barbarism, the mind of an ugly
woman, dark idolatry and pale enlightenment at war with
each other and with vision, and the havoc which a voca-
tion, or even a faith, works on human life."

As Trowbridge points out, the novel may be called a "quasi-
historical supernatural novel and a parable or fable." It is
a quasi-historical novel because it gives a detailed view of
the customs and beliefs of "... a non-Greek city-state dur-
ing, roughly, the Golden Age of Greece." It is a supernatural
novel because it contains visions and gods. It is a parable
because Psyche is a symbol of the human soul and because the
theme illustrates man's denial of God, his subsequent suffer-
ing, and his redemption. Whether it is given any of these
labels or all of them, Till We Have Faces is Lewis's most ef-
fective presentation of Christian doctrine in mythical form.

1Green, C. S. Lewis, p. 32.
2Trowbridge, pp. 390-391.
The story is set in Glome, a mythical kingdom somewhere on Earth. The geographical location of Glome is not specifically related to any verifiable country, but it is far to the north of Greece. Robert J. Reilly suggests that Glome is vaguely north and east of Greece and that the time of the story is between the times of Aristotle and Christ. Glome is a barbarous kingdom with a superstitious people and primitive customs. It has been influenced by Greek ideas but only in a superficial way. Glome is a small kingdom rather than a whole world as are Malacandra, Perelandra, and the world that contains Narnia; these whole worlds are separated from Earth whereas Glome is a part of Earth. But as Wright states, Glome seems to be a country which exists only for the story of Cupid and Psyche.

Glome is more restricted than the fully ordered worlds of the Narnia series and the space trilogy, but it is clearly described within its limited area. It is located near the imaginary countries of Phars, Essur, and Caphad, and Glome is given credibility by concrete scenic descriptions.

The city of Glome stands on the left hand of the river Shennit to a traveller who is coming up from the southeast, not more than a day's journey above Ringal, which

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4 Wright, p. 155.
is the last town southward that belongs to the land of Glome. . . . About as far beyond the ford of the Shennit as our city is on this side of it you come to the holy house of Ungit. And beyond the house of Ungit (going all the time east and north) you come quickly to the foothills of the Grey Mountain.5

Lewis enlivens scenes with vivid detail so that Glome seems real to the reader, just as Malacandra, Perelandra, and Narnia seem real.

Lewis retains most of the adventures of the classical myth of Cupid and Psyche. In his version Psyche is still the youngest, most beautiful daughter of a king, and because the common people worship her, she arouses the jealousy of Venus, or Ungit, as she is called in Glome. In both versions Psyche is taken to a mountain and left as a sacrifice to the God of the Mountain; the west wind carries her to the god, the son of Venus (Ungit), who makes her his wife but comes to her only at night and orders her not to try to see him. And in both versions Psyche, urged to disobey this command, lights a lamp and looks at him. He then abandons her to be punished by Venus (Ungit). This punishment consists of Psyche's having to save herself by sorting a huge pile of seeds, grain by grain, gathering golden fleece from large, fierce rams, filling an urn with water from the source of the Styx, and taking a casket to Proserpine and returning with it.

5C. S. Lewis, Till We Have Faces: A Myth Retold (Grand Rapids, 1964), p. 4.
Lewis makes several changes which alter the myth considerably and bring out its spiritual meanings. In the classical myth Psyche is visited by both of her sisters, but in Lewis's story only one sister, Orual, comes to visit Psyche. Orual cannot even see Psyche's palace except in a brief vision which she distrusts and rejects. When Orual urges Psyche to look upon the god, she does not act from envy as do the sisters in the classical myth; instead she thinks that Psyche is the slave of a thief or a monster, and she thinks that she is helping Psyche by forcing her to see him. As Lewis says,

The central alteration in my own version consists in making Psyche's palace invisible to normal, mortal eyes—if "making" is not the wrong word for something which forced itself upon me, almost at my first reading of the story, as the way the thing must have been. This change of course brings with it a more ambivalent motive and a different character for my heroine and finally modifies the whole quality of the tale.\(^6\)

The ambivalence of Orual's motives is contrasted with the steadfastness of Psyche. In the older version Psyche is persuaded by her sisters to doubt the goodness of her husband, and her own curiosity later leads her to open the casket she carries to Venus from Proserpine. But Lewis's Psyche is forced to look at her husband by Orual's threat of self-destruction, not by her own doubts, and she does not open the casket she carries to Orual.

\(^6\text{Ibid., p. 313.}\)
Orual is both the narrator and the main character of Lewis's novel. The book is divided into two parts. The first part takes up most of the book and tells of Orual's youth and her days as Queen of Glim. In this section Orual states that she has written her story in order to bring an indictment against the gods for their treatment of her. The second part completes her story and her life as she realizes her own faults and the inaccuracies of her book and as she humbly bows before the God of the Mountain. As Wright notes, the novel ends with the supernatural happiness of the eucatastrophe in this meeting of Orual and the God of the Mountain. As Fuller states, although the novel lacks overt Christian theology, it has religious significance. Lewis's emphasis on spiritual meanings adds profound variation to the classical myth, but the changes do not violate the integrity of the story.

The characters of *Till We Have Faces* have mythical qualities not only because of their appearance in the classical myth but also because of their characteristics as gods or heroes in this novel. Divinity is represented by the God of the Mountain, who is called the son of Ungit, goddess of Glim. When Psyche disobeys him and looks upon him at Orual's demand, both Psyche and Orual see him surrounded by a great light. Orual is awed by his beauty and realizes

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7Wright, p. 175.  
8Fuller, pp. 165-166.
that he knows all that she has ever been, done, or thought. He tells her that both she and Psyche must now suffer. As the God of the Mountain leaves, rains and storms make the beautiful valley a ruined and desolate place. After Orual's ordeal, the god returns to judge her, and Orual, humble and repentant, stands waiting.

Each breath I drew let into me new terror, joy, overpowering sweetness. . . . I was being unmade. I was no one. . . . Psyche herself was, in a manner, no one. I loved her as I would once have thought it impossible to love, would have died any death for her. And yet, it was not, not now, she that really counted. Or if she counted (and oh, gloriously she did) it was for another's sake. The earth and stars and sun, all that was or will be, existed for his sake. And he was coming. The most dreadful, the most beautiful, the only dread and beauty there is, was coming.  

Orual is at last able to forget herself and adore the God of the Mountain.

Ungit, represented by a rough, black stone, is the goddess of Glome. When the Fox, Orual's Greek teacher, tells the people of Glome that Ungit is like the Greek goddess Aphrodite, a beautiful image in the shape of a woman is placed beside the black stone in the temple. The struggle between the old faith and the new influences is represented by the differences between the images of Ungit and Aphrodite. The common people worship the old Ungit and find comfort in her, but the Fox has encouraged Orual to scorn Ungit. Ultimately, however, he confesses that he was wrong in rejecting

9Lewis, Till We Have Faces, p. 307.
Ungit. He says,

"I never told her why the Old Priest got something from the dark House that I never got from my trim sentences... why the people got something from the shapeless stone which no one ever got from that painted doll... I don't know now. Only that the way to the true gods is more like the house of Ungit... oh, it's unlike too, more unlike than we yet dream, but that's the easy knowledge, the first lesson... The Priest knew at least that there must be sacrifices. They will have sacrifice—will have man. Yes, and the very heart, center, ground, roots of a man; dark and strong and costly as blood."

The sacrificial worship of Ungit is presented as being preferable to the rationalism taught by the Fox or the aesthetic worship of the image of Aphrodite, but Ungit is still an inadequate goddess, a substitute for something greater. She represents a primitive religion which emphasizes blood sacrifices and slavish devotion. The worship of Ungit's son, the God of the Mountain, surpasses this savage worship in its emphasis on love and mercy.

"All, even Psyche, are born into the house of Ungit. And all must get free from her. Or say that Ungit in each must bear Ungit's son and die in childbed—or change."

Thus, Crual learns that neither Ungit nor Aphrodite is the true goddess. As Wright states, the Greek goddess offers no comfort because she knows no suffering. The ugly, cruel Ungit is partly an image of the brutal and devouring part

10Ibid., p. 295. The third ellipsis is Lewis's.
11Ibid., p. 310.
of man; but she also demonstrates that the true gods demand obedience and sacrifice rather than intellectual theories and aesthetic appreciation. Ungit leads to truth, but she must be superseded.\textsuperscript{12}

Psyche has a Christ-like role for a while; she is a ransom for the people of Glome in the Great Offering, and in completing Orual's tasks, she is instrumental in bringing Orual to the God of the Mountain. As Kilby states, Psyche may be seen as divine love, but Lewis says that he considers her an example of a person who makes the best of her pagan religion. Her imagination guides her to the true God, and she is "... in some ways like Christ not because she is a symbol of Him but because every good man or woman is like Christ."	extsuperscript{13}

Psyche is so ruled by her faith in the God of the Mountain that she seems a less complex figure than some of the other characters. Reilly even says that she is not a character so much as an element, God's last creative touch, necessary for the whole man. She represents the longing for God which man needs along with rationality and love.\textsuperscript{14} Psyche may represent this, but she seems to be more clearly a full character than this statement suggests. For instance, in spite of her life-long yearning for the God of the

\textsuperscript{12}Wright, p. 87.  \textsuperscript{13}Kilby, pp. 57-58.  \textsuperscript{14}Reilly, p. 117.
Mountain, Psyche is afraid when she finally is left on the mountain, and her love for Orual and the Fox makes her want to return to them.

Orual is the primary representative of ordinary mortals. But Reilly states that Orual and Psyche are not

... "real" persons but rather adumbrations of real persons. They have a modicum of individuality and objectivity, but they have not become fixed or permanent. They hover between symbolic existence and fictional reality because the world they live in hovers between potential and actual existence. 15

This statement comes nearer to accuracy with Psyche than with Orual, but for both it seems to be only partially true. Both seem to be more individualized than this statement indicates. Certainly Orual may represent, as Trowbridge suggests, the human soul which has to learn through suffering to accept "the vision of love, ... Psyche." And she does seem to represent all men, who have to develop "faces" so that they can meet the face of God. 16 But although Orual does seem to suggest these things on one level, on another level she is a fully drawn, realistic character, revealed with subtlety and complexity. Her struggle to understand herself and the gods has symbolic overtones suggestive of a struggle of universal scope, but this is her own individualized struggle as well. As narrator she is able to bring the reader close to the story and to gain immediacy by the revelation of her personality. The reader may easily identify with Orual's inability...
to comprehend the gods and the significance of her own actions; yet the reader can also see the flaws in Orual which eventually turn her indictment of the gods into an indictment of her own selfishness.

Orual cannot fully accept either the Fox's rationalism or the beliefs about Ungit. She cannot share in the devotion of the common people of Glome to Ungit or understand Psyche's faith, but neither can she be sure that Ungit is unimportant. Orual says of her conflict,

If the things believed in Glome were true, then what Bardia said stood; if the Fox's philosophy were true, what the Fox said stood. But I could not find out whether the doctrines of Glome or the wisdom of Greece were right. I was the child of Glome and the pupil of the Fox; I saw that for years my life had been lived in two halves, never fitted together. 17

Orual finally sees that she has been wrong in blaming the gods for her own sins and that her chatter has been a meaningless stream of words which made communication with the gods impossible. She says,

I saw well why the gods do not speak to us openly, nor let us answer. . . . Why should they hear the babble that we think we mean? How can they meet us face to face till we have faces? . . . I know now, Lord, why you utter no answer. You are yourself the answer. Before your face questions die away. 18

Orual, like Mark and Jane Studdock, Edmund Pevensie, and Eustace Scrubb, is a dynamic character who is changed by the events of the story.

17 Lewis, *Till We Have Faces*, p. 151.
Several other mortals in *Till We Have Faces* are significant. Lysias the Fox, Orual's Greek teacher, is individualized by his love for Orual and Psyche and his attitudes toward his service in Glome. Also he is made believable by his frequent tears and his love of poetry, which undermine the stern, rational approach to life which he tries to maintain. As Kilby states, Lewis seems to deprecate philosophical naturalism as presented in the Fox's philosophy. The Fox finally admits the inadequacy of his philosophy when he confesses that his logic was clear but shallow, easy but worthless.  

Bardia, the faithful soldier, in contrast to the Fox accepts the religion of Ungit without thinking about it, and he has as little as possible to do with Ungit. Arnom, the young priest of Ungit, has been influenced by the Fox to replace blood sacrifices with aesthetics, but few people of Glome accept the change. Each of the important characters reveals some attitude toward Ungit so as to give a variety of responses, most of which remain inadequate by themselves.

In *Till We Have Faces* the archetypal pattern of the quest and the archetypal images of the tree, the numinous place, and the stone are again important.

Both Orual and Psyche have important quests. Orual's quest begins when Psyche is banished from the house of the God of the Mountain, and it includes her efforts to find

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19 Kilby, pp. 58-59.
Psyche and to complain to the gods. When she has written her complaint to the gods, she thinks that she has completed her work, but she soon learns that this is not so. She must try to carry out the tasks set for her, but she cannot complete them. She does, however, bear the pain for Psyche.

Psyche's quest includes completion of these tasks for Orual and a return to the God of the Mountain. As Wright states, Orual's selfish nature is changed through Psyche's completion of the tasks which Orual could not finish. The real purpose for the quest of each is to help the other.20 Riley Hughes suggests that Orual's progress to self-discovery "... offers a psychological pattern which parallels the spiritual one of Psyche's abandonment and travail."21 The two quests are not only parallel but also dependent on each other.

One archetypal image in Till We Have Faces is the tree. When Psyche is sacrificed to the God of the Mountain in the Great Offering, she is bound to a Holy Tree on top of a mountain. It is a leafless, isolated tree marking a boundary beyond which even the priests do not go. Bardia tells Orual, "'Beyond the Tree, it's all gods' country, they say.'"22 The tree serves as a means to give Psyche new life rather than

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20Wright, p. 114.

21Riley Hughes, "Novels Reviewed by Riley Hughes: Till We Have Faces," Catholic World, CLXXXIV (March, 1957), 472.

22Lewis, Till We Have Faces, p. 100.
the death which the people of Glome expect for her, and it seems to serve as a connection between men and the gods.

The image of the numinous place is to be found in the home of the God of the Mountain. When Psyche finds herself at the threshold of the god's house, she realizes at once that it is a god's home rather than a temple for worshiping him; and she is afraid, filled with awe, and ashamed of her mortality. When Psyche and Orual meet after Psyche's return from the lands of the dead, they are in the house of the god, and they feel wonder and terror in that place even before he arrives.

Not only the house of the god but also the temple of Ungit has a numinous quality. Orual frequently mentions the darkness and "holy smells" associated with the temple and priests of Ungit. The house of Ungit is made of huge stones set in an egg-shaped ring. "This is a holy shape, and the priests say it resembles, or (in a mystery) that it really is, the egg from which the whole world was hatched or the womb in which the whole world once lay."23 Mystery is associated with both the god's house and the temple; both are sacred and frightening places as well as places of joy and comfort.

Another archetype is the image of the stone. One stone is the black mass which represents Ungit. Orual describes

23Ibid., p. 94.
the origin of this stone.

She had not, like most sacred stones, fallen from the sky. The story was that at the very beginning she had pushed her way up out of the earth—a foretaste of, or an ambassador from, whatever things may live and work down there one below the other all the way down under the dark and weight and heat. I have said she had no face; but that meant she had a thousand faces. For she was very uneven, lumpy and furrowed, so that . . . you could always see some face or other. She was now more rugged than ever because of all the blood they had poured over her in the night. In the little clots and chains of it I made out a face; a . . . face such as you might see in a loaf, swollen, brooding, infinitely female.24

The associations with earth and the maternal qualities of this stone are also to be found in the stone given the shape of a woman and called Aphrodite; this stone is but another version of the same image.

The setting, plot, characters, and imagery of Till We Have Faces develop the themes of this interesting and thought-provoking book. As Green says, Gnome may lack some of the enchantment of Malacandra and Perelandra, but Till We Have Faces powerfully affects the intellect. And as usual in Lewis's books, the reader tends to feel as if he is enacting a myth rather than following an adventure.25 Lewis illustrates the significance and nature of myth as he lets Orual hear her own story told as a myth in a foreign country; she is unable to accept the truth in the myth and tries to correct the priest who tells her the story.

24Ibid., p. 270.  
25Green, C. S. Lewis, p. 32.
There is another story in the novel which also suggests the nature of myth. Grual has to dig through stone and dirt to get to one room after another, each smaller than the one before. This myth within a myth may suggest that "... to discover the essential truth of myth one must go, if he can, to the depths of it." As Kilby states, Lewis seems to suggest that myth is like the image of Ungit. It seems to be faceless, but there are a thousand faces there. For those who look closely, it reveals "... the fundamentally theistic stuff of which the universe is made." The worship of Ungit has evil aspects, but it also has truths in its assumptions that man is dependent on the gods, that blood is appropriate for sacrifice, that one may have to die for many, and that the temple offers comfort. As in Lewis's other works of fiction, myth is shown to contain truth of vital importance to man's spiritual life.

A dominant theme of the novel is Lewis's illustration of the conflict between faith and rationalism. The Cupid and Psyche myth has been reshaped to emphasize this conflict. As Hughes says, "Greek daylight reason" clashes with "... a barbaric prefiguration of revealed religion, which in Glome has only reached what the narrator calls 'the horror of holiness.'" The Fox thinks that the gods are simply the lies of the poets, and he has taught Grual this. Her lack of

\[26\text{Kilby, p. 63.} \quad 27\text{Ibid.} \quad 28\text{Hughes, p. 472.}\]
faith makes her unable to believe Psyche's story about the god who is her husband. Fuller states that because the joy of Psyche is not something visible, the rationalist demands proof of its existence. Only when there is pain at the loss of this joy can he realize that it was real. But "the Divine Bridegroom" loves even the doubter and the unlovely, and every soul, like Psyche, may be united to him.29

As B. R. Redman states, the weakness and blindness of rationalism are shown when it stands before revelation. Orual is blind to what Psyche, a believer, can see, and by using love as a weapon she forces Psyche to disobey the God of the Mountain.30 Orual tries to destroy faith because she does not understand it. She finally falls before the God of the Mountain when she understands that he does not answer the complaints of "faceless" men but demands their faith and obedience. Once men can face themselves and God with honesty and without selfishness, their questions are answered by the encounter with God. Orual learns that Psyche's faith is more powerful than the Fox's rationalism and that she must submit herself with her facelessness and glibness to God.

_Till We Have Faces_ emphasizes the evils of selfishness through the character of Orual. She maintains that she loves Psyche, but this love becomes increasingly possessive until

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29 Fuller, p. 166.

it turns into hatred. Orual rejects all gods as her self-absorption keeps her from loving anyone but herself. Her conversion takes place, as Moorman points out, by means of an exchange. By transference Orual becomes first Ungit and then Psyche. In a vision Orual sees that through her efforts to rule by reason rather than superstition, she becomes Ungit; like this goddess, she demands the total efforts of her advisors, and she devours their lives. She must transform the ugly Ungit into Psyche, "the bride of Love." This is done through exchange. She bears the pain of Psyche's tasks, and her selfishness is replaced by a genuine, spiritual love.\textsuperscript{31}

After having written her indictment of the gods in an attempt to justify her actions, Orual finds herself confronted with her cruel usage of Bardia, the Fox, and Psyche—those she thought she loved dearly. She is forced to admit that her love for each was largely hatred and that she resented any life or pleasure they enjoyed away from her. She resented Bardia's wife, Psyche's strength of mind and love for the God of the Mountain, and the Fox's love for Psyche and desire to return to Greece. She says,

It was I who was Ungit. That ruinous face was mine. I was that . . . all-devouring womblike, yet barren, thing. Glome was a web—I the swollen spider, gorged with men's stolen lives.\textsuperscript{32}

When Orual recognizes her selfishness, she is then able to

\textsuperscript{31}Moorman, pp. 106-107.

\textsuperscript{32}Lewis, \textit{Till We Have Faces}, p. 276.
bear Psyche's burden, cease being Ungit, and become Psyche. She learns the difference between self-love and selfless love. Through visions she sees that because of her sin of betraying Psyche, her own suffering was long. But this made possible her ultimate redemption.

The complexity and richness of this novel are suggested by Kilby's statement that there is a series of contrasting themes intricately merged in *Till We Have Faces*: the barbarism of Glome versus the enlightenment of Greece, the beauty of Psyche versus the ugliness of Orual, and the apparent love of Orual and cruelty of the gods versus the real hatred of Orual and love of the gods are all woven into the story.33 And as Wright adds, *Till We Have Faces* has a "... more perfected working out of the characterization and motivation" than Lewis's other fiction, and "... the archetypal and mythical qualities are more consistent and continuous." It seems to represent the "... complete achievement of the blend of myth with realistic novel" which Lewis had sought.34

*Till We Have Faces* succeeds in some ways in which Lewis's earlier books partially failed. The themes of this novel are more subtly presented, and there is no problem of didacticism. Realism and the supernatural are effectively blended. Characterization is more fully developed, and complex ideas are suggested but not explained away. Theological

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33 Kilby, p. 64.  
34 Wright, p. 164.
problems are not oversimplified, and their complexity is revealed by the various responses of several characters. But more important, Till We Have Faces is a powerful presentation of a conversion of the ugliness in human nature into the beauty of a godly nature; Orual's experience offers profound insight into the plight of unregenerate men and into the joys of redeemed men. This novel seems to represent the height of Lewis's artistic development of myth in fiction.
CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

For Lewis, myth is important not only because of his personal enjoyment of it and because of the significant part it played in his life but also because it is an effective means of providing entertainment and presenting truth in fictional form.

Myth has been defined for this study as a story which contains supernatural beings and preternatural events, an atmosphere of gravity and a sense of the numinous, and the suggestion of significant truths about man's experiences and beliefs. Myth may combine vigorous action and thrilling adventure with spiritual experiences and theological ideas. Myth is able to join the universal and the particular through archetypal imagery, to provide supernatural experiences which explore the internal world of man, and to present in palatable form ideas which might not otherwise be read receptively.

The union of Christian doctrine and myth makes possible a reenactment of Christian events in unusual terms. The freshness of this approach may attract many readers who would not accept these ideas in abstract discussion; and for readers who already accept Christian doctrine as truth, its
mythical presentation provides fresh insights into old ideas and a renewed appreciation of Christian events.

Lewis feels that since man is estranged from God, he cannot always recognize truth which is unverifiable by means of his senses; his perspective is limited and his vision is clouded because he prefers self will to God's will. Myth offers this kind of truth to man even though it usually is not thoroughly clear. Lewis borrows both pagan and Christian myths, interprets them, and adds to them, thus creating new myths which reveal spiritual truths.

In the space trilogy Lewis combines various elements to make his own myth; the most important of these are science fantasy, Arthurian myth, and Christian theology. In the worlds of Malacandra and Perelandra Ransom learns that Earth, the silent planet, is cut off from the joys of Deep Heaven because it is ruled by the Bent Oyarsa, Satan. As Ransom lives among the creatures of Malacandra and as he takes part in an analogue to the Fall of man on Perelandra, he learns that myth is based on reality and that only on Earth are myth and fact mutually exclusive terms. Ransom's experiences also teach him that the choices of the individual make him primarily good or evil as he either grows in self-love or selflessness. Given the perspective of Deep Heaven, Ransom is able to see that Earth has warped values; men prefer power and wealth and mechanization to spiritual growth and a system of ethical values. The battle between the
forces of good and evil in That Hideous Strength reveals what goodness and evil are like and what they ultimately produce in individuals.

The Narnia series uses the fairy tale rather than science fiction, but again Lewis combines Christian doctrine with fantasy. He creates a world with gods, devils, and mortals where good and evil clash in events of cosmic significance. Through the experiences of the human children in Narnia, myth is again shown to be based on reality. Their experiences, like Ransom's, teach them the natures of good and evil and the importance of individual free will in determining one's ultimate character. A cosmic hierarchy is revealed which parallels that of the space trilogy and which clearly is meant to apply to Earth. Whereas the space trilogy gives an analogue to the Fall of man, the Narnia series gives an analogue to the crucifixion and resurrection. In both situations Lewis is using fresh settings, characters, and images to give insight into the significance of Christian events.

Till We Have Faces is Lewis's version of the Cupid and Psyche myth, changed to emphasize his Christian themes. Again he reveals the importance of myth as a means of suggesting truth. Orual's inability to accept any kind of truth but fact which she can verify with logic or her senses brings suffering to her and to Psyche. The inadequacies of rationalism and of aesthetics in religion are revealed to Orual as
she learns that the worship of Ungit with blood sacrifices comes closer to the real gods than either of these; but one must then pass from the worship of Ungit to the worship of the God of the Mountain. The sins of selfishness and pride and the evil which develops from the abuse of free will are revealed in the personality of Orual; and her ultimate death to self pictures salvation.

Lewis's fiction is enjoyable even on a superficial level of thrills and adventures. The mythical qualities of preternatural events and supernatural beings add to this excitement, but on a deeper level they also add to the powerful impact which his themes may make upon the reader. By giving his themes fresh illustration he enriches them and increases their appeal. Depth is given to Lewis's fiction not only by the important nature of his themes but also by his ability to use myth in fiction to give these themes imaginative life.
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