Unity and Diversity, Love and Conflict:

An Exploration of the Philosophy of Life in C.S. Lewis's Cosmic Trilogy

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Abstract

The subject of this thesis is to explore the philosophy of life that informs C.S. Lewis's Cosmic Trilogy (*Out of the Silent Planet*, *Perelandra* and *That Hideous Strength)*. These texts are "spiritual adventures" which exemplify Lewis's phenomenology of spiritual progress - the movement from self-centredness to Other-centredness. I perform a close reading of the trilogy and attempt to understand the way(s) in which the three major thematic threads – Conflict, Love, and the relationship between Unity and Diversity – all contribute to the proposed phenomenology of the spirit. In the final chapter, I use Kierkegaard's "stages in life's way" (the aesthetic, ethical and religious) as a structural frame for understanding the trilogy's dialectical movement. I also take the unusual step of codifying the fruits of my exploration into what I call 'the Cosmic Manifesto,' which serves as my creative engagement with the results of the philosophical exploration. My research shows that the philosophy of life is expressed through a tripartite spiritual journey. The traveller firstly visits the sphere of Mars, which entails developing clear perception and overcoming fear of the Other. Next, the traveller must pass through the sphere of Venus, where – through courageous action on behalf of the Other – s/he learns the nature of self-sacrificial love. Successfully traversing these two stages, the traveller then apprehends the spirit of Harmonia, the love-child of Mars and Venus. As a result, the ideal relation between the self and the Other – unity in diversity – is discovered. I conclude that the philosophy of life underlying the trilogy is both aesthetically, ethically and religiously rich, and is an insightful perspective on a "life worth living."

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Abbreviations

Out of the Silent Planet ____ *OSP*

Perelandra ____ *Per*

That Hideous Strength ____ *THS*

The Abolition of Man ____ *AM*

The Discarded Image ____ *DI*

An Experiment in Criticism ____ *EC*

The Four Loves ____ *FL*

The Last Battle ____ *LB*

The Letters of C. S. Lewis ____ *LCSL*

Collected Letters of C.S. Lewis Vol. 2. ____ CL

The Problem of Pain ____ *PP*

Surprised By Joy ____ *SBJ*

On the Genealogy of Morals ____ *GM*

Beyond Good and Evil ____ *BGE*

Thus Spoke Zarathustra ____ *TSZ*

"Is Progress Possible?" ____ "Progress"

"A Reply to Professor Haldane" ____ "A Reply"

"Sometimes Fairy Stories May
Say Best What's To Be Said" ____ "Sometimes"

"It All Began with a Picture..." ____ "It All Began"

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Chapter 1

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Introducing the Cosmic Trilogy and a Philosophy of Life

All actual life is encounter.

Martin Buber, *I and Thou*[1]

Good philosophy must exist, if for no other reason, because bad philosophy needs to be answered.

C.S. Lewis, "Learning in War-time"[2]

Thesis Statement: Exploring the Cosmic Trilogy's Philosophy of Life

The subject of my research is to explore the philosophy of life that informs C.S. Lewis's Cosmic Trilogy, which is composed of *Out of the Silent Planet*, *Perelandra* and *That Hideous Strength* (hereafter referred to as *OSP*, *Perelandra* or *Per, THS*). These three texts contain in themselves an entire worldview – at times made explicit, often only implied. In the Cosmic Trilogy, the encoded worldview is worth exploring both for its own sake (to the modern and postmodern mind it is a strange cosmos) and for the insights it gives for our own life-world and how one might approach living within it. I will argue that the texts' inherent philosophy of life, which is encapsulated conceptually in the concepts of conflict, love, unity and diversity, is a good one – and particularly insightful when attempting to develop a theory and practice of the good life.

For many readers, the Cosmic Trilogy is replete with epiphany and insight. When the authorial voice describes a situation, or reports the protagonist's thoughts about a certain event, in each case the description 'jumps out' and prompts a mental response: "Yes – that's how it is! He's captured the essence of that moment."[3] Tom Morris records a similar response, referring to Lewis's work in general: "I recall finding in his books sentences of such insight, and unexpected phrases of such perfection, that I would just sit and stare at the

[1] *I and Thou* 62.

[2] *Fern Seed and Elephants* 34.

[3] Given my initial characterisation of reading the trilogy, it should not be a surprise that I view Lewis as a phenomenologist: someone seeking to uncover the essence, indeed, the quintessence of being-in-the-world. For he starts from the given, from an intuition, and then begins the dual process of stripping down his target even while building it up again, to arrive at, insofar as it is possible, a non-reductive understanding of the phenomenon of his study.

words, thinking to myself, *I wish I had been able to say it that way*. It was all so wise, and yet at the same time so simple. I was astonished" (9). These epiphanies, as I call them, are like the external parts of a root vegetable; they are green signs of something deeper, an underlying source full of nourishment. This source is the philosophy of life that I explore in the coming chapters.

Scope and Method of Exploration

The core of this thesis is an exploration of those philosophical ideas informing the trilogy's worldview. I use the term exploration for good reason: the word does not imply a systematic exegesis that attempts to cover all the relevant themes and fit them into a philosophical system. On the contrary, my analysis is impressionistic by nature, dependent on what is found – and it therefore often relies upon those portions of the text that 'jump out': the epiphanic portions. On the relevant sections, I perform a close reading and attempt to understand the way(s) in which the three major thematic movements – Conflict, Love, and the unity in diversity expressed by Harmony – are illuminated thereby. The chapter divisions and sub-divisions, as structured, allow me to treat each novel separately while also stressing the above-mentioned themes. Each chapter is basically divided into two sections: one on Conflict, and the other on Love. In addition to this, the chapter looking at *OSP* has a third section called 'Loving Conflict,' the *Perelandra* chapter has a section on 'The Great Dance,' and in my discussion of *THS,* I include a section on 'Harmony.' These structural divisions preserve the distinct unity of each text while also positioning each one in thematic relation to the other two. In the final chapter, beyond concluding my exploration into the trilogy's philosophy of life, I also take the unusual step of codifying the fruits of my exploration into what I call 'the Cosmic Manifesto.' Given Lewis's usage of indirect communication[4] to express the trilogy's philosophy of life, I believe it to be a natural extension of my project to do the same, albeit in a distilled form. In the manifesto, I take certain stylistic liberties and depart from conventional academic prose. My intention is to give it an aesthetic timbre that corresponds to the trilogy itself. Indeed, one might call this final section my creative engagement with the fruits of philosophical exploration.

In the course of the exploration, I do not offer a history of Lewis's ideas, philosophical or otherwise, as expressed in the Cosmic Trilogy. Of course, his ideological stance, religious faith, literary forebears and biography are all important factors in *why* he

[4] See p. 10 for an explanation of this term.

wrote what he wrote. Exploring this would be the task of a literary biographer, and does not correspond to my interest as a philosophical critic: the texts' philosophy, primarily as abstracted from the author. I do not attempt to ignore Lewis's literary or philosophical influences – sometimes I will advert to them – but these are not my main focus.

Philosophy, Wisdom and Life

I follow Adam Barkman[5] in using Pierre Hadot's description of "philosophy as a way of life," in which philosophy, understood in its ancient sense, is defined as being "a method of spiritual progress which demanded radical conversion and transformation of the individual's way of being" (Hadot 265). This definition of philosophy is particularly apposite given that it maps well on to the perspective which Lewis came to hold about the subject. As he relates in his autobiography:

> Once, when [Dom Bede Griffiths] and [Owen] Barfield were lunching in my room, I happened to refer to philosophy as "a subject."
> "It wasn't a *subject* to Plato," said Barfield, "it was a way." The quiet but fervent agreement of Griffiths, and the quick glance of understanding between these two, revealed to me my own frivolity. (*SBJ* 225)

I see the etymology of philosophy as another useful point of departure from which to elucidate a fuller account of what philosophy means. Thus an even simpler definition: "[p]hilosophy is the love of wisdom" (Morris 10); doing philosophy means to commit (passionately) to becoming wise. Not merely that, but as Morris says in his preface to *C.S. Lewis as Philosopher*, it is also the "unending desire to find [wisdom], understand it, put it into action and pass it on to others" (10). Wisdom is knowledge put into practise, knowledge made *meaningful*. It is a movement from the abstract and propositional to the actual, the real; wisdom implies change in the realm of human beliefs and behaviour. Philosophy, as a way of life that aims towards wisdom, is concerned not only with asking questions, but also with answering these questions – the "quest for certainty" (qtd. in Evans 56) as John Dewey has described it.[6]

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[5] Barkman is the author of *C.S. Lewis and Philosophy as a Way of Life*, a historical analysis of Lewis's philosophical thought.

[6] It will be immediately obvious that I am ignoring any meta-narratives, often present in post-structuralist / postmodern perspectives, which de-legitimise the very idea of a "quest for certainty." Although the epistemological scepticism and cynicism these lenses provoke is of interest, in the everyday world of our experience, certainty must be grasped and chosen, and whether articulated or not, a teleology is always presupposed. Given my desire to elucidate a philosophy of life, and not merely some *niche* philosophy (understood as an academic discipline), I therefore proceed from an imagined *Lebenswelt* in which certain

Developing a Philosophy of Life

Sigmund Freud defines a worldview as follows:

> an intellectual construction which gives a unified solution of all the problems of our existence in virtue of a comprehensive hypothesis, a construction, therefore, in which no question is left open and in which everything in which we are interested finds a place. [...] [T]he possession of such a *Weltanschauung* is one of the ideal wishes of mankind. When one believes in such a thing, one feels secure in life, one knows what one ought to strive after, and how one ought to organise one's emotions and interests to the best purpose. ("Lecture XXXV")

One might possess a certain worldview, a "unified solution," and yet in practise not feel "secure in life" nor actually strive after the "best purpose." This fact of this disconnect is central to my own idea of a philosophy of life, which I propose as a bridging concept, presupposing a world-view *and* 'world-action': the "intellectual construction" leads to telos-orientated, concrete behaviour. Thus, for the sake of clarity, I define a 'philosophy of life' as essentially a worldview (*Weltanschauung*) but with an emphasis on the corresponding outworking of that worldview.

In attempting to develop a philosophy of life, there are any number of ways in which one might proceed – beginning, for instance, with the concept of freedom, over against determinism (or slavery). The discussion would then always return to this fundamental, and attempt to show how all other central or peripheral concepts relate to it (or do not relate). There is of course something slightly arbitrary, at an epistemological level, on deciding to view existence through a certain explanatory lens. Yet as I see it, the reason Heidegger (for example) chose 'Being' and 'Time' is because he wanted to *emphasise* these elements, and to show that they could be considered among the basic, prior, fundamental things: not necessarily assert their priority against other frames of viewing the world. Søren Kierkegaard spoke of "the aesthetic, ethical, and religious as 'spheres of existence'" (Evans 68) and such a tripartite categorisation informs the way I view and conclude my exploration of the Cosmic Trilogy's philosophy of life. This draws together the diverse foci of each chapter into a whole, structured according to Kierkegaard's three "stages in life's way" (Evans 38), which in many ways maps onto the concepts of Conflict, Love and Harmony, and serves as a useful explanatory framework and means of ordering the phenomenology of the human spirit.

(fictional) persons must find certainties, act upon them, and do so for some end in mind. I will spend no time arguing for the "quest for certainty" and its corollaries; this exploration merely presupposes it.

Unity and Diversity, Love and Conflict

The title of this thesis – Unity and Diversity, Love and Conflict – has been chosen to reflect the concerns of the trilogy and provide an important framework, in addition to Kierkegaard's existential spheres, for exploring the trilogy's philosophy of life. There are several reasons why I chose these concepts specifically. Firstly, upon reading the Cosmic Trilogy, these pairs commended themselves to me as appropriate lenses through which to view and understand the trilogy. This intuition grasped not only at the thematic instances of conflict, love, unity and diversity in the texts, but also mapped directly on to the planetary connotations of Mars and Venus – and the product of their mythological union, Harmonia (which, as I argue, encompasses the idea of a 'diverse unity' or 'unity in diversity'). Secondly, these ideas, combined with their astrological significance, are fundamental. Often used by philosophers, theologians and mystics to describe the interrelated nature of human experience and reality, this conceptual triad will help elucidate Lewis's view that "every one of us is already a living dialectic, a psychomachia,[7] containing striking opposites" (Holmer 16). As will become apparent, this "living dialectic" or "psychomachia" – which leads to a harmonious, cosmic 'psychosynthesis,' if you will – is paramount if one is to understand the trilogy's philosophy of life.

Literature as Philosophy?

Michael Ward, when discussing other literary critics' attempts to define 'the message' of *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, claims that it "is the book itself in all its fullness. To extract religious or philosophical or moral 'truths' from the story is to misread it, according to Lewis's critical principles" (67). He then quotes from *The Personal Heresy* in which Lewis asserts of poetry that "[w]hat it 'says' is the total, concrete experience it gives to the right reader [...]" (114). Ward's (and Lewis's) claims are bold ones, implying the idea that any reductive literary critique of a text (that seeks to extract 'the message') is a misreading.

I argue that it is appropriate to read literature, like Lewis's trilogy, as philosophy – largely because my enterprise is primarily that of philosophical or ethical criticism, not literary criticism. Rather than attempting to elucidate the "total, concrete experience" which the "right reader" would receive by reading *OSP*, *Per* or *THS* for the first time, my task is to explore the philosophy of life underlying the events, symbols and narratives of the trilogy: all of which contribute to (but do not define) the reading experience. Lewis himself seems to

[7] Conflict of the soul.

accept the legitimacy of reading his trilogy both "[a]s a philosophical critic" and "as a literary critic" ("A Reply" 98).

Furthermore, I would reject the overly sacred view of literature as presented by Ward. Attempting to mine a poem, or novel, for philosophical truths would not be to misread it. To do so, however, *and* assert that one has thereby captured the poem's meaning or "what it 'says'" *would* be. Underlying my position is the idea that, in essence, there is a false dichotomy made by critics between literature (as an art) and other disciplines like philosophy. To define literature and philosophy in terms of language, the former tends towards the study of ambivalent, equivocal utterances, whereas the latter tends towards the study of certain, unequivocal utterances. I will illustrate this with two examples: James Joyce's *Ulysses* (literature) on the one hand and John Rawls's *A Theory of Justice* (philosophy) on the other. In both texts, the reader encounters utterances about the individual's place in society. While the latter attempts to treat this topic in a systematic, definite fashion, the former relies upon equivocation and a multitude of indefinite resonances. Both seek to describe reality (or a kind of reality) and offer a means of navigating it – that is, a form; this much is necessary if they are to possess meaningful content for their audience. There is, thus, a continuum between philosophical and literary language; some utterances transgress the borders of certainty, impinging upon the realm of equivocation and speculation. One might think of Nietzsche's ahistorical *On the Genealogy of Morals* here, which for the most part presents itself as a philological study of moral concepts. Others *appear* equivocal, while actually pointing towards a singular meaning or sense (allegories like Lewis's own *The Pilgrim's Regress* would fit this category). And always – in both philosophy and literature – utterances are not solitary, but are gregarious in nature. By this fact they take on resonances and distinctions otherwise impossible, and are able to provide comprehensive descriptions of reality and accompanying systems to navigate it.

My point about these two types of utterance-collections, the philosophical and literary, is that both are made of the same substance. Literature, as an art, cannot be treated in a sacrosanct manner or viewed as something wholly different when it is compared to other written disciplines (be it philosophy, politics, or sociology). To read works of literature as if they were philosophy is thus not an "misreading": on the contrary, reading literature as a philosophical critic is a way of reading past the style, the equivocation, the puns and the poetic for those utterances about reality that are concealed in the subtext. This way of reading does not demean the utterances' presentation(s) (the formal, aesthetic aspects), nor the

encountered "total, concrete experience," but rather aims to better understand *why* the formal literary techniques might feel substantial and why the text has the effect it does.

Furthermore, there is a rich tradition in support of such a perspective. Take, for instance, works of literature that are read for their philosophical suggestiveness: Tolstoy's *Death of Ivan Ilyich* (which deals with the nature and meaning of death, and thus life), Camus' *The Outsider* (dealing with alienation, freedom, human personality), Sartre's *Nausea* (existential dread), Kierkegaard's *Either/Or* (the nature of the aesthetic and ethical). I would place the Cosmic Trilogy in a similar category insofar as it deals with the phenomenology of the spirit.

Transformative Power of Literature

Paul L. Holmer, an American theologian-philosopher whose scholarly focus was Kierkegaard and Wittgenstein, had a keen passion for Lewis's work. The fruit of this passion is his *C.S. Lewis: The Shape of His Faith and Thought*, which Walter Hooper, one-time secretary and executor of Lewis's literary estate, calls "the best book ever written about Lewis" (Foreword). One element of what Holmer does so well is revealed in the facility with which he describes what literature, and Lewis's brand of it in particular, succeeds in doing to the perceptive reader. He claims, firstly, that literature "communicates in such a way that, when successful, it creates new capabilities and capacities, powers and a kind of roominess in the human personality" (20). A second claim of interest is that "Lewis's literature shows us something without quite arguing it. [...] Lewis would have it that literature actually creates thoughts in us; it is not only about thoughts, it causes them to exist" (20). Thirdly, he asserts that "Literature [...] gets us used to people; it presents them as subjects and not as objects" (41). Finally, he makes the point that "Literature [...] brings one to a kind of objectivity and grip upon the world that is better than one's idiosyncratic grip"; it leads one to "a logic that is cosmic [...] what Ludwig Wittgenstein called a 'grammar,' a way that things fall together and the pattern of rules which articulate the way things are" (42). To make Holmer's claims less abstract, I quote Lewis's assertion that in stories,

> we have *seen* how destiny and free will can be combined, even how free will is the *modus operandi* of destiny. The story does what no theorem can quite do. It may not be 'like real life' in the superficial sense: but it sets before us an image of what reality may well be like at some more central region. ("On Stories" 39)

Lewis makes even bolder claims than Holmer. He asserts that "good stories [of the mythopoeic variety, like Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* or Lindsay's *Voyage to Arcturus*]

are actual additions to life; they give, like certain rare dreams, sensations we never had before, and enlarge our conception of the range of possible experience" ("On Science-fiction" 93). He also mentions that (successful) mythopoeic literature is able to "generalise while remaining concrete, to present in palpable form not concepts or even experiences but whole classes of experience, and to throw off irrelevancies" ("Sometimes" 74).

These are strong claims. They all express a movement of some sort, a transference or motivational force, which passes from the literary work into the reader. Holmer and Lewis believe that ideas have consequences; that literature can shape the behaviour and self-understanding of readers. It simulates an encounter with what Buber calls a *Thou,* a subjectivity that can challenge one's worldview and sometimes even convince the reader of his or her own deficiencies: so much so that one begins to see and act differently. To prove scientifically that literature is efficacious in this way is a task that goes beyond the scope of this thesis (and as science often regards ideas as epiphenomenal, I am not certain a proof is even possible). For this reason, I presuppose based on personal experience – and the testimonial evidence of fellow readers – that literature is transformative.

"Cosmic Romance"

Lewis's Cosmic Trilogy is inspired largely by the science-fiction of writers like H.G. Wells, David Lindsay, Olaf Stapledon, J.B.S. Haldane and others. While Lewis does imply that his books are examples of science-fiction,[8] in practice he did not respect conventional genre boundaries and used science-fiction tropes and motifs in ways which seem closer to fantasy or myth. For instance, David Downing notes that "*Perelandra* is more clearly a fantasy from the start" (142) and that in various places Lewis calls his stories "'romances,' 'tall stories,' and 'fairy-tales'" (qtd. in Downing 142). Two of the largest influences on Lewis were H.G. Well's *The First Men in the Moon* and David Lindsay's science fiction classic, *Voyage to Arcturus*. The former provided something of a narrative model for Lewis to follow, as well as a statement of Wells's characteristic scientism, to which Lewis writes back during the course of the trilogy.[9] In the latter's case, Lewis claims that Lindsay "is recording a lived dialectic" and is "the first writer to discover what 'other planets' are really good for in fiction," namely, travel to "another dimension" – the "region of the spirit" ("On Stories" 35). In a letter to the poet Ruth Pitter, Lewis tells her that it was "[f]rom Lindsay [he] first learned what other planets in fiction are really for; *spiritual* adventures" (qtd. in Hooper 17). The spiritualised

[8] See "Unreal Estates".
[9] See pp. 24-26.

science-fiction which Lewis writes is particularly suited to embody different philosophies of life, and is the ideal milieu for philosophical exploration. Not bound to genre expectations, Lewis can far more easily "deal with issues far more serious than those realistic fiction deals with; real problems about human destiny and so on" ("Unreal Estates" 183). As will become apparent, the trilogy becomes a means of undermining philosophies that, in Lewis's view, were plaguing the genre and public imagination at that time. The depiction of "a confrontation of ideologies" (Sellin 108) in the trilogy serves to emphasise its science-fiction heritage (which tends to be concerned with spatial and moral liminality, and thus conflict), but Lewis also subverts this heritage through his emphasis on spiritual rather than material reality. This becomes apparent in Lewis's explanation for why he uses differing modes of interplanetary transportation in *OSP* and *Per*: "I took a hero once to Mars in a space-ship, but when I knew better I had angels convey him to Venus" ("On Science-fiction" 91).

Central to the peculiar conflation of genre exhibited by the trilogy is a view of the cosmos which Lewis called "The Discarded Image" in his eponymously-titled book. Because it was both to his taste and the subject of his scholarly research, Lewis's imagination was heavily influenced by medieval cosmology. The 'phenomenology of the spirit' exemplified in the seven spheres of the Ptolemaic cosmos (the Martial, Saturnine, Jovial, Lunar, Venereal, Mercurial, and Solar) have "permanent value as spiritual symbols" ("The Alliterative Metre" 24) and for this reason Lewis puts them to use in the Cosmic Trilogy. Michael Ward's ground-breaking study *Planet Narnia* examines how Lewis has done this in *The Chronicles of Narnia*, and much of his research is also applicable to understanding what Lewis does in the Cosmic Trilogy.

On the surface, there seems to be a genre conflict between the first two novels and *THS*. The first two are clearly derived from a mixture of science-fiction and myth. *THS*, however, has dispensed with the planetary journeys and reads more like a novel of social realism. Nevertheless, even if there are no voyages to other planets in *THS*, the planets, as it were, all journey to Earth instead; Mars and Venus are very much present. As such, all three novels conform to Lewis's revised view of science-fiction as "spiritual adventure." Perhaps Ward says it best when he describes the trilogy as "cosmic romance" (152); by invoking the genre of romance (the precursor to modern fantasy), this denomination includes both the science-fiction setting ("cosmic") and the more fantastic or mythopoeic elements ("romance").

Lewis's Authorial Intentions and Indirect Communication

Lewis's motivations for writing the trilogy are not straightforward. Brian Aldiss, in conversation with Lewis and Kingsley Amis, suggests that Lewis "constructed Perelandra for the didactic purpose." Lewis replies: "Yes. Everyone thinks that. They are quite wrong [...] I never started from a message or a moral" ("Unreal Estates" 182). In reaction to accusations that *The Chronicles of Narnia* were merely a way of saying "something about Christianity to children" and that he "drew up a list of basic Christian truths and hammered out 'allegories' to embody them," he responds that "[t]his is all pure moonshine. I couldn't write in that way at all" ("Sometimes" 72). Critics of both the Christian and non-Christian variety have tended to reduce Lewis's fiction to merely stylised apologetics. Charles Moorman, for instance, writes that "Lewis's main aim in the creation of the silent-planet myth is to create and maintain a metaphor that will serve to carry in fictional form the basic tenets of Christianity and present them from a non-Christian point of view, but without reference to normal Christian symbols" (qtd. in Downing 39).

Lewis claims, rather, that "[a]ll my seven Narnian books, and my three science fiction books, began with seeing pictures in my head [...] not story, just pictures" ("It All Began" 79). "[S]omething must happen" ("Unreal Estates" 181) in the context of these pictures if they are to be fully realised, and because Lewis is "interested in [...] particular ideas," he is able to weave a narrative which makes those initial images the milieu in which "extraordinary things" ("Unreal Estates" 182) take place. While he denies didactic intent, Lewis is willing to accept, for instance, that "*Perelandra* [...] is mainly for my co-religionists" ("A Reply" 101). They would find *Perelandra* interesting, I suspect, because Lewis retells Eve's temptation with a vastly different outcome. Nevertheless, Lewis's qualification ("mainly") indicates that it is not *just* for them; many non-Christians find the story poignant and imaginatively rich, irrespective of the deeper significance it has for Christians.

Moving onto the "particular ideas" which enabled his pictures to come to life, Lewis describes the Cosmic Trilogy "as imaginative hypotheses illustrating what I believe to be theological truths" (qtd. in Hilder 48). Lewis says elsewhere that "the characteristics of the planets, as conceived by medieval astrology, seem to me to have a permanent value as spiritual symbols – to provide a *Phänomenologie des Geistes* which is specifically worthwhile in our own generation" ("The Alliterative Metre" 24). The trilogy is thus "infused throughout with astrological symbolism" (Ward 245). Lewis disagreed with the

"Saturnocentric" bias expressed in T.S. Eliot and other modernists' gloomy imaginations, and "[p]art of [his] *raison d'être* as a writer" (Ward 206) was to rehabilitate the other planets' influences. If one is to understand the "lived dialectic" ("On Stories" 36) which Lewis attempts to emulate in the trilogy, his commitment to these "spiritual symbols" cannot be overemphasised.

At this point, I briefly revisit the transformative aspect of Lewis's literature. Lewis excelled in his fiction at "indirect communication" (Evans 22), an idea usually associated with Kierkegaard. This form of communication relies upon implication rather than explication, and thus expects from the reader (if the implications are to be grasped) an openness to being influenced and surprised by what s/he encounters – rather than reading the text with mere comprehension in mind. Lewis's interest in the "planetary characters" coincided with his belief that they "need to be seized in an intuition [...] we need to know them, not to know about them, *connaître* not *savoir*" (*DI* 109). Later in *DI* he adds that they "need to be lived with imaginatively, not merely learned as concepts" (173).[10]

Lewis thus does not try to communicate propositional knowledge of the planets as he does in *DI*. He prefers to communicate it indirectly. Given this communicative strategy, the content of Lewis's meta-narrative is not, for an open reader, the trilogy's focus and if it appears to be a narrowly didactic, apologetic work for his own Christian worldview, it is because the reader will not accept otherwise. As Lee Rossi says, "[t]he stories do not simply act out, then, the familiar doctrines of Christian theology. Instead the doctrine, as myth and archetype, exists for the story, giving deeper suggestiveness and solemnity to the landscapes and the actions of the characters" (33). Rather than delineating his philosophical positions in a dry, to-the-point manner, Lewis incarnates his proposed philosophy of life through instantiating a "supposition" (*Letters* 283) *within* an inspired, imaginative context; this is what gives his cosmic vision the power to inform and transform the imaginations of his readers. In the same way that the person who practises what s/he preaches is a striking figure, so can a concrete exemplification of a certain theory, if well done, be very striking indeed. Without using indirect communication, the danger is that only the head will listen, but not the heart.

[10]Ward claims that in the Cosmic Trilogy Lewis "went some way toward helping his readers acquire a *connaître*-like knowledge of the planets" such that "we know (*savoir*) what it is that we are expected to know (*connaître*)" (229). Although I mostly agree with this claim, I do think that the trilogy occasionally captures the "*Phänomenologie des Geistes*" ("Alliterative Metre" 24) as fully as Ward claims Lewis does in *The Chronicles of Narnia*.

Chapter 2

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Conflict, Loving Conflict and Love in *Out of the Silent Planet*

> At last it dawned upon him that it was not they, but his own species, that were the puzzle.
>
> C.S. Lewis *OSP*[1]

Sanford Schwartz has described *OSP* as being an "exploration of our troubled reckonings with human, animal, and extraterrestrial Otherness" (22). These "troubled reckonings" are what I will focus on in the following chapter: the perceptual (or aesthetic) conflict with the Other, and how one may recognise and act appropriately towards it – developing a love for the Other. Since the story is largely situated on Mars, a discussion of conflict is particularly apposite. Following Ward, I take seriously Lewis's imaginative interest in the Ptolemaic cosmology and therefore treat the martial influence in Malacandra's air as being central to a full understanding of the text's philosophy.[2] Although love is not the central concern of *OSP* (as it is in *Per*), it is nonetheless an important element of the Malacandrian world and Ransom's story; in Ransom's case, the resolution of every conflict leads to greater love. Moreover, the instances of love found in this text foreshadow the love encountered in *Perelandra*.

Lewis said in a letter that *OSP* is "Ransom's *enfance*" (qtd. in Downing 104). It is the beginning of a journey – a stage of life – that he must traverse if he is to transcend what Downing calls "his soul's childhood" (104). C. M. Manlove, in his study of Lewis's fiction, concurs: "much of the book is taken up with sojourning and with learning [...] [Ransom] has to learn, learn about himself, learn to accept the alien, learn that life is far vaster than any previous categorization of his mind [...] This is a story of preparation" (30). The education and preparation Ransom undergoes stems from the fact that Ransom's "one besetting sin is anxiety" (Walsh 119), and this 'sin' is what prompts a war of the soul in Ransom, a kind of psychomachia. In gradually overcoming his anxieties, Ransom's openness to the Other increases – which manifests itself in the courage required to embrace the Other, that is, to love.

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[1] *OSP* 75.
[2] See overleaf.

Beyond the primary narrative thread of Ransom's journey, Lewis explains that it was against an "outlook on life" characterised by "the 'metabiological' heresy" that he wrote *OSP*, calling it a "satiric fantasy" ("A Reply" 101). Downing explains that the heresy is "a philosophy that projects Darwinism into the metaphysical sphere" (36). Lewis thought that the brand of scientism or evolutionism popularised by J.B.S. Haldane, H.G. Wells, Olaf Stapledon and others was "diabolical"; it gave up a belief in a qualitative view of human life in favour only of a quantitative one – the idea that survival and utility trump ethics and immutable goodness. The anxiety underlying such a "philosophy of life" (*OSP* 23) – the fear of death and an unknown future – manifests itself in a kind of heroism which Monika Hilder calls "classical heroism" or "masculine heroism" (8). This is seen fully in the figure of Weston, but also partially in Ransom, who must learn "spiritual" or "feminine" heroism (13) in its stead. As such, the story may be understood as a "troubled reckoning" between two competing philosophies of life. Weston, as the personification of the metabiological heresy, is satirised and thus schooled in the infantile nature of his views. He is afforded the chance to repent (and does not). Ransom, who exhibits certain elements of Weston's philosophy of life, must unlearn his anthropocentric tendencies and repent from his anxious unwillingness to grant rationality to anything other than his own species. In learning to be a hero of a different sort – one defined by obedience and trust, rather than by disobedience and fear-based independence – he exemplifies the moral and metaphysical victory of an Other-centred, logocentric perspective[3] over Self-centred, anthropocentric "Westonism" (*LCSL* 166).

In *The Discarded Image*, Lewis explains how, in the "unfallen translunary world [...] there come to be such things as 'bad' or 'malefical' planets". He says "they are bad only in relation to us" and later, "[t]he temperament derived from each planet can be turned either to a good or a bad use. Born under Mars, "you are qualified to become [...] either an Attila or a martyr" (*DI* 116-7). Mars may be called *Infortuna Minor* – but this is clearly a name used only from a sublunary perspective.[4] Michael Ward in *Planet Narnia* (2008) discusses the development of Mars in classical thought, and elucidates possible resonances a depiction of Mars might contain:

[3] This idea will be explained in further detail during the course of the chapter.
[4] When I use the term 'sublunary,' it describes the influence of sinfulness or corruption, which in medieval astrology permeates the atmosphere beneath the nearest sphere to Earth, Luna (the moon). The term may be understood as shorthand for 'fallen' or 'sinful.' 'Translunary' thus amounts to 'unfallen' or 'sinless' – for that which is beyond the moon is not subject to corruption.

> Mars was not always or only a god of war. Originally, he was a god of vegetation and fertility [...] and his functions were rustic. Under the name *Mars Silvanus* (who later became a god in his own right), he lived in forests and mountains and looked after the well-being of cattle [...] He was the spring-time divinity (the vernal month of March became consecrated to and named after him) and *Mars Gradivus* ('to become big, to grow') was another of his titles. His warrior functions only came later, but in the end they superseded his former roles, which then became the preserve of Liber and Ceres. When he became the god of battle, Mars retained his former title of *Gradivus*, but it had changed its meaning and was now connected with the verb *gradi*, 'to march.' (82-83)

Ward goes on to say that "this [Martial duality] helps to explain why Ransom's visit to Mars is not the occasion for much fighting," because "Lewis is drawing on [Mars's] origin as a vegetation deity to supplement and balance the militaristic aspects" (83). Perhaps in the sense of physical fighting, this is true of the story. Other than the initial shooting of the *hnakra* after landing on Malacandra, the *hnakra*-hunt with Hyoi, and lastly Hyoi's murder, physical conflict does not occur. This is surely because of Lewis's recognition that his interplanetary stories were to be less science-fiction than 'spirit-fiction.' As Lewis wrote in a letter to Ruth Pitter, "[he] learned what other planets in fiction are really for; for *spiritual* adventures" (qtd. in Hooper 17). It thus makes sense that the fighting takes place within Ransom's soul, and between the spirits of two opposing philosophies of life. In addition, perhaps the maturation which can result from psychomachia (assuming the right psychic elements win) better exemplifies a translunary understanding of Mars, taking into account both epithets *Silvanus* and *Gradivus*. This is because in the "spiritual adventure" of *OSP*, one finds the growth and straightening of Ransom's character and personality such that he later personifies a courageous, upright warrior who "learned war" while battling the Un-man on Perelandra (*THS* 307). He is indeed "[b]orn under Mars," becoming a kind of "martyr" (*DI* 117). Although Downing might say that "astrology plays only an incidental role in [*OSP*]," in fact what he calls "the reality of planetary 'influences'" (78) permeates the entire trilogy.

The Plot of *Out of the Silent Planet*

Before continuing with my exploration of the text, a brief outline of *OSP*'s plot might be convenient. The story is a space-travel narrative that recounts the adventures of a man called Elwin Ransom. A philologist from Cambridge, he is kidnapped by two ill-intentioned men, Weston and Devine. He is taken on a voyage from Earth, which Ransom later comes to know as Thulcandra (the "silent planet" (*OSP* 97) of the title), towards Mars, known as Malacandra

by its inhabitants. Upon his arrival, Ransom escapes from his captors and the alien creatures for whom he was brought. Thrown then into a strange and terrifying world, Ransom has a near mental breakdown: his fear is exacerbated by the fact that his captors had intended him as a blood sacrifice, a 'ransom' in order to curry favour with certain of the local Malacandrians[5] whom they had met during their previous landing. In spite of his fear, Ransom gradually comes to terms with what is described as the "extra-terrestrial Otherness" (33) of Malacandra and its inhabitants. He does this in various ways. He begins to understand the organising principle of the landscape (which he characterises as perpendicularity). He encounters and allows himself to trust a sentient, benevolent alien species called the *hrossa*; he goes on to learn their language and become part of their community for a time. He eventually confronts his fear of the *sorns*,[6] the alien species who had – according to his captors – wanted a human sacrifice. Finally, riding on the back of a *sorn* (who turns out to be quite friendly), he travels to meet the angelic *Oyarsa* (ruler, presiding spirit) of Mars, who explains and clarifies the whole affair. At this point Ransom also acts as a translator between the *Oyarsa* and his former captors (who are themselves captured by the Malacandrians for shooting Hyoi, Ransom's *hross* friend). The three humans are then returned to Earth: Ransom willingly, the other two forcibly.

Conflict in *OSP*

If *OSP* is indeed Ransom's childhood, then it would follow that he must, like a young child, learn how to distinguish between the diversity of impressions that an initially alien world throws at him. As Wolfhart Pannenberg says, "[p]rimordially, and in fact repeatedly, men stand helpless before such diversity. That is man's original situation in the world – especially that of the child. Therefore, it is initially necessary to orient oneself and to obtain an overview" (15). And this is what occurs in Ransom's case, but it is not straightforward or simple matter for him to "orient [him]self" correctly.

[5] Although others (e.g. Richard Purtill) have employed the forms "Malacandran", "Perelandran", I follow Lewis in the both adjectival and nominative "Malacandrian", "Perelandrian" and "Thulcandrian" – Cf. "the visible Malacandrians were but the smallest part of the silent consistory which surrounded him" (121) and "The Thulcandrians feared the *sorns* and were very unteachable" (124).

[6] Both the form '*sorns*' and '*séroni*' are used as the plural for *sorn*. I shall primarily use the former, as this is the term mostly used (the *Oyarsa* uses it too). I use the latter when referring to all three species together.

Space and Deep Heaven

Part of what Lewis has achieved in the trilogy, and indeed elsewhere in his writings, is to revise the common-sense phenomenology of his readers, indeed, to subvert and overturn their presuppositions about the nature of the world. Perhaps one of the most striking re-definitions that Lewis offers his readers in *OSP* is 'space': the region between the planets and stars. From a modern, earth-bound human perspective, space is often perceived as being the *absence* of matter (viewed in purely material terms). It is cold, dark, empty, and, if the circumstances are right, rather sinister. Ransom remarks to Weston "I always thought space was dark and cold" (*OSP* 26). In *DI,* Lewis writes how "[t]he 'space' of modern astronomy may arouse terror, or bewilderment [...]" (99). Yet in Lewis's re-imagined Ptolemaic cosmology of the trilogy, space is presented in a manner "overwhelming in its greatness but satisfying in its harmony" (*DI* 99). Ransom's experience is one of (to quote the Green Lady) "delight with terror in it" (*Per* 67). There is no fear or terror of the 'void of space' popularised by science-fiction – for he involuntarily perceives that space is not a negative void, but instead a positive abundance. When Ransom first wakes up in the space-ship, he is struck by the excessive heat and light around him: a heat which, unlike the terrestrial form, "produced no tendency to drowsiness" (25). Soon thereafter, Ransom notes the "glory of the light" (32) filling what he calls, echoing Milton, "this heaven, these happy climes" (32). Ransom's perception, from this point onwards, displays what Pannenberg calls "openness to the world" (15). He is open to having his former assumptions overturned or inverted – and not only about space, as will be seen.

When Ransom finally returns from Malacandra in the space-ship, his perspective on space *qua* "happy climes" is reinforced. It is described as "the ocean of eternal noon" (151), a place "full of life in the most literal sense, full of living creatures" (152). Ransom encounters space as a region of the spirit – appropriate given his belief that interplanetary travel makes for what Lewis calls "*spiritual* adventures" (qtd. in Hooper 17). In spite of the real possibility of the ship's disintegration before reaching Earth, he believes that "life was waiting outside the little iron eggshell in which they rode, ready at any moment to break in, and that, if it killed them, it would kill them by excess of its vitality" (151-2). The term "Deep Heaven" (*Per* 211) best captures this revised understanding of space. Rather than being dark and cold, it is light and warm; rather than being empty, it is full; rather than being sinister, it is benevolent, rather than being endless, it is *deep*. Because of Ransom's "receptivity to 'otherness' that mitigates the terror of infinite space" (Schwartz 34), he is enabled to

understand its true nature. It is the "marvellous" (*OSP* 28) stage of the Great Dance, which will be discussed in Chapter Three.

The Alien Environment

Ransom is initially struck dumb by the "unearthly strangeness [...] of the bright, still, sparkling, unintelligible landscape [of Malacandra] – with needling shapes of pale green, thousands of feet high, with sheets of dazzling blue sodawater, and acres of rose-red soapsuds" (42). Yet he is far better prepared to navigate his conflict with the alien landscape than he is to navigate his confrontation with the alien creatures that inhabit it. As the narrator explains, "[t]he same peculiar twist of imagination which led [Ransom] to people the universe with monsters had somehow taught him to expect nothing on a strange planet except rocky desolation or else a network of nightmare machines" (39-40) – and a desolate or nightmarish landscape is precisely what he does not find. Lewis does well to elucidate the complexity of perception: it is possible to perceive objects through one's retinas – but this is a very different thing to *seeing*, which presupposes a kind of knowledge. Beyond seeing colours, Ransom at first receives sense impressions of Malacandra quite indiscriminately:

> He gazed about him, and the very intensity of his desire to take in the new world at a glance defeated itself. He saw nothing but colours – colours that refused to form themselves into things. Moreover, he knew nothing yet well enough to see it: you cannot see things till you know roughly what they are. (39)

But this defeat does not last long, because "a moment later he recognised the flat belt of light blue as a sheet of water, [...] They were on the shore of a lake or river" (39). At this point, the nature of Ransom's perceptual conflict with Malacandrian phenomena alters. Ransom begins interpreting his sense impressions through "a vague memory of earthly geography" (46); by this, he is able to re-order and understand the initially alien impressions that he receives. As his experiences and utilisations of the Malacandrian environment grow in number, the alien landscape becomes increasingly familiar, and less of a perceptual enemy; he makes sense of the "extra-terrestrial Otherness" which surrounds him. This process is, however, not automatic. It requires attentive commitment from Ransom. While running from his captors and the *sorns*, his eyes meet with a "wild confusion of blue, purple and red [...]," for which he does not stop "for a moment's inspection" (44). Inspection would lead to understanding – but, as this example shows, inspection is by no means a necessary action.

This implies the impossibility of understanding phenomena without some sort of

dialectic between, firstly, the initial brute impressions of sense perception and secondly, the imaginative framing of a hypothetical structure for those perceptions – an "inspection." This dialectic process would eventually result in a confirmation, modification or rejection of one's tentative understanding of the impressions – a means by which "he can control the diversity of sensations that storm in upon him" (Pannenberg 15).[7]

I call the process described above the phenomenological dialectic: it is the basis of Ransom's worldview formation, a process which starts from his self and proceeds dialectically to relate itself to alien phenomena based on the increasing quantities (and qualities) of these which he encounters – until the alien Otherness is rendered familiar.[8] Ransom develops a capacity to *recognise*, instead of being dumbstruck by (putatively) incomprehensible phenomena: He is not paralysed by the initial aesthetic conflict. The phenomenological dialectic, once it produces sufficient constructs, means that Ransom's "attention is set free for other things" (Pannenberg 17). Beyond rendering previously-alien phenomena familiar (with all the practical ease and know-how which familiarity provides), the ability to recognise phenomena allows the second-order perception of *beauty* in phenomena – i.e. it enables appreciation. Once Ransom decides that his hypothesis about the Malacandrian equivalent of mountains is valid, the narrator adds that "the mere oddity of the prospect [that such strange physical configurations could be mountains] was swallowed up in the fantastic sublime" (*OSP* 51). As such, attributions of beauty follow from recognition; they do not take place prior to it. If there is to be recognition of phenomena, and thus, an appreciation of beauty, then a dialectic between brute perceptions and their imaginative framing is compulsory.

My claim is strengthened when one considers that Ransom comes to see that "Malacandra [is] beautiful" (39). To him, this is unexpected, as "this possibility had never entered into his speculations about it" (39-40). An explicit analogy is made to his ignorant assumptions about the nature of Martian alien creatures; they are supposed to be unimaginably awful, yet turn out to be sufficiently familiar to describe. The *sorns* are tall and spooky, while the *hrossa* are tall, furry, and otter-like. As such, the "perpendicular theme

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[7] Although I focus on visual perception, this dialectic process holds for developing any kind of perception. When Ransom first sees the *sorns*, his initial impression of their nature is clearly incorrect, and it is modified radically during the course of the narrative as he breathes the Malacandrian air and has more, less terrifying encounters with the *sorns*. As a result, he decides to trust the *sorns* and this provides the means by which he meets the *Oyarsa* – which is arguably the culmination of his quest to understand why he is on Malacandra.

[8] Another conceivable result is that the alien is rendered absolutely alien (i.e. unable to become familiar) – this happens to Weston and Devine in many ways, a fact made painfully obvious when Weston is giving an account of himself to the *Oyarsa* towards the end of the novel.

which beast and plant and earth all played on Malacandra" (51), along with the unearthly riot of colours, are actually pleasing to Ransom's earthly aesthetic. Richard Purtill claims that "[p]erhaps the outstanding impression" which the reader receives "is that Ransom is 'open' – able to appreciate and love. He delights in the beauty of Mars" (89). The fact that Ransom is *open* to seeing beauty is important; it is difficult to imagine either Weston or Devine attributing or finding beauty in a universe where only survival-aimed utility or self-seeking pleasure are important.

The Alien Creature

Ransom's conflicted perception of the alien creatures of Malacandra is a more complex affair than that of the environment. Confronted with the possibility of alien *sorns*, he must either grasp a means of dealing with "extra-terrestrial Otherness" or he thinks that the only other plausible response "must be suicide" (33). The reason why Ransom would accept such an abhorrent solution is largely because of his ignorant view of the alien; having "read his H. G. Wells and others", his imagination is "peopled with horrors such as ancient and mediaeval mythology could hardly rival" (32). As Manlove observes, "[Ransom's] fears are barriers between himself and an understanding of the true nature of phenomena" (32). His prejudiced imagination apprehends

> [...] various incompatible monstrosities – bulbous eyes, grinning jaws, horns, stings, mandibles. Loathing of insects, loathing of snakes, loathing of things that squashed and squelched, all played their horrible symphonies over his nerves. But the reality would be worse: it would be an extra-terrestrial Otherness – something one had never thought of, never could have thought of. (32-3)

By appearances, Ransom is initially committed to the necessary monstrosity of any and all aliens he encounters. He believes that an alien's essential nature is something which he, *qua* human, would be incapable of ever understanding. For him the alien creature is sublime in the worst way possible. This commitment is not entirely his fault. One cannot blame him for assuming the worst when overhearing Weston and Devine's discussion of his intended fate: that he is to be "[g]iven, handed over, offered" (33) to "loathsome sexless monsters" for "human sacrifice" (32). This absolute conviction, derived from rather questionable epistemic sources, partially obstructs his ability to perceive the actual nature of the aliens he encounters, especially the *sorns* – even once he has lived within the *hross* community and realised that at least one type of alien may not be as terrible as he originally believed.

In spite of his imaginative prejudice, Ransom does gradually grow sympathetic to the *sorns* – he develops what Lewis calls elsewhere "the taste for the *other*" (*PP* 125). It is clear that Mars, in his capacity of *Mars Silvanus* (who causes things 'to grow'), exerts a good influence over Ransom's life. Ransom is eventually enabled to overcome convictions of the *sorns'* fundamental "Otherness", but he still suspects their integrity and explicability far longer than is warranted. When first encountering the *sorns*, Ransom realises that they are "quite unlike the horrors his imagination had conjured up" (45). Although he was earlier convinced that they would be something that one "never could have thought of" (33), he is "taken [...] off his guard" by the fact that they *are* comparable and thus conceivable: they are not so absolutely alien as he had originally thought. For they "appealed away from the Wellsian fantasies to an earlier, almost an infantile, complex of fears. Giants – ogres – ghosts – skeletons: those were its key words" (45). There is sufficient comfort in this fact, such that "[t]he idea of suicide" goes "far from his mind" (46). Later, when he meets "face to face with the spectre which had haunted him ever since he had set foot on Malacandra," he feels a "surprising indifference" (92). Following this indifference to a *sorn's* physical presence, "[a] new conception of the *sorns* began to arise in his mind: the ideas of 'giant' and 'ghost' receded behind those of 'goblin' and 'gawk'" (94). After being Augray's[9] guest for a time, "the creature he had been avoiding" turns out to be "as amicable as the *hrossa*" (99). Manlove points out that "[t]he distance he puts between himself and the *sorns* is as much spiritual as material" (37). Ransom's characterisation of the *sorns*' physical appearance depends greatly on his apprehension of their peacefulness and benevolence. In the end, Ransom even repudiates his conception of the *sorns*' gawkishness by recognising their beauty. It is explained how "the grace of [the *sorns*] movement, their lofty stature, and the softened glancing of the sunlight on their feathery sides, effected a final transformation in Ransom's feelings towards their race" (103). From beings of incomprehensibility and awfulness to beautiful creatures of "lofty stature" – Ransom is wholly won over by the "Otherness" which at first terrifies him.

This is powerfully illustrated later through Ransom's solidarity with the Malacandrians: he repositions his sympathies and identity such that his own human kin, Weston and Devine, become aliens in his sight. Encountering them visibly for the first time since his escape, Ransom describes them as "two creatures which he did not recognize," adding

[9] Augray is the name of the *sorn* who leads Ransom to the *Oyarsa* of Malacandra.

> [t]hey were much shorter than any animal he had yet seen on Malacandra, and he gathered that they were bipeds, though the lower limbs were so thick and sausage-like that he hesitated to call them legs. The bodies were a little narrower at the top than at the bottom so as to be very slightly pear-shaped, and the heads were neither round like those of *hrossa* nor long like those of *sorns,* but almost square. They stumped along on narrow, heavy-looking feet which they seemed to press into the ground with unnecessary violence. And now their faces were becoming visible as masses of lumped and puckered flesh of variegated colour fringed in some bristly, dark substance [...] Suddenly, with an indescribable change of feeling, he realized that he was looking at men. The two prisoners were Weston and Devine and he, for one privileged moment, had seen the human form with almost Malacandrian eyes. (128)

This is perhaps the clearest refutation of the necessary strangeness of the alien, a notion initially assumed by Ransom. Manlove comments how this section is an example of Lewis's "recurrent technique" of inversion, through which "[t]he alien becomes 'natural,' the human grotesque" (44). Ransom's ability to view with "almost Malacandrian eyes" implies the contingency of familiarity; one can be alienated (legitimately or illegitimately) from one's own species or one's own people. This, indeed, is what Lewis shows: that anthropocentric (sublunary) perception – or any kind of perception that assumes the centrality of the perceiver – is simply the wrong perspective, because it leads to "narrowing of sympathies and even of thought" (*OSP* 105). As Lewis points out in conversation with Kingsley Amis and Brian Aldiss,

> most of the earlier [science fiction] stories start from the [...] assumption that we, the human race, are in the right, and everything else is ogres. I may have done a little towards altering that, but the new point of view has come very much in. We've lost our confidence, so to speak. ("Unreal Estates" 185)

Conflicted Rationality

The "confidence" Lewis speaks of is found in Ransom's anthropocentric views of rationality. If there is any one particular idea that gets in Ransom's way of understanding the Malacandrians, it is this. When Ransom speaks with the *sorns*, he reports that "[t]wo things about our world particularly stuck in their minds [...] the fact that we had only one kind of *hnau*: they thought this must have far-reaching effects in the narrowing of sympathies and even of thought" (*OSP* 105). At the beginning of the novel, he uses the word 'rational' coterminously with "man-like" (56) and assumes that, because "[the Malacandrians] build

houses" (39) and produce "artefact[s]" (56), they are human. Ransom is forced to conclude, however, that the non-human *hrossa* are rational: they have "the charm of speech and reason" (56). Yet this confronts him with what he calls the "baffling enigma of reason in an inhuman form" (65). This enigma leads to "sudden losses of confidence" on his part whenever "the rationality of the *hross* tempted [him] to think of it as a man" (56-7). The idea of a man who is "seven feet high, with a snaky body, covered [...] with thick black animal hair, and whiskered like a cat" is "abominable" (56) to Ransom. He therefore finds a way of avoiding such a discomforting image – he changes his "point of view" (56). He learns to see reason not as a faculty of man alone, but rather man as an instance of the Logos, divine reason,[10] and thus makes space for Aristotle's "[*a*]*nimale rationale* – an animal, yet also a reasonable soul [...] the old definition of Man" (*Per* 212) to apply in practice beyond just the *human* animal. It is thus a *logocentric* "point of view" that allows him to accept the *hrossa*'s rationality. Downing agrees, noting that Lewis "resurrects the Aristotelian concept of personhood" (45) when Ransom is told by Hnohra (his *hross* language tutor) that "[y]ou are *hnau.* I am *hnau*. The *séroni* are *hnau*. The *pfifltriggi* are *hnau"* (*OSP* 68). In effect, the animality of a rational (but alien) *hrossa* need not conflict with the familiar humanity of the reason-endowed man – but each can be seen as a unique example of the cosmic Logos. Schwartz notes that by the time Ransom has met Augray and spent time with the *sorns*, he has come to accept his own animality: "he introduces himself to the *sorns* as 'the animal [...] called Man'" (44).[11]

Ransom's most troubling assumption, perhaps, is that rational creatures dominate by their very nature over less rational creatures. One instance of Ransom's desire "to find out the political and economic framework of Malacandrian life" (*OSP* 100) reveals this: "On Malacandra, apparently, three distinct species had reached rationality, and none of them had yet exterminated the other two. It concerned him intensely to find out which was the real master" (69-70). Later, hearing descriptions of the *sorns'* intelligence, he proceeds to name them "the intelligentsia" and thinks that "[t]hey must be the real rulers, however it is disguised" (70). This assumption can be attributed to a H.G. Wells-induced xenophobia and the cultural heritage of colonialism, but it also reveals the "the narrow and self-aggrandizing perspective of a single fallen species" (Schwartz 37). This is what causes his social paradigm to presuppose the existence of "real rulers" who would exterminate their apparent competitors. I quoted Manlove earlier, who says that the distance between Ransom and the alien *sorns* is "as much spiritual as material" (37). This distinction operates between Ransom

[10]In *THS* Lewis writes of the "goddess Reason, the divine clearness" (414).
[11]In this, he sets his own literary precedent: *The Chronicles of Narnia* are replete with rational animals.

and all the Malacandrian species: not merely the *sorns*. It seems as if he sometimes assumes that their benevolence is a façade, that on the inside they are actually driven by a will to power and domination. Hilder would agree: "[Ransom] views all things in terms of power relations so that his perpetual question to the Malacandrians is, 'who rules?'" (33). The extent to which there has been a "narrowing of sympathies" in his own spirit is unfortunately clear – the Martial influence brings it out into the open.

Ransom learns that on translunary Malacandra, rationality does not naturally lead to conflict with or domination over other species as it does on Thulcandra. On the contrary, his exclusive human paradigm is transcended by the concept of *hnau*.[12] This, he discovers, is the more fundamental category of rational creature, and acts as a concept empty of his problematic anthropocentric, sublunary assumptions. Only after the trauma of Hyoi's death and his time spent with the most intelligent of the three Malacandrian species – the *sorns* (*séroni*) – is he fully disabused of his "narrowness of perception" (Hilder 34) and ceases obsessing about power relations. He takes to heart "the need for a new and less self-centred 'cosmic' or 'corrective' anthropology" (Schwartz 52) and realises, finally, that Malacandrian (and thus cosmic) rationality is a different thing to human rationality – which is broken, because it has lost its moral sense. In the immediate aftermath of Hyoi's shooting, Ransom calls his species "half *hnau*" because its moral perception is "bent" (*OSP* 83). As such, being a *hnau* – a rational animal – means being able to navigate reality, both material *and* spiritual, in a sensible way. It is "not merely the faculty to abstract and calculate, but the apprehension of values, the power to mean by 'good' something more than 'good for me' or 'good for my species'" (qtd. in Downing 46). Lewis thus undermines an anthropocentric account of rationality just as he expands the concept to include ethical sensibility: a sensibility derived from the ability to apprehend, rather than arbitrate, values.

Philosophical Conflict: Weston and Devine versus Ransom

The several conflicts between Ransom and his kidnappers, Weston and Devine, are what drive the *OSP*'s narrative forward. The pair of men are his reason for going to Mars; they are indirectly the reason for his encounter and stay with the *hrossa*. As a result of their killing of Hyoi, they prompt Ransom's willingness to visit the *sorns* and meet the *Oyarsa*. They are also, finally, the reason he leaves Malacandra. The first major instance of conflict is a scuffle

[12] Ransom, arguably, only just qualifies for being considered a *hnau*. This is because he is open to developing a rational capacity, in the sense of being adept both aesthetically and ethically. Weston and Devine, however, are closed within their anthropocentric version of rationality, and are ethically blind – therefore considered "bent" or "half *hnau*."

between Harry, who works "the furnace" at the Rise, and Weston and Devine. Ransom's unwelcome entrance puts an end to this, but soon, engaged in a scuffle with the two men himself, he successfully 'ransoms' the boy and replaces him as scapegoat. As I mention earlier, Weston and Devine think they need a sacrificial victim to appease the *sorns*. The reader catches something of the ideological battle which is to occur when Weston argues with Devine over Ransom's kidnapping; he sees more value in Ransom "[who] is, after all, human" (*OSP* 15), than he sees in Harry, whom he thinks is an imbecile. As such, Harry is a better candidate for sacrifice. Devine convinces Weston that Ransom will do, however, on more pragmatic grounds. This willingness to calculate the value of human life in scientific (and thus material) terms points towards the philosophical outlook(s) that both men hold.

Devine candidly summarises Weston's views, the main "diabolical" (*CL* 753) philosophy against which Lewis takes aim in *OSP*, as being "all straight stuff – the march of progress and the good of humanity and all that" (13). In "A Reply," Lewis describes Weston's views as 'scientism':

> the belief that the supreme moral end is the perpetuation of our own species, and that this is to be pursued even if, in the process of being fitted for survival, our species has to be stripped of all those things for which we value it – of pity, of happiness, and of freedom. (100)

Weston is thus committed to the expansion and evolution of the human species. He desires the good of humanity, which is to say, human thriving – as he understands it. But, as Downing says, "Weston's problem is that his abstract ideals about advancing his species are more real to him than actual beings or concrete ethical obligations" (86); he is closed off to reality, believing rather that his "metabiological heresy" represents the enlightened view, and unwilling to "inspect" with open eyes the Malacandrian phenomena as Ransom chooses to do.

While Weston believes that it "would be easier if [Ransom's] philosophy of life were not so insufferably narrow and individualistic," Ransom "consider[s] [Weston's] philosophy of life [to be] raving lunacy" (*OSP* 24). A sentence later he summarises Weston's ethical position: that one is "justified in doing anything – absolutely anything – here and now, on the off chance that some creatures or other descended from man as we know him may crawl about a few centuries longer in some part of the universe" (24).

Although Weston and Devine are both pragmatists, they have different reasons for being so. Weston believes in something beyond mere possessions and pleasure: his ideology

projects beyond his own lifespan, towards future generations' survival and civilisation. Unlike Weston, whose idealism is misperceived, Devine has no such idealistic dreams. On the contrary, he reduces the good life to maximising material possession: of things, and importantly, of pleasure. He tells Ransom (with Weston out of earshot), "[b]etween ourselves, I am putting a little money into some experiments he has on hand. It's all straight stuff – the march of progress and the good of humanity and all that, but it has an industrial side" (13). Later, "Ransom realise[s] the meaning of Devine's interest in Malacandra": it is gold, or "Sun's Blood" (69) as the *hrossa* call it. His striving is directed towards the accumulation of wealth, and from this his pragmatism springs.

Weston and Devine's philosophy of life is perhaps best exemplified at the point where the two men murder Ransom's *hross* friend, Hyoi, in cold blood. When the ruler of Mars asks why they did so, Weston responds in his pidgin Malacandrian, revealing another aspect to his philosophy, namely the idea that 'might makes right': "We kill him [...] show what we can do. Every one who no do all we say – pouff! Bang! – kill him same as that one. You do all we say and we give you much pretty things" (130). This response is deemed insufficient by the Martian ruler. When asked again, Weston revises his account of the murder: rather than being a means of inducing fear and servitude, he explains that they wanted to reach Ransom when they saw he was with a large, otter-like creature. Because they were *afraid* of Hyoi, they killed him. Weston and Devine see the alien Other as an expendable means to an end – which is, strangely enough, just the way they see their fellow human, Ransom, when they forcibly bring him to Mars for sacrificial purposes. In fact, anyone who is not essential to their own purposes is thereby rendered alien. Unlike Ransom, who grows and learns under the Martial influence, Hilder observes that "Weston embodies the common – and very worst – view of what Mars, the god of war, represents: ruthless devastation of innocent life" (26). Their view of Malacandra is mediated through a wholly pragmatic, utilitarian lens. Schwartz comments that "Devine and Weston embody an imperial contempt for the Other" (30), and thus when they are confronted with the alien, their natural response is to dominate it, looking to their own anthropocentric interests.[13] When this fails, they evade the truth of their ontological misapprehension by violence, attempted bribery and telling lies. Although they are physically beyond the sublunary, silent Thulcandra, they still receive the Martial spirit with an unfortunate and rather tragic dose of lunacy.

Ransom does not subscribe to Progress-aimed scientism like Weston, nor the greedy,

[13] Similar to the way Ransom originally expects that the *sorns* dominate as "the real masters."

pragmatic materialism of Devine. His philosophy of life is still being formed. One crucial element, however, is suggested in what I have called his developing *logocentric* perspective.[14] Ransom's vocation[15] as a philologist is important, for by its very nature it involves the study of words and their history. Manlove concurs, stating that "[i]t is not for nothing that Ransom is a philologist in the story" (34).[16] Philology as a discipline is retrospective and often hypothetical in nature. Moreover, the imprecision of a philologist's data precludes any absolute certainty of a word's genealogy or pedigree. Ransom is therefore akin to a 'word detective': his vocation entails the attempt to negate himself, and insert himself in another linguistic *Weltanschauung.* Once there, he would decipher the relations between all the morphological suspects. This occupation requires a capacity to go outside of one's own paradigm and enter the paradigm of another. Manlove remarks that Ransom's "speed and interest in grasping the Malacandrian language and its dialects is an index to his desire to meet creatures outside himself" (34). For as Lewis says in *EC*, "[i]n coming to understand anything, we are rejecting the facts as they are for us in favour of the facts as they are for someone else" (138). To humbly accept rather than merely impose one's understanding of phenomena is far easier – even preferred – for someone whose job requires a kind of openness to error, a kind of epistemic humility.

The phenomenological dialectic that I described above[17] extends beyond the straightforward processing of sense perception; it may be reformulated to describe the processing of ethical encounters too.[18] To phrase my conception of the dialectic differently, one may talk of phenomenal *integration*; taking that which is at the periphery and resistant to comprehension, and then centring it, unifying it – letting it express itself in a meaningful relation to other things. At a perceptual level, Ransom seeks the unifying thread amongst the diverse Malacandrian scenes he encounters. He succeeds in this, but his search for unity goes beyond rendering his environment functional; it goes beyond understanding the simple geological or ecological facts about *what* constitutes the Malacandrian landscape. Rather, Ransom wants fluency in the Old Solar language; he wants to know how the *hrossa, séroni,* and *pfifltriggi* relate, and to find out about their beliefs and arts. To use a term from science-

[14] Not in Derrida's deconstructionist sense; rather, in my own (more Platonic) sense of 'Logos', 'Divine Reason' or 'The Word' which acts as a cosmic scaffold for unity and diversity of Being.
[15] I use this word in the sense of 'calling.'
[16] Manlove here echoes "the Voice" in *Perelandra* that tells Ransom that "[i]t is not for nothing that you are named Ransom" (*Per* 147).
[17] See p. 18.
[18] By ethical, I mean 'concerned with right action.'

fiction, he becomes, not an anthropologist, but a xenologist.[19]

This is in stark contrast to both Weston and Devine. They exhibit a defective ability to modify their hypothetical structures beyond that which is pragmatic or in-line with their own agendas. For them, asking 'Why?' is irrelevant. Accordingly, their centring of peripheral elements is forced; the embrace of (possible) inherent structures in phenomena is never countenanced. This is best seen in the final judgement scene when the *Oyarsa* decides what to do with the pair. Weston has categorically misperceived the structures inherent in the data of Malacandra; his prejudiced, anthropocentric outlook forces itself incongruently upon all phenomena. Even after having been captured and baptised "in the cold water seven times" (*OSP* 137), the only result is that he loses his fur cap – he obtains neither respect for the rationality of the Malacandrians, nor a sense of his immorality in having brought murder to the *Oyarsa*'s planet. Devine is less closed off to the phenomenological data, but for the wrong reasons. He exhibits better linguistic skills and common-sense, yet his small measure of openness is the product of a worldliness and recognition that rigid ideologies like Weston's can easily lead to monetary – or mortal – disasters. This is apparent when he tells Weston in their judgement scene, "Be careful what you say to them and don't let's have any of your bloody nonsense" (138).

The anthropocentrism displayed by all three of the main human characters in *OSP* is symptomatic of a profound misunderstanding of the centrality of human existence. This misunderstanding derives from the phenomenological conviction of humanity's importance, but misinterprets the nature of this importance. Weston focuses on the importance of the collective, Devine on the individual (namely, himself). Only Ransom manages to alter his paradigm, and this is not into a *hnau*-centric worldview (although this would be an improvement), but rather a logocentric one: as a good philologist, he implicitly begins to appreciate the cosmic archetype of reason, the Logos, as the source and unifier of all rational creatures of Deep Heaven.

Loving Conflict

The *Hnakra*, the *Hrossa* and Ransom

Ransom's attempt at an accusation, his attempt to find at least one defect in Malacandrian society, succeeds only in introducing one of the most interesting elements of the story. A major aspect of the *hross* culture is a large, shark-like creature called a *hnakra*. It is a

[19] Alternatively, to coin a particularly horrible word, a '*hnaulogist.*'

predator of Malacandrian waters, and is described by Ransom's friend Hyoi in the extract below:

> I long to kill this *hnakra* as he also longs to kill me. I hope that my ship will be the first and I first in my ship with my straight spear when the black jaws snap. And if he kills me, my people will mourn and my brothers will desire still more to kill him. But they will not wish that there were no *hnéraki;* nor do I. How can I make you understand, when you do not understand the poets? The *hnakra* is our enemy, but he is also our beloved. We feel in our hearts his joy as he looks down from the mountain of water in the north where he was born; we leap with him when he jumps the falls; and when winter comes, and the lake smokes higher than our heads, it is with his eyes that we see it and know that his roaming time is come. We hang images of him in our houses, and the sign of all the *hrossa* is a *hnakra.* In him the spirit of the valley lives; and our young play at being *hnéraki* as soon as they can splash in the shallows. (76)

A confrontation with a *hnakra* is an opportunity to face death; this existential conflict, this great risk, provides the *hrossa* with the bittersweet material for their poetry, and thus, for their self-identity. Hyoi says later that he does not think "the forest would be so bright, nor the water so warm, nor love so sweet, if there were no danger in the lakes" (76).

Mars's pugnacious (*Gradivus*) influence is apparent here, but not in the way Weston and Devine receive it. The *hrossa* are not subject to sublunary interference like the humans of Thulcandra, and thus their battle with the *hnakra* never becomes a thing of hatred, competition or domination. There is respect and appreciation of the enemy, even while recognising the essential antithesis separating each species from the other. Hyoi later describes how "[he] drank life because death was in the pool [...] That was the best of drinks save one" (77). This leads to a profound inversion, for this singular drink is "[d]eath itself, when he "go[es] to Maleldil" (77). The *hnakra* and the hunt associated with it is not merely a source of poetry, excitement or self-understanding. It points to an ultimate reality; to echo the title of a piece by Clint Mansell, "Death is the Road to Awe"; it is one kind of threshold within the cosmic Great Dance.[20] This helps elucidate exactly *why* the *hnakra* is "beloved"; in meting out death to the apparently unfortunate hunter, the *hnakra* opens his way into Deep Heaven. In this translunary realm, all conflict, even conflict ending in death, is rendered sweet.

[20] See my discussion of the Great Dance on p. 57.

The *hnakra*-hunt also "serves as the means through which Lewis's hero restores his sense of physical well-being and prepares himself for the conflict that awaits his return to earth" (Schwartz 39). It is not merely preparation for his return to earth, for as Hilder mentions, "the bravery required in the *hnakra*-hunt may be thought of as preliminary training for his battle with the Un-man on Perelandra" (47). Viewing this episode as preparatory or restorative *prima facie* makes sense, but it is important to note that Ransom participates in the hunt only by obeying "something *like* conscience" (my italics) with a desire to "hold on to his new-found manhood" (*OSP* 81). He decides to ignore the *eldil*'s warning that "there will be evil" if he postpones going to the *Oyarsa* (81) – at the expense of Hyoi's death. His sublunary[21] version of conscience wins out in this instance. The ambiguity of conflict – of the Martial influence – is hereby exemplified. He passes the test of *hross* heroism, and reaps courage as a reward – but he also learns the bittersweet lesson that heroic conflict, pursued to the exclusion of less heroic (but more important) obedience, does not result in good.

Ransom's Conflicted Mind and Self-love

Another instance of loving conflict appears when, on the "realisation of his position" (*OSP* 49), Ransom is rendered schizophrenic.[22] This lasts until he is able to come to terms with the deep terror of being in an "unbearable" (49) alien environment, far from anything familiar. This schizophrenia is not pure madness, however. It is at the very least symptomatic, at most something curative: an illustration of self-love and a will to survival. After his mad dash away from his kidnappers and the *sorns*, "[h]e felt a strange emotion of confidence and affection towards himself [...] saying, 'We'll stick to one another'" (*OSP* 46). Soon afterward, his split mind manifests as he struggles to attribute a solid identity to himself:

> Then he remembered [...] that there was a man wandering in the wood [...] He would come up to him and say, "Hullo, Ransom," – he stopped, puzzled. No, it was only himself: he was Ransom. Or was he? Who was the man whom he had led to a hot stream and tucked up in bed, telling him not to drink the strange water? Obviously some newcomer who didn't know the Place as well as he. (49)

By disassociating himself from the paranoid, isolated Ransom, he embraces the risk-taking Ransom, who is willing to "drink the strange water" because of his imagined familiarity with "the Place" (49). Ransom must disassociate from himself, deny his own *fearful* identity in

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[21] See p.13 n4.
[22] Not in the medical sense, but in the etymological sense of a 'split mind.'

order to act without succumbing to hysteria – to act courageously. This split in his consciousness does not persist: once his bodily needs are quenched and he is able to understand more of his environment (through contact with the *hrossa*), the schizophrenia passes and he is restored to his former cognitive unity. His disunity is a means to the end of subjective unity.

The link between this episode and love becomes apparent when one considers how Lewis reveals (intentionally or not) the medicinal value of a split mind: how a mind at conflict with itself can actually be a very good thing. This is because a self that loves itself is sometimes willing to go *against* itself. Moreover, such a principle may be extended (I suspect more fruitfully than in the realm of mental health) to love, specifically in the sense of charity or *agape*. As a child should endure the loving discipline of his or her parents so as to develop a good character – even though the discipline is painful to him/her – in the same way a split mind which then achieves unity may be more firmly integrated than before. Such a process, although *prima facie* an indication of madness, is in fact a means of maturation and a function of love. This episode also points to the larger theme of Ransom having to transcend his childhood, with all the juvenile notions attached to it, and embrace a self that is willing to hunt *hnéraki* and meet *sorns*; that is, to develop a love for the Other.

Love in *OSP*

Ransom and the *Hnau* of Malacandra

The love that develops between Ransom and the *hnau* of Malacandra is somewhat surprising if one recalls his original fear of the alien. Yet Ransom's "openness to the world" coupled with what Lewis calls the "the shy, ineluctable fascination of unlike for unlike" (58) produces a situation wherein at least one of the four loves[23] is suggested, and the other three are exhibited. Although *eros* love is absent – Lewis is primarily saving it for *That Hideous Strength* – the initial meeting of Ransom and Hyoi invokes imagery typically associated with love at first sight. In this scene, Lewis skilfully "evokes the complex of desire and mutual recognition that sometimes outweighs the suspicions that distance us from those we perceive as different from ourselves" (Schwartz 35):

[23] In Lewis's work *The Four Loves* (*FL*), he outlines four different kinds of love (*storge*, *philia*, *eros* and *agape*).

> "[The *hross*], too, was in the grip of curiosity. Neither dared let the other approach, yet each repeatedly felt the impulse to do so himself, and yielded to it. It was foolish, frightening, ecstatic and unbearable all in one moment. It was more than curiosity. It was like a courtship – like the meeting of the first man and the first woman in the world. (54)

This meeting with Hyoi is an integral moment, for it signals to the reader something important about Ransom. Here Ransom's openness to the alien is displayed; it is an openness that eventually will overpower his prejudice against the *sorns*. Schwartz is right when he says that Ransom's "relations to strangers are not entirely at the mercy of [his] fears" (36). The "prodigious adventure" inherent in the experience of meeting Hyoi results in Ransom's attachment to Hyoi "by bonds stronger than he knew" (58-59). Friendship love, *philia,* grows between them. Hyoi goes on to help Ransom understand and integrate into the *hross* community; he enables Ransom to experience a wholly inhuman yet morally perfect, 'humane' society. Purtill emphasises how Ransom "grows to love the *hross* [sic] and especially Hyoi, his first friend among them" (89). His stay in this community soon engenders a *storge* (affection) love in Ransom for the *hrossa* generally, and an appreciation for their delight-filled way of life. He likewise becomes an object of their love; from the young *hrossa*'s affectionate perspective, he is an avuncular, "hairless goblin" (65). Ransom learns their language, and as much about the culture, customs, art, and history of Hyoi's people as he can. Later, he learns about Augray's and Kanakaberaka's[24] people too. These studies require a kind of openness and love, something that Lewis explicitly characterises Ransom as having by the time of Hyoi's funeral. The reader is told how "[t]hrough his knowledge of the creatures and his love for them he began, ever so little, to hear [the dirge for Hyoi] with their ears" (*OSP* 135). Lewis writes in *EC* that

> [i]n coming to understand anything, we are rejecting the facts as they are for us in favour of the facts as they are for someone else. The primary impulse of each is to maintain and aggrandize himself. The secondary impulse is to go out of the self, to correct its provincialism, and heal its loneliness. In love, in virtue, in the pursuit of knowledge, and in the study of literature, history, and philosophy, we are doing this. (138)

Ransom's "longing to learn [Malacandrian] language" (*OSP* 58) and his desire to explore their body of knowledge is an example of charity or *agape* love, albeit a rather weak example. For to accept the facts of another requires a sacrifice of the self, and the

[24] Ransom meets this *pfifltrigg* after reaching the *Oyarsa*'s sanctuary. He sculpts Ransom's likeness in the Malacandrian style.

"provincialism" toward which the self inclines. Ransom is not forced to learn the Old Solar language, yet he does so to the extent that he can adequately interpret for Weston and Devine. They have no such competency, not even after their second visit. As a philologist (*qua* vocation, not *qua* profession), Ransom is a lover of language and knowledge. In this case, it helps him become a *hnau*-lover too.

Beyond enabling Ransom to enter into the *hross* community, Hyoi also directs Ransom's gaze to the *hnakra*, which becomes the focal point of their friendship. This reaches its culmination once "[t]hey had stood shoulder to shoulder in the face of an enemy" [25] where "the shapes of their heads no longer mattered." Ransom is of the conviction that "[h]e was one with them [...] They were all *hnau*" (82). The differences of appearance are transcended by an underlying unity of purpose and 'being in the same boat' (in this case, quite literally). Although successful in the *hnakra*-hunt, owing to Ransom's disobedience Hyoi is tragically slain. But as Ransom notes, "Hyoi with his last breath had called him *hnakra*-slayer; that was forgiveness generous enough" (85). The absolution that Hyoi offers to Ransom reveals the extent to which their friendship has deepened into charity, an *agape*-love that "keeps no record of wrongs".[26]

Malacandrian Society

At the outset, let me differentiate between intra-species and inter-species love on Malacandra. As for the former (using the *hrossa* as the primary source), once Ransom is told about the centrality of the *hnakra* in the *hrossa's* imagination and tribal identity, he asks whether the *hnakra* ever kills young *hrossa* who innocently play-hunt in the lake's shallows. He is told that this seldom occurs: "[t]he *hrossa* would be bent *hrossa* if they let [the *hnakra*] get so near" (*OSP* 76). Clearly, taking care of one another is of great importance to the *hrossa*; their ethic is one where neglect, a lack of care for one's neighbour, is the measure of bentness – as opposed to Ransom's Thulcandra, where neglect is the norm and positive evils are the usual measure for bentness.

The *hrossa* can barely conceive of a bent *hnau* – and would regard one more as an aberration to be rehabilitated, given that their translunary state admits of no (moral)

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[25] According to *FL,* a mutual interest in something or other is the necessary for *philia* love (96). Lewis also visualises friends as being "side by side or shoulder to shoulder" (104) rather than facing each other (as with *eros* love).

[26] 1 Cor. 13:5 (NIV). I use the NIV here because the connection to the text is purely connotative in my own mind (i.e. Lewis himself would not have encountered a similar translation of the verse in question, but would likely agree with its meaning). In all other Bible references that follow, I use the KJV.

corruption. Their philosophy of life follows from natural instinct. As far as they are concerned, there is no plausible conflict between instinct and moral principles. This is illustrated when Ransom asks Hyoi about "love in a bent life" (75). Hyoi responds with a question: "How could the life of a *hnau* be bent?" The best-imagined example of such a life Hyoi can produce is of a mythical *hross* who saw everything double – including two mates, an unnatural anomaly that, if it actually occurred, does not necessarily entail bentness. The *hrossa* are "a species naturally continent, naturally monogamous" and, although they do see "the begetting of young" as a "very great [pleasure]" which "[they] call love" (73), this does not translate into behaviour similar to that of humans. For the *hrossa,* love is not just physical pleasure; it also takes into account societal concerns like overpopulation – a reason why they do not breed whenever they wish, but only for a certain period and then never again. Clearly, *hrossa* do not take to sex for its own sake, but only as a pleasurable means to a limited end. Once this end is reached, the means – and its pleasures – are fulfilled and are not repeated, for that would lead to an ethical dilemma. Hyoi makes this point with a rhetorical question – "How could there ever be enough to eat if everyone had twenty young?" (76). The pleasurable aspects of love between *hrossa* and *hressni*[27] do not overwhelm the other, less erotic aspects; and societal balance is preserved as a result.

With regard to inter-species love on Malacandra, the love that characterises the *hrossa*, *séroni* and *pfifltriggis'* interaction is best exemplified by the cooperation and the sibling-like sense of family exhibited by the three species. It reveals a deep affection, probably even a charity,[28] which they hold for each other. In the first instance, they find each other attractive as we tend to find non-human animals attractive. Each species has a certain quiddity that the others find to be rather endearing and which makes possible the ironising of the other species. Using Lewis's framework from *FL*, they have *storge* love for one another.[29] Ransom explains after his return to Earth that

> [e]ach of them is to the others both what a man is to us and what an animal is to us. They can talk to each other, they can co-operate, they have the same ethics; to that extent a *sorn* and a *hross* meet like two men. But then

[27]Females of the hross species.

[28]Although there are no clear examples of this in the text, the closest example would be where the dying Hyoi forgives Ransom. Ransom, however, is a special case and the Malacandrian's relations with him do not necessarily reflect their relations with each other. I think there are strong reasons to think so, however, given the timbre of their benevolence to each other. This is most clearly expressed when all three species are in the presence of the *Oyarsa* together.

[29]It is a love that "ignores even the barriers of species" and is characterised by a "warm comfortableness […] satisfaction in being together" (*FL* 54).

> each finds the other different, funny, attractive as an animal is attractive. (*OSP* 162)

Another function of their love is that the three species see each other as *hnau* possessing inalienable rights – there is a respect for each other's rights and autonomy, something the 'early' Ransom finds difficult to comprehend. The unfallen Malacandrians are logocentric. Whin, Ransom's other *hnakra*-hunt companion, states a fact when he says to Ransom that "[o]ne does not kill *hnau*" (83) – only the *Oyarsa*, as the planet's ruler and guardian, can legitimately do this (126). The Malacandrians know their moral limitations and recognise mutual equality before their *Oyarsa*. They thus complement each other through obedience to the *eldila,* the *Oyarsa*, and Maleldil above all. Schwartz summarises Malacandrian society, in contradistinction to Thulcandrian society, as follows:

> [T]he peace and equality among the three Martian species, who live separately but never seek to subordinate one another, involve the transfiguration of the terrestrial vision of relentless evolutionary strife into a harmonious community that participates in the beneficent rationality of the cosmic order. (20)

Weston and Devine, and Ransom

Ransom exhibits a surprising solidarity with Weston and Devine when the *Oyarsa* decides to send them back to earth. He certainly recognises that they are evil men; after Hyoi's murder he tells Whin that "if [the *hrossa*] are wise they will kill me and certainly they will kill the other two" (*OSP* 83). Earlier, I discuss the extent of alienation that he feels when seeing them again.[30] Ransom nevertheless decides to "throw in his lot with Weston and Devine," explaining "[l]ove of our own kind [...] is not the greatest of laws, but you, Oyarsa, have said it is a law. If I cannot live in Thulcandra, it is better for me not to live at all" (147). Considering the fact that he is "given full liberty to remain in Malacandra" (147) and yet decides to risk death alongside his kidnappers – his friend's murderers, no less – it is puzzling that he decides it must be 'Thulcandra or death.'

One explanation for this seeming paradox is that the solidarity, the love "of [his] own kind" (147) is not primarily aimed at Weston and Devine themselves, but rather for the human race of which they are representative: a species besieged and silenced, in dire need of a champion. This indeed is the special task given to Ransom by the *Oyarsa* of Mars, who orders Ransom to "watch this Weston and this Devine in Thulcandra if ever you arrive there.

[30] See pp. 20-21.

They may yet do much evil in, and beyond, your world. [...] Watch those two bent ones. Be courageous. Fight them" (148). Still, Ransom's willingness to have anything to do with them, and the many humans who would have acted just like this pair, reveals an undercurrent of *agape* love, a love willing to endure the presence of evil in order that good will come from it.

Conclusion

Given Lewis's claim that "[t]he temperament derived from each planet can be turned either to a good or a bad use" (*DI* 116-7), it is clear that the ambiguous Martial influence can lead to a love-centred philosophy of life, as seen in Ransom and in his adopted Malacandrian kin. As such, Ransom – guilty only of "a little fearfulness" (*OSP* 147) – grows from the Martial spirit's tutelage and overcomes his fear of the Other. This initial fear reveals "the distance of Ransom from true reality" (Manlove 38). In the process of lessening this distance, he develops "a readiness to see, a facility to size things up, a quickness to understand" (Holmer 42). In Manlove's words, "Ransom's perspective literally expands" (39). He firstly perceives the true nature of space, then the nature of Malacandra's landscape and geography, then the nature of its three alien species and the cosmic order that they inhabit. In this process Ransom also develops a personal anthropology that is "cognizant of [his] aptitude for misrecognition of the Other" (Schwartz 52), thereby obtaining an adequate xenology, free from anthropocentric assumptions. This results in "turning the extraterrestrial Other from an object of suspicion into a welcome rational copresence in a divinely ordered universe" (Schwartz 34). Throughout all these strands, the perceptual humility or "openness to the world" that Ransom displays "leads to true courage" (Hilder 51).

The novel also shows that the Martial spirit, improperly received, produces a deeply flawed philosophy of life when bound by the sublunary tendencies of the "Silent Planet": a symbol, if you will, for the realm of inwardness, self-centredness and selfishness. Weston and Devine clearly exhibit "narrow and self-aggrandizing perspective[s]" (Schwartz 37) by kidnapping Ransom, murdering Hyoi, and attempting to justify both actions according to their "diabolical" motivations. Martial conflict thus gives rise to a choice: either grow in perception, courage and love, or become ever more fearful, isolated and hateful. Ransom chooses the former, while Weston and Devine choose the latter.

OSP provides the trilogy's first treatment[31] of Mars offering a translunary perspective. The reader is able to see how *Infortuna Minor* is rendered fortunate. This does not entail the neutralisation of any bellicose or pugnacious spirit (typified in the *hnakra*-hunt) or its replacement with a cowardly submission to the demands and challenges of life. Rather, this spirit is shown in its proper place, as an expression of life, a wilful desire to get 'out of' the shackles that constrain one's understanding of the world, and 'into' the appreciation of both the life-process and goal to which it leads. As Manlove perceptively notes, the "Out of" of the title effectively becomes 'into' (44). Ransom's journey through conflict results in a radical re-orientation; his eyes are open and focused in the right direction: "he has [...] gone out of the 'silent' world" (Manlove 28) and is poised to "become a member of the living cosmos [...] as a spiritual hero ready to take his place in the celestial battle between good and evil" (Hilder 51).

[31] Not the only treatment: *Perelandra* and especially *That Hideous Strength* build and clarify the image of a fortunate Mars.

Chapter 3

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Love, Conflict and the Great Dance in *Perelandra*

In the prelapsarian world of Perelandra (Venus), where peace is an unknown concept by virtue of its ubiquity, Lewis explores a potentially devastating conflict between two competing views of love. For the most part "the action" of the novel "consists of confrontation of persons and intellectual or moral decisions" (Gibson 47) and thus Lewis reduces society on Perelandra to, effectively, only three people: an authorial decision which "reveals Lewis's concentration on spiritual states" (Sellin 107). The first major spiritual confrontation takes place between a diabolical tempter (the Un-man) and the Eve of Perelandra (the Green Lady). Her temptation hinges upon the question of what it means to truly love the Other – that is, what perfect, self-sacrificial charity really looks like. Unlike the Genesis account, however, "*Perelandra* is the story of 'Paradise Retained,' of an Eve who is able to resist the tempter long enough for Ransom to destroy him" (Downing 46).

Ransom is thus the third main character in this story, and unlike in *OSP*, his participation in a second inter-planetary journey is voluntary. He has lost his anthropocentric bias and developed a far more logocentric perspective in its stead. Ransom arrives on Venus without any fears of "loathsome sexless monsters" (*OSP* 32) or "extra-terrestrial Otherness" (33). This perspectival shift is apparent on Perelandra when Ransom sees mermen and mermaids, to whom, despite their "total absence of human expression" (*Per* 100), he no longer reacts negatively; his categories have broadened. Ransom explains that the mermen are "neither bestial nor diabolic, but merely elvish" (100). This acceptance of their ontological legitimacy is a major part of the logocentric outlook developed in the previous novel. Because of Ransom's unique adventures on Malacandra and the benevolent influence of the Martial spirit, he is now prepared to "[b]e courageous" and "[f]ight" Weston and those like him (*OSP* 148). I agree with David Downing when he says

> the opening pages of *Perelandra* show that Ransom has travelled far in his spiritual pilgrimage; but succeeding pages will show that he has far yet to go. If the great challenge of his first journey was to overcome his fears, the great challenge of his second journey will be to overcome his doubts. (111)

These doubts refer to two things. Firstly, there is the second major spiritual confrontation of *Perelandra*, in which Ransom doubts the role he has been given as the Lady's protector. He

is tempted to abandon the Green Lady and avoid combat with the Un-man. It becomes apparent that "Ransom's real enemy is once again his own diseased subjectivity" (Rossi 42). Unlike in *OSP*, where his faculty of perception is faulty, the disease now reveals itself in Ransom's will – he fears doing what he perceives to be the right course of action. I argue that Ransom's perceptual re-orientation is merely the precondition for ethical, loving action; for him to act rightly still requires "overcom[ing] his doubts," taking a self-chosen leap into uncertainty and risking death in order to preserve innocence. The second set of doubts proceeds indirectly from his victory over the first set. They relate to the processes of cosmic history, and provide Lewis an opportunity to develop what he terms "the Great Dance" (*Per* 219): it acts as the final inoculation against Ransom's misgivings.

The Plot of *Perelandra*

In a coffin-like box, Ransom is propelled through the heavens by *eldilic* powers. Given what he now knows about the planets and their essential benevolence, his initial experience on Perelandra is one of peace and solitude (despite being uncertain of his purposes there). He enjoys the pleasures of the Venereal landscape: an ocean world of turquoise water, floating islands, and lush organic life. His solitude is broken by the Green Lady – the Eve of Perelandra – with whom he engages in lengthy discussions; while he attempts to understand her innocence, she likewise tries to understand his experience. It is not long, however, before Weston arrives, explains his new philosophical stance, and violently transforms into the Un-man: a diabolical figure with the sole intention of corrupting the Green Lady. Ransom strives to prevent this by battling against the Un-man's half-truths, but he eventually realises that he must physically destroy Weston's body so that the Un-man, speaking through the physicist, will cease his inexorable temptation. This physical conflict is long and painful – but eventually Ransom emerges as the victor, and vanquishes Weston's body and the Un-man with him. He ascends a mountain to find himself standing before the *Oyéresu* (planetary spirits) of both Perelandra and the already-familiar Malacandra. The Green Lady and her King arrive, each having endured their respective temptations, and are given the rule and care of the planet by the *Oyarsa* of Perelandra. All the gathered characters participate in a so-called "conversation" (*Per* 219) about the Great Dance, a grand vision of the unfolding of cosmic history. Finally, after more than a year's absence from Earth, Ransom re-enters his coffin-like vessel and returns home.

Love in *Perelandra*

Perelandra's alternate title, *Voyage to Venus*, immediately suggests concerns with the nature of love and the way the Venereal spirit influences those who travel within its sphere. On Perelandra, Lewis generates a landscape dominated by Venereal archetypes and motifs. There is the 'womb' of his coffin-like space vessel; the warmth of the climate; the characters' nakedness; the profusion of water and wetness; the verdurous flora and multitudinous fauna; the general dynamism of the landscape. Lewis claims in *DI* "we find no difficulty in grasping the character of [...] Venus" (109). By "we", he means those who have a 'modern' outlook as opposed to a medieval one. He adds that certain "[c]hanges of outlook, which have left almost intact [...] the character of Venus, have almost annihilated Jupiter" (*DI* 109). By this, Lewis is possibly alluding to modern tendencies – since the Romantics, and later, Freud – to frame human striving in terms of Venus and the sexual drives she most often now represents.[1] A voyage to Venus thus resonates with a modern readership, and allows Lewis to re-present her, much as he does Mars in *OSP,* in a way that emphasises charity (*agape* love) rather than lust. In the following sections, I explore the character of the Green Lady as an embodiment of love. Her identity, innocence, attitudes and actions all disclose Lewis's attempt to capture a "condition of mind to which terrestrial experience offer[s] no clue at all" (*Per* 54).

Encountering the Green Lady

Ransom's nakedness – and the shame often attributed to such a state on Thulcandra – are inconsequential in the holy air of Perelandra. He has overcome his sublunary anxiety, and the Perelandrian society – the Green Lady – knows nothing of them. The reader is told that the "cord of longing" infecting Ransom "in any world where men's nerves have ceased to obey their central desires would doubtless have been aphrodisiac too, but not in Perelandra" (101). Perelandra is clearly a world, like Malacandra, in which incontinence and unbridled instinct go against the natural order. When Ransom sees the naked Green Lady for the first time, his distraction does not therefore stem from the fact of their mutual nakedness or any experiences of lust. The reader is told that "[e]mbarrassment and desire were both a thousand miles away from his experience" – his unnerving comes more from "the fact that he knew his body to be a little ugly and a little ridiculous" (57) and, I suspect, the experience of not being "prepared for a goddess carved apparently out of green stone, yet alive" (52). Ransom explains that

[1] Take, for instance, contemporary connotations of the 'Venereal.'

> [t]here was no category in the terrestrial mind which would fit her. Opposites met in her and were fused in a fashion for which we have no images. One way of putting it would be to say that neither our sacred nor our profane art could make her portrait. Beautiful, naked, shameless, young – she was obviously a goddess: but then the face, the face so calm it escaped insipidity by the very concentration of its mildness, the face that was like the sudden coldness and stillness of a church when we enter it from a hot street – that made her a Madonna. (61-2)

Ransom's devotion to the Lady is due to his appreciation for her goddess-like beauty and innocence, as well as his identifying her as "a Madonna," thereby invoking associations with Mary who in Christian tradition has been called the *Nova Eva* and Holy Mother. By characterising the Lady as predominantly hallowed and maternal, Lewis is not desexualising her, but rather is stressing her beauty, purity, and spiritual fertility over her sexuality. Ward tells how Lewis discovered that his quest for Joy, often mediated through an experience of "[*S*]*ehnsucht*," would not be satisfied by sexual desire: "[n]othing on earth, no appetite of flesh and blood, could satisfy the *longing for beauty* symbolised by Venus" (168, my italics). Lewis thus makes the Green Lady into an embodiment of that towards which *Sehnsucht* aims – "unselfconscious radiance, the frolic sanctity, the depth of stillness" (*Per* 127) – and does not stress the Green Lady's sexuality.

The Character of the Green Lady

The Green Lady is a type of Venus who is unfallen, holy, and innocent. A personification of charity, she visibly exhibits its various aspects as outlined in I Corinthians, chapter 13, verses 4 to 8.[2] She is *long-suffering* both with Ransom, who still experiences moments of self-alienation and therefore dismay, as well as with the Un-man; she is oblivious to its ill-intent, and treats it with patience just as she does Ransom. She is *kind* and fair to all the animals as well as the two men. She does not *envy* – the Un-man tries to develop this vice in her – and she has no conception of ownership that enables *boasting*. She lacks *vanity* (again, the Un-man tries to develop this in her). She is obviously not *self-seeking*; her thoughts are either for her future children, the King or Maleldil – never for herself (133). She is *not easily provoked*; it is arguable if she displays anger at all. She "thinketh no evil"; for example, she is protected from registering the Un-man's sins against her animal devotees.[3] She certainly *does not delight in evil* though she does, unknowingly, flirt with it. She is better described as *rejoicing*

[2] In this case, I follow the KJV. See p. 32 n26.

[3] One assumes that she is necessarily blind to the Un-man's obscene desecration of the frogs (and birds), since she knows no evil and cannot recognise it.

in the truth, which she gleans from both Ransom and the Un-man (in spite of the latter's attempts to misuse it). She always *believes* the best of her interlocutors, always *hopes* (for her King), and she *endures* her temptation without disobeying the will of Maleldil. Finally, she does not *fail*. Altogether, she overwhelmingly displays charitable qualities.

The Nature of Innocence

Perhaps inspired by Lewis's reading of Milton's Eve, the Green Lady is similarly not a creature who can easily be patronised, and is by no means "primitive," "unsophisticated," or "naïf" in the usual senses (*PPL* 116). One particularly endearing trait of the Green Lady is her literal conflation of age and knowledge; statements such as "I was young yesterday" (*Per* 56) seem like an obvious fact out of context. For the Lady, however, knowledge entails wisdom; she immediately sees the relation between Ransom and the Un-man's statements and her own philosophy of life. Her innocence is preserved, but *not* at the cost of her growing maturity; Lewis's treatment of innocence is not without nuance. Some, like William Blake (and more recently Philip Pullman in his *Dark Materials* trilogy), set up innocence and maturity as mutually exclusive – to have one truly, you must sacrifice the other. Lewis circumvents this apparent dilemma and introduces a plausible synthesis. Hilder explains how "Lewis attempts to portray in [the Green Lady] how an innocent being with full intellectual capacity negotiates knowledge that is conveyed by fallen human beings – an education that could but need not corrupt her" (67).

There are a few elements of this innocence which I will examine in more depth, most of which stem from a series of concepts lacking in the Green Lady's worldview. The first is the concept of peace. Ransom, still cautious despite his experiences on Malacandra, approaches the Green Lady as follows:

> Speaking slowly in that ancient language, he cried out to her, "I am a stranger. I come in peace. Is it your will that I swim over to your land?" The Green Lady looked quickly at him with an expression of curiosity. "What is 'peace'?" she asked. (54)

In a world hitherto unfamiliar with war or conflict, peace is the status quo; Ransom's words, as far as the Lady would be concerned, are meaningless. This conceptual lack helps the reader understand her total trust of Ransom, the "Piebald Man" (57), and the Un-man. Her blind trust, as we might call it, illuminates the risky combination of innocence and curiosity. Driven by a desire to grow 'older,' she invites her own temptation.

In conversation about what will happen to the older (non-human) races of Malacandra, Ransom asks if they will be "swept away" like "rubbish." The Lady tells him that "[she does] not know what *rubbish* means" (*Per* 60). This second conceptual lack suggests that without any intimate knowledge of evil, the Green Lady does not have the conceptual apparatus to comprehend how there could be anything without purpose or use in the universe. Sanford Schwartz's summation of her reply to Ransom – that "cosmic progression entails no loss" (Schwartz 70) – shows her complete trust in the purposefulness of every existing thing.

The third element of her innocence is her inability to grasp being 'alone.' Ransom, upon his first sighting of the Green Lady, realises how alone he has been before that point. She does not, in spite of her separation from the King, whom she is trying to find. Ransom asks "Do you live here alone?" and she responds with another question: "What is *alone*?" (*Per* 63). Ransom discovers "the Lady's almost Enoch-like walk with Maleldil" (Gibson 50) and the perpetual communion she has with her creator. As a result, to borrow a distinction later used in relation to Ransom, she has her *privacy*, but is never truly *alone*.[4] Unlike those born beneath the moon, she cannot comprehend the state of what Heidegger calls 'thrownness' (*Geworfenheit*),[5] which I parse as the apprehension of a profound ontological disconnection – something which might enable a feeling of loneliness. In her unfallen state, the Green Lady knows – not only theoretically, but also via constant phenomenological warrant[6] – that she has not been thrown (*geworfen*) into an indifferent cosmos.

Fourthly, she lacks the concept of ownership or possession. During the Green Lady's temptation, the Un-man asks if she might like to keep the mirror that he has brought to her. As with the previous examples, she replies with a question: what does it mean to "[k]eep it?" (139). Upon immediate reflection, such ignorance is in her case natural – for she has never dealt with the conundrums of (in increasing complexity) the barter system, colonialism, or modern banking. I do not suggest that if she accepted the Un-man's offer, she would have fallen. Nonetheless, the idea of ontological ownership or possession by a contingent being would make a mockery of the necessary being, namely Maleldil, because it involves the creation of a right (ownership) by a *creature* without the authority or potency to do so.

[4] Because of "the sense of being in Someone's Presence […] [The Green Lady's] absence left him not to solitude but to a more formidable kind of privacy" (*Per* 69).
[5] See Macquarrie 191 for a more in-depth discussion of *Geworfenheit*.
[6] By which I mean her spiritual communion with Maleldil.

A fifth feature of her innocence is an altered conception of time. Hers is closer to a theory of time that approaches time as tenseless rather than possessing an objective past, present or future.[7] The Green Lady understands that Ransom looks "backward and forward along the line" in which "a day has one appearance as it comes to you, and another when you are in it, and a third when it has gone past. Like the waves" (*Per* 57). Yet as a being who does not know death, this tripartite separation is clearly foreign to her: an unnecessary division on a world such as hers, where the usual reasons for invoking tense – change, deterioration or privation – are either approached very differently or do not mean anything. She does not "think times have lengths" (57) although she grants that if one is "stepping out of life into the Alongside and looking at oneself living as if one were not alive," it would be "true in a way" (58). Schwartz comments that "even as she learns to take account of past and future within the unfolding present, [she] also reveals what it would be like to possess a mind at peace with the progression of time" (69). She finds a way to preserve the eternal present even as she learns from the Thulcandrians the tensed technique of self-reflexivity.

Sixth, the Green Lady's understanding of joy and love are similar, and reveal her innocent ignorance with regard to the (unfortunate) possibilities of sublunary love. Because she does not divide time into past, present or future but rather lives in and for the eternal present, this means that she perceives joys and pleasures in qualitative and superlative terms, never in quantitative or comparative terms. As she says, "[e]very joy is beyond all others. The fruit we are eating is always the best fruit of all" (*Per* 80). Schwartz also notes this distinction, explaining how the Green Lady is "[u]ntouched by our impulse to transform the qualitative into the quantitative and measure one moment against another." Rather, she "rejoices in the distinctive character of each phase of the creation as it unfolds in time" (70). Similarly, in a state of innocence, her love admits of no comparison: she does not love Maleldil more than the King, but she loves each in a different way (i.e. qualitatively). For her, the ability to love something 'more' and 'less' (i.e. in quantitative terms) is paradoxical: "[i]t is like saying a thing could be bigger than itself" (104). One either wholly assents to love, or one wholly denies it.

Finally, when Ransom asks her whether she is "happy without the King" and if she "want[s] the King?" She responds typically: "Want him? [...] How could there be anything I did not want?" (68). She *does* want to be reunited with him, yet there is no causal link

[7] Similar to a B-theory of time, in which time is understood not as a succession of moments but more as a construct of human consciousness.

between being deprived of his presence and her happiness. The Green Lady's will does not distinguish between desiring something and desiring everything – after all, "rubbish" does not make any sense to her. Instead, she wants everything that she receives, because everything has its own peculiar sort of goodness – "a strange and great good" (103). This all-embracing will certainly does raise the question of why she would strive for anything to be different from her given facticity, but I think the reason is due to the nature of her rationality and her natural curiosity. Her faculty of will is also orientated towards transcendence: discovering new states of affairs, new gifts to receive, and returning to remembered (but not current) joys like being with the King. In her innocent state, however, this openness to the future does not distract her to the extent that she loses her 'animal' satisfaction in living in the present.

The Green Lady, Ransom, and Weston / the Un-man

The Green Lady, quite ignorant of the danger Weston represents, treats him (possessed by the Un-man) just as she treats Ransom. In spite of Ransom's warning that "[t]his man [...] is a friend of that *eldil* of whom I told you – one of those who cling to the wrong good," the Lady thinks the appropriate course of action is to "explain it to him" and "go and make him older [...]" (82). Because she instinctively desires to "guide all natures to perfection" (211) and immediately recognises that "clinging to the wrong good" is not *good* for Weston, the Lady feels a duty towards him. Although her mission to "explain it to him" is doomed from the start, she still (even in the midst of his temptation) is respectful and willing to correct his apparent ignorance. Ransom – in spite of *OSP*'s events – is cordial to Weston when they meet again on Perelandrian soil. Though he is certain that Weston's arrival signifies nothing good, he nevertheless treats him with respect – reminding the reader of his willingness to return with Weston and Devine at the conclusion of his Malacandrian adventures. Later, when Weston appears to regain a semblance of agency from the Un-man, Ransom is unwilling to discount it immediately as a ploy to gain the advantage in their physical battle. Rather, he listens, and responds, and feels pity for the 'nothing' that Weston has become. Evan K. Gibson agrees, describing how Weston's "role is only tragic, and Ransom shows nothing but concern and compassion for him" (Gibson 55).

The Green Lady and the Animals

As we have seen in *OSP,* one of Lewis's aims seems to be re-situating 'the human' or 'the rational' within the animal kingdom. In Lewis's framework, it is important to note that

humans, possessing rationality like other *hnau*, have not graduated into a separate category of being or made an irrevocable jump past their less rational neighbours. Although Ransom learns a good deal about such things on Malacandra, his encounter with the Green Lady reveals ideal *hnau*-animal relations in sharper relief.

The Lady exhibits "a primordial intimacy with species other than our own" (Schwartz 44). This is clarified when Ransom wonders why "[t]he beasts in [Perelandra] seem almost rational"; the Green Lady responds that "[w]e make them older every day" (*Per* 62). This, she thinks, is what "it means to be a beast" (62). There are at least three implications in her statement: firstly, being a beast is characterised by its relation to *hnau*; secondly, *hnau* like the Green Lady or Ransom are *responsible* for the beasts' development; thirdly, getting "older" – maturation – is a good thing. Animals are thus like children in need of parenting. Far from the rhetoric of having unqualified rights to do with animals what one wills, Lewis has given them a kind of ontological right to being made "older" and an intrinsic value which goes beyond mere utility. This is an example of a central pattern in Lewis's imagination: on the one hand an obedient submission, and on the other, a loving authority. In the Great Dance, he describes this as "the unions of a kneeling with a sceptred love" (222). One example of the "sceptred love" would be an emphasis on (and therefore training in) fairness and impartiality. After Ransom and the Green Lady travel by means of the dolphin-like fish, Ransom asks why she "took so long to choose the two fish" which had carried them. Her response is that she tries "not to choose the same fish too often" (75), consequently varying her choices.

There are, however, limits to the pattern where the higher should look after the lower and raise them up (as the higher are themselves being raised). This is suggested firstly by Ransom's judgement that "by taking seriously the inferiority of her adorers," the Green Lady "made them somehow less inferior – raised them from the status of pets to that of slaves" (62). One immediately notes the seeming necessity of "her adorers" inferiority (which I take to be in an ontological sense, not axiological or moral) – and this inferiority is not demeaning in any way, as becomes apparent.[8] Lewis's usage of the word "slaves" here is more akin to associations with committed servant-hood: the kind of slavery of which St. Paul speaks – one is either a servant of "sin unto death" or "obedience unto righteousness".[9] While the former

[8] Note also the ontological limitations inherent in the Green Lady's claim that "[h]owever I teach the beasts they will never be better than I" (*Per* 80). She echoes Jesus, who claims "[t]he disciple is not above his master, nor a servant above his lord" (Matt. 10:24; Luke 6:40 [KJV]).
[9] Rom. 6:16; 1 Cor. 7:22 (KJV).

denotes a lack of freedom, the latter, seen in terms of discipleship, paradoxically contains the idea of ultimate freedom. Lewis echoes this when he says "[d]iscipline, while the world is yet unfallen, exists for the sake of what seems its very opposite – for freedom, almost for extravagance" (*PPL* 81). In other words, freedom needs a form: an appropriate configuration in which it may flourish.[10] Quoting Roland M. Kawano, Downing claims "a central element in the image of the [Great Dance] is 'the reconciliation of order and freedom'" (73); the relationship between the Lady and her animals illustrates such a reconciliation.

The Green Lady tells Ransom that teaching the beasts "is a joy beyond all" (*Per* 80). Her avowal of joy emphasises the love with which she approaches the task, a love primarily for Maleldil, and as a result, for that which he has made and the tasks that he has given. In a similar vein, the *Oyarsa* of Perelandra echoes the original injunction given to Adam when she instructs the Green Lady and the King to "[g]ive names to all creatures, guide all natures to perfection. Strengthen the feebler, lighten the darker, love all" (211). The couple reveal one specific way in which they will "guide all natures to perfection; they "will make the nobler of the beasts so wise that they will become *hnau* and speak: their lives shall awake to a new life in us as we awake in Maleldil" (217).[11] Lewis is suggesting that the beasts' so-called 'slavery' (or servant-hood) is the sort which allows them maximal thriving, both physically and spiritually (which includes the sense of 'rationally'), under the nourishing, but firm, direction of loving authority.

Conflict in *Perelandra*

Repeating and Arresting Pleasure

Lewis is unequivocal in his rejection of ascetic tendencies with regard to the body and pleasure, and displays this throughout *Perelandra*. Ransom's initial experience on the planet is one of "excessive pleasure" (33), "unearthly pleasures" (38), an experience "filled with all delights" (101) – ranging from the "orgiastic and almost alarming pleasure of the gourds [a kind of fruit]" to the "specific pleasure of plain food" (47). Beyond food, however, "[t]here was an exuberance or prodigality of sweetness about the mere act of living which our race finds it difficult not to associate with forbidden and extravagant actions" (34). Lewis emphasises that Ransom is "haunted, not by a feeling of guilt, but by surprise that he had no

[10] I credit the idea that freedom needs a form to Ellis Potter, who makes this distinction in one of his podcasts – which I unfortunately can no longer find.
[11] Lewis expands on this idea in Chapter 9 of *PP*, where he discusses the topic of 'Animal Pain.'

such feeling" (33). In Ransom's dealings with pleasure on Perelandra, the essential *goodness* of bodily pleasure is never called into question. The trilogy's metaphysic is predicated upon the Augustinian idea that "[n]o Nature (i.e. no positive reality) is bad and the word Bad denotes merely privation of good" (*PPL* 66). Lewis's focus is rather the way one should navigate these intrinsically good pleasures so as not to ruin them.

Although Ransom "was [...] neither hungry nor thirsty" after having experienced the "alarming pleasure of the gourds [...] [h]is reason, or what we commonly take to be reason in our own world, was all in favour of tasting this miracle again." Nevertheless, there is "something" which "seemed opposed to this 'reason,'" and consequently, "it appeared to him better not to taste again" (*Per* 39). This new faculty – appreciative restraint, one might call it – exerts its influence on Ransom because of who he has become, and because of where he is.[12] The internal battle between overindulgence and restraint prompts Ransom to articulate a central life-principle of the trilogy. He decides that repeating "a pleasure so intense" would be "a vulgarity – like asking to hear the same symphony twice in a day" (39). This hearkens back to *OSP*, in which the *hrossa* express a similar aversion to the inappropriate repetition of pleasurable experiences. Ransom is told there "a pleasure is full grown only when it is remembered" (*OSP* 74) – not when it is repeated.

After the incident with the gourds, Ransom goes on to speculate that "the root of all evil" is found in "[t]his itch to have things over again, as if life were a film that could be unrolled twice or even made to work backwards" (*Per* 44). Here he is outlining the fact that "reason in our own world" easily supports a hedonistic attitude. Ransom understands that, as Downing says, his species "long[s] for a godlike sovereignty over their lives, to maximize pleasure and security" (89). On Thulcandra, which is in constant flux and subject to a variety of variables and uncertainties, it can seem wise to take the pleasures one can, *when available*. Moreover, depending on how pleasurable they are, earthly wisdom might possibly even exhaust them as a kind of "security for being able to have things over again, a means of arresting the unrolling of the film" (*Per* 44).

The Expected Good versus the Given Good

The Green Lady exhibits a kind of regret when she realises that the figure – whom she initially hopes is her King – is actually Ransom instead. She "finds a different fruit and not the fruit [she] thought of" (66). She expands on this as follows:

[12] He has changed from the Ransom who gives in to "something like conscience" in *OSP* (81). See p. 29.

> [o]ne joy was expected and another is given [...] at the very moment of the finding there is in the mind a kind of thrusting back, or a setting aside. The picture of the fruit you have not found is still, for a moment, before you. And if you wished – if it were possible to wish – you could keep it there. You could send your soul after the good you had expected, instead of turning it to the good you had got. You could refuse the real good; you could make the real fruit taste insipid by thinking of the other. (66)

Even in her innocence, she recognises at a conceptual level how one might "make the real fruit insipid." Her qualification, however, is crucial: that this would occur only "if it were possible to wish" at the expense of the given good to keep the expected good in focus. For her, this condition is unfulfilled when she sees that Ransom is not the King; she embraces the "different fruit" and does not "send [her] soul" after the expected good. The Lady explains to Ransom that

> [t]he joy of finding [the King] again and the joy of all the new knowledge I have had from you are more unlike than two tastes; and when the difference is as great as that, and each of the two things so great, then the first picture does stay in the mind quite a long time [...] after the other good has come. (67)

Beyond this, she also learns something useful in the context of her coming temptation. She exclaims "it is I, I myself, who turns from the good expected to the given good. Out of my own heart I do it. One can conceive a heart which did not: which clung to the good it had first thought of and turned the good which was given it into no good" (67). This episode concludes with an interesting passage in which the Green Lady seems to discover the radical nature of her freedom. She has been under the impression until this point that everything is divinely ordered by Maleldil in his sovereignty; that he is in control of every detail of her existence. She now apprehends an important distinction, however; there is no necessity in her reception of "the good things He sent" (67). She is the one who chooses to accept the good – and if she wanted to, she could also say No. She becomes conscious of free-will in a libertarian sense, and the "delight with terror in it!" (67) – a central intuition of existentialist thought (it tends to focus on the terror of such freedom more than the delight, however). A little while later, she reformulates her understanding of the nature of freedom; telling Ransom that she had "thought we went along paths – but it seems there are no paths. The going itself is the path" (67). This is Lewis's succinct answer to the problem of Maleldil's sovereignty and the Green Lady's freedom. For a free creature, united with its creator, the intended path is established

through the creature's exercise of its own freedom: never is it forced or compelled. The pathfinders create their own paths with Maleldil's official pen. [13]

In her state of innocence, she recognises both a fact about herself and a governing norm of her coming maturity. She turns towards the given good and does not begrudge the entrance of anything unexpected. In other words, she is not condemned by the shadow side of fallen humanity's drive to transcendence, characterised as it is by a constant projection of oneself into the future (in an attempt to escape the present).[14] The Green Lady reframes her existence in different terms. First and foremost, the given good is to be received joyously. Desired but absent goods never corrupt the phenomenological value of the present moment. As she later asserts: "[t]he fruit we are eating is always the best fruit of all" (80).

The Temptation of the Green Lady

The central spiritual conflict in *Perelandra* is the Green Lady's temptation. After Weston's metamorphosis into the Un-man, his mission is unambiguous – to teach the Lady the pride which 'comes before the fall.' He uses various approaches – and considerable repetition – in attempting to reach this goal. Two points differ from his previous success in Eden, however: firstly, Ransom is there to defend the Lady, first verbally, and later physically. Secondly, the Un-man is dealing with an unfallen creature of a sort he does not fully understand. The Green Lady is not a carbon copy of Eve, rather, she is a *hnau* created after Maleldil's redeeming work on Thulcandra and into a universe where "[a]ll is new" (60).

The Un-man's attempt focuses on inducing the Green Lady to disobey Maleldil and stay overnight on the Fixed Land; an action which is explicitly forbidden to her. The tempter encourages her to imagine what it would be like to dwell on the Fixed Land – after all, "[Maleldil] has not forbidden [the Green Lady] to *think* about dwelling on the fixed land" (102, italics mine). She tells the Un-man that it is "a strange thing – to think about what will never happen" (102). He responds as follows:

> Nay, in our world we do it all the time. We put words together to mean things that have never happened and places that never were: beautiful

[13] In the course of her dialogues with the Un-man and Ransom, she further concludes that "[w]e cannot walk out of Maleldil's will: but He has given us a way to walk out of *our* will" (*Per* 118), meaning that ultimately Maleldil's plans will be accomplished. Disobedience is ultimately against oneself and one's own natural bias towards the Creator.

[14] Unlike Satan, who Gibson calls "the *eldil* who clung to the fruit desired and turned from the fruit given" (Gibson 66).

> words, well put together. And then tell them to one another. We call it stories or poetry. (102)

The Un-man cleverly defends the validity of this speculation or "Story" (103) by stressing the artistic elements in the process, alluding to its potential beauty, and thus, implying the beauty of disobedience. Perhaps the hope is that such an emphasis would overwhelm the reasons against such fantasising, especially fantasising about forbidden things. Speculation, however, is strange for the Green Lady. In her world of immediateness, beauty corresponds to reality, to actuality, and thus truth. Schwartz explains how Henri Bergson's life-force philosophy, which stresses "the actual over 'what might be' or 'what might have been,'" particularly appealed to Lewis (65).[15] Although she finds the Un-man's speculations quite alien, her faculty of imagination has not developed far. This puts her in danger, for she does not realise that the imagination can be powerful shaper of reality. When the Un-man suggests that "one of the reasons why you are forbidden to [dwell on the Fixed Land]" is "so you may have a Might Be to think about, to make Story about" (*Per* 103), she tentatively accedes to the point, but responds that she will "get the King to make [her] older about it" (103). She thus closes their discussion with an appeal to authority.

When the Green Lady attributes to the King so much epistemic authority, this is because of her belief that those who are lower in the chain of hierarchy should submit to those who are higher – a hierarchical idea which also underpins her unwillingness to disobey Maleldil.[16] The Un-man attempts to undermine this hierarchy of authority, epistemic or otherwise, which for the Green Lady is an *a priori* fact of her existence. He does this by introducing "the women of [his] world" (104) who represent the "classical feminine heroic image – that of a self-reliant, pioneering, tragedy queen superior to weaker and would-be domineering males" (Hilder 72). They are described as being "of great spirit" (*Per* 104); they reach "for the new and unexpected good, and see that it is good long before the men understand it" (104). Furthermore, they do not need Maleldil to "tell them what is good, but know it for themselves as He does" (104) – they are epistemologically independent, and would not want anyone else "to make [them] older" (103).[17] Like a playwright-cum-director who "had already written the play" (139), the Un-man expects the Green Lady to become "[t]he heroine of a very great tragedy" (127) and to embody what Ward calls "the spirit of

[15] "Almost he felt that the words 'would have happened' were meaningless – mere invitations to wander in what the Lady would have called an 'alongside world' which had no reality. Only the actual was real" (*Per* 146).
[16] I discuss this hierarchism fully in the Great Dance section (p. 57) as well as in Chapter Four.
[17] This is of course what the serpent offers Eve in her temptation. See Gen. 3:3 onwards.

Venus Infernal" (170). The Un-man wants her to become a woman, defined by "the nobility of self-sacrifice" (*Per* 132), who disobeys her Creator in order that her husband and offspring might reap the rewards of greater wisdom; wisdom that she, "stepping forth fearless and friendless into the dark" (126), would give to them. The Un-man also promises that her innocent request to know more about "Death" would be realised "in abundance." He explains to her that "with Death" she will enter into "the real oldness and the strong beauty and the uttermost branching out" (114) – and so she has a great many reasons to disobey. Having introduced a "swell of indistinctly splendid images" which fill "half her imagination [...] with bright, poisonous shapes (134), the disobedient act of staying on the Fixed Land overnight becomes an act of individuation, loving self-sacrifice, beautification, the command of greater wisdom, and, of course, the demystification and apprehension of Death. Owing to the unceasing repetition of the Un-man's temptation and the Green Lady's wavering defence, it is not clear to either the reader or Ransom whether the Green Lady will successfully avoid what Lewis elsewhere calls "the Satanic island" (*PPL* 103).

Ransom's Temptation

Ransom's temptation, the second major spiritual conflict of *Perelandra*, does not consist in whether to commit a positive act of disobedience or not. On the contrary, he is tempted to withhold the sacrificial *agape* love required by the Lady's deteriorating situation. He finds "the suggestion that he had been brought there not to do anything" to be very appealing; it is much easier to be "a spectator or a witness" (*Per* 106) than to intervene in the Un-man's plans at personal risk. Initially Ransom fights the Un-man in a battle of word and concept, but his verbal defence soon falters. His conscience (as the voice of Maleldil) suggests the only alternative: a physical defence. This is not to Ransom's liking, and he "shrinks from the divine commission to destroy the Un-man" (Gibson 48), trying to find any means possible to justify his pacifism. Thus begins "the night of Ransom's personal Gethsemane" (Downing 52).

Ransom firstly comes to realise the gravity of his freedom on Perelandra, which is to say "the preposterous truth that all really depended on [his and the Green Lady's] actions" (*Per* 142). A single action – or inaction – would change everything. He knows that "his journey to Perelandra was not a moral exercise, nor a sham fight. If the issue lay in Maleldil's hands, Ransom and the Lady were those hands" (142). In this, he recognises a truth that the

Green Lady had articulated earlier: "there are no paths. The going itself is a path" (67). Nothing is preordained in a sense of 'determined':

> Either something or nothing must depend on individual choices. And if something, who could set bounds to it? A stone may determine the course of a river. [Ransom] was that stone at this horrible moment which had become the centre of the whole universe. (142-3)

With an awareness of something analogous to 'the butterfly effect,' Ransom recognises the cosmic centrality of his choice. The extent of this responsibility is staggering: for if "Maleldil's creatures are to be allowed meaningful choices at all, then those choices must be allowed to determine even whether worlds are to be saved or lost" (Downing 115).

Once Ransom unwillingly apprehends the gravity of his situation, he then probes why he is in such a situation at all – for "[w]hat would it prove" if the Green Lady "were to be kept in obedience only by the forcible removal of the Tempter?" (*Per* 144). Lewis, I believe, is getting his idea for Ransom's intervention from I Corinthians, chapter ten, verse 13 (KJV): "but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." Gibson concludes that, given that the Green Lady "had stood the test," Ransom's "job is to remove the personified malice" and be "the 'way of escape' promised to those who are tempted" (52). Ransom condemns his own attempted retreat into theological dilemmas, for as "the Darkness" or "the Voice" whispers to him, he is only "wasting time" (*Per* 145). It tells him that "[i]t is not for nothing that you are named Ransom" (147). Ransom's earlier desire to find out "[w]hat had he been brought here to do" (47) now has its most clear-cut, unavoidable answer. Distanced from his initial desire to be a "spectator," his conscience asserts itself and leads him to make a decision. The reader is told that Ransom "bowed his head and groaned and repined against his fate – to be still a man and yet to be forced up into the metaphysical world, to enact what philosophy only thinks (148). Ransom's love and devotion for the Green Lady is stronger than his desire for self-preservation. For this reason, Ransom accepts being Maleldil's Hand rather than a "spectator or witness" (106). He receives the "the translunary virtue" of Venus, becoming "ready to kill, ready to die" (*THS* 359).

At the conclusion of Ransom's temptation and beginning of his obedience, Lewis elucidates Ransom's thoughts on the 'fixity of the future,' and in doing so, captures the phenomenology of decisive commitment. We are told how "there had arisen before [Ransom], with perfect certitude, the knowledge 'about this time tomorrow you will have

done the impossible'" (*Per* 149). Faced with a "sheer impossibility" (149), Ransom embraces this knowledge as a psychological coping mechanism. There is, of course, no inevitability that it will take place, but through abandoning himself mentally to the "future act" as if it "stood there fixed and unalterable," the hurdle of his will-faculty is overcome. As the reader is told, "[i]t was a mere irrelevant detail that [the action] happened to occupy the position we call future instead of that which we call past" (150). This may be interpreted in two ways: either "the power of choice had been simply set aside and an inflexible destiny substituted for it," or "he had been delivered from the rhetoric of his passions and had emerged into unassailable freedom" (150). Both hypotheses fit the data. For Ransom is set free by his determination, thereby exemplifying one way in which "[p]redestination and freedom" (150) may amount to the same thing.

The Maturity of Conquered Temptations

Both the Green Lady and Ransom's temptations result in the increased maturation of their characters, and proceed from the idea that "temptations might be good for us" ("Letters" 332). Once the Un-man is defeated and Ransom meets the Green Lady again, she explains that the only reason she would have wanted to disobey and stay on the Fixed Land were if she had wanted "to be able [...] to command where I should be [...] and what should happen to me" (*Per* 213). Staying on the Fixed Land would entail stability, and in her immaturity, stability is not what would have matured her into the being she was made to be. It would have enabled her to claim autonomy before it was given, "to draw [her] hands out of Maleldil's, to say to Him, 'Not thus, but thus'" (213). Paul S. Fiddes calls this the desire "to seize security for oneself, rather than welcoming the next wave that Maleldil sends. It is, in the language of a modern theologian, 'trying to make absolute a finite certainty'" (142).[18] With this in mind, the Un-man's temptations all tried to satisfy (in shortcut fashion) the Green Lady's own "quest for certainty" (qtd. in Evans 56). Consenting to this, she concludes, "would have been cold love and feeble trust" (*Per* 214). The King supplements his wife's view, explaining that the pair "have learned of evil, though not as the Evil One wished us to learn" (214). Rather than partaking in Evil, and being taught Death by the Un-man, the whole temptation is shown to be a planned path, by which Maleldil "brought [them] out of the one ignorance," i.e. a *savoir*, propositional knowledge of evil, without allowing them to "enter the other," a *connaître*, participatory knowledge (214). Lewis explains in *PPL* that "the presence of evil as

[18] Fiddes here quotes Paul Tillich's *Systematic Theology*.

an object of thought does not [make a mind evil]," but that only "the approval of the will" can do so (84). The irony, which the King notices, is that "[i]t was by the Evil One himself that he brought [them] out of the first [ignorance of evil]. Little did that dark mind know the errand on which he really came to Perelandra" (*Per* 214).

Downing rightly claims that "[t]he destruction of the Un-man resolves the major external conflict of the story, but it also betokens the end of the conflict that has been raging within Ransom's own mind and heart" (51). He also observes that "on the morning [Ransom] awakens resolved to do battle with the Un-man, he discovers that the piebaldness of his body has largely faded away" (151). Ransom's decision has set in motion the resolution of his "inner discord [...] the conflict between [his] sanctified self and [his] natural self" (113), symbolised by his piebald skin. In rightly perceiving what he must do, and obeying his conscience through courageous battle with the Un-man, Ransom successfully "heal[s] the dangerous split in his nature" (Rossi 42) and denies, categorically, any re-emergence of the fearful, initially-imperceptive Ransom encounters at the beginning of *OSP*. His new integrity means, in practical terms, an experience of peace and contentment. Following the Un-man's fiery death and what he later remembers as a "long struggle in the caves of Perelandra" (*THS* 360), Ransom ascends toward the holy mountain "unwearied," "not lonely nor afraid," with "no desires" – he experiences a "state of life" in which "he was content" (*Per* 197).

Philosophical Conflict #1: Weston and the Spirit of Emergent Evolution

Looking now at the philosophical conflicts in *Perelandra*, Weston's "raving lunacy" (*OSP* 24) has changed to a certain degree. Weston was previously committed to a heavily anthropocentric understanding of the universe. Upon reaching Perelandra, however, he reveals a new loyalty to what he calls "Spirit" (*Per* 89), which amounts to a "belief in a single pervading spirit which inhabits all things" (Gibson 53). Claiming that he has been making "a wholly unscientific dichotomy or antithesis between Man and Nature" (*Per* 88), he decides that he "could admit no break, no discontinuity" and becomes "a convinced believer in emergent evolution," with its slogan that "[a]ll is one" (89).

A major implication is his abandonment of the idea of the intrinsic value of man – from an extreme anthropocentric view of the universe, he moves to the other extreme where man is meaningless except insofar as he carries the impulse of "Spirit" (89). Weston describes this as an "unconsciously purposive dynamism" aiming at "an ever-increasing complexity of organisation, towards spontaneity and spirituality" (89). The reader is told that,

through Weston, the "Spirit itself is at this moment pushing on to its goal" (91). Given his new belief that "[m]an in himself is nothing" (89), Weston's new emphasis on "Spirit" is theoretically a useful replacement for his previous axiomatic standard; it is one which he can still embrace rather than accepting the universe's indifferent, inarticulate purposelessness (as he does later).

His view is essentially monistic. As such, "heaven and hell" and "God and Devil" are to Weston's mind mere products of an interesting tendency "in popular religion" to divide reality into parts (92). He declares that dualisms "are really portraits of Spirit [...] cosmic energy-self-portraits" (92), an idea consistent with the monism he professes. The focus on synthesising dichotomies is also integral to Weston's current view because it neatly fits with his pragmatic notion of Progress. Since amoral Spirit cares little for *how* it comes to flourish (caring only that it *does* flourish) – pragmatism rules. Intrinsic moral values must be dispensed with if they get in the way of Life. Ransom asks Weston whether "the things the Force wants you to do are what ordinary people call diabolical?" (94). The response is simple: "The two things [evil and good] and are only moments in the single, unique reality" (94). An overtly Nietzschean ethic is made explicit:

> The world leaps forward through great men and greatness always transcends mere moralism. When the leap has been made our 'diabolism' as you would call it becomes the morality of the next stage; but while we are making it, we are called criminals, heretics, blasphemers... (94)

In effect, Weston's answer is Yes. It is at this point that the conflict is most apparent between Ransom and Weston's philosophies of life, because Ransom would attest to an objective morality and ethical standard. Weston becomes "a sort of missionary for the life force" (Gibson 54) and embraces diabolism because he believes it is, currently, the vehicle of Life. In the end, Weston's Bergson-inspired "theory of 'creative' or 'emergent' evolution is ultimately an expression of [his] desire to usurp control over the conditions of [his] existence" (Schwartz 74) – a desire which undermines itself. For Weston is, in fact, "a dupe, a victim of the forces not of life but of death" (Gibson 54).

Philosophical Conflict #2: Pseudo-Weston, the Un-man and the Grotesque Dance

The Un-man's conquest of Weston's body is peripheral given the centrality of the Green Lady's temptation, but it is something that introduces an important philosophy of life, one which acts as a nihilistic counter to the Great Dance and Lewis's overall philosophical thrust.

Soon after Weston concludes telling Ransom about his philosophy of Spirit, he "call[s] that Force into [himself] completely" (95). This invitation results in his initial incapacitation, and soon, his transformation into the Un-man. Hilder writes that "[e]very human soul is a 'receptacle' for a greater force: either the demonic that destroys the soul or the divine that fulfills the soul" (59). Weston, unfortunately, has become a receptacle for the former. When the Un-man is attacked by Ransom, there is a period in which Weston apparently rallies against the Un-man's control and regains a measure of mental control. The reader is told, though, that "[i]f the remains of Weston were, at such moments, speaking through the lips of the Un-man, then Weston was not now a man at all [...] Only a ghost was left – an everlasting unrest, a crumbling, a ruin, an odour of decay" (*Per* 130–1). It is striking that Weston uses the Un-man's lips, not his own: such is the completeness of his possession.[19] This ghost, who I follow Gibson in calling "Pseudo-Weston" (Gibson 51), offers a grotesque philosophy of life premised upon the dominant, victorious reality of the Un-man's evil (which I examine first).

The reader is told "[t]he extremity of [the Un-man's] evil had passed beyond all struggle into some state which bore a horrible similarity to innocence" (*Per* 110). The irony is that 'innocent' contains etymologically within itself the idea of being 'harm-less' or 'free from moral wrong.' To apply such a word to the Un-man hardly seems appropriate. Yet in more modern senses of the word – i.e. 'purity', 'blamelessness' or 'childishness' – there is a certain appropriateness for such a description.[20] Lewis's evaluation of Milton's Satan is pertinent: the Un-man is similarly "a personified self-contradiction" (*PPL* 97). This becomes apparent through the Un-man's "petty, indefatigable nagging" (*Per* 123) by which he irritates Ransom. He constantly calls out Ransom's name, followed by the retort "Nothing" (122) when asked for explanation. Childishly aiming to provoke frustration in an elder, he tests Ransom's patience. This episode reveals a good deal about Lewis's conception of evil – that at core, it is a repetitive "Nothing" acting as if it were actually 'Something.' In this conception, Lewis follows the "Augustinian view that grants ontological status only to the Good and relegates evil to a privative notion that is parasitic upon it" (Schwartz 65). Lewis quotes Augustine, for instance, in PPL: "No Nature (i.e. no positive reality) is bad and the word Bad denotes merely privation of good" (61). This becomes explicit when Ransom intuits that, although it might be irritating to be addressed so repetitively, at least his name

[19] I credit Jamie McGregor for this insight.

[20] Moreover (though not for lack of trying), by the novel's end the Un-man is rendered 'harmlessly' evil, at least with regard to his primary aim of corrupting the Green Lady. The only real harm one might say he inflicts is the enduring wound on Ransom's heel. See p. 54.

has *substance*. The reader is told that "if he must hear either the word Ransom or the word Nothing a million times, he would prefer the word Ransom" (*Per* 123) – he has no desire for Nothing, in any sense of the word. Moreover, he is told later that "[i]t is not for nothing that you are named Ransom" (147). This is in stark contrast to the Un-man's name, which is a negation of a positive reality, man – and therefore something essentially good. 'Nothing' is an excellent word for encapsulating the nature of its evil.

With this conception of evil (as nothing or 'no thing') in complete possession of his body, Pseudo-Weston no longer dwells upon "Spirit" or "emergent evolution" (89), but rather concedes that he has "been stuffing [him]self up with a lot of nonsense" in an effort to "make the universe bearable" (169) – to replace "Nothing" with something. Having ceased "trying to persuade [him]self" (169), Pseudo-Weston now accepts that the cosmos is basically evil. He expresses this to Ransom by saying that a child "knows something about the universe which all science and all religion is trying to hide," namely that the ground of being is the stuff of "bad dreams" (170). Men of religion may "think there is a way of escape [...] There isn't" (170). The Un-man would never despair at such a ghastly vision. Being an expression of "bad dreams" himself, this would undoubtedly seem like a very good thing indeed. Pseudo-Weston, however, embraces despair in the face of the Un-man's "Nothing." He sees cosmic history as a horrible tendency towards non-being, and now perceives that the "unconsciously purposive dynamism" (89) which he previously advertised is in fact an insidious movement from order to an "essential disorder" (167). Pseudo-Weston's cosmos eschews anything Heavenly in favour of anarchic Hellishness; like his own psyche, it will regress until there is "Nothing" (122) left.

The Great Dance

Although most of *Perelandra* may be understood broadly in terms of love and the conflict prompted by Weston's arrival, the final chapters of the novel bring both the Martial and Venereal undertones into a consonant, resonant harmony. Having completed the task set for him, some doubts have arisen in Ransom's mind about the goodness of Maleldil's cosmic plan. He questions whether the unfolding cosmic process is anything more than 'a Great Disappointment.'

Ransom's questioning prepares the way for a sensual rendition (primarily verbal and visual) of the Great Dance as a response. In *OSP*, Lewis had already emphasised certain aspects of the Dance's stage and lighting by re-introducing the glorious nature of the heavens

and expressing it in terms very different to the "nightmare perspective" of Deep Heaven (*Per* 167).[21] This is a necessary revision, as the Great Dance is cosmic in nature and scope: it cannot take place in a dark vacuity or in a "remote corner" (218). Though the Great Dance may refer to the masque-like interplay of planets and stars – as the Green Lady says, one can "see the great dance with [one's] own eyes" (58) – in a deeper sense, it refers to the interrelations between every creature and creation inhabiting Maleldil's cosmos. Understood as such, the movements of the Great Dance are not solely expressed in the *Oyéresu*'s twenty or so verses, each of which conclude with the refrain: "Blessed be He!" (220), but are scattered throughout *Perelandra* and the other two texts of the trilogy. Philip Tallon has described the Dance as a kind of theodicy, asserting that in it, "Lewis uses creation's beauty to point to [Maleldil's] goodness" (200). Lewis is thus emphasising how Maleldil's beautiful goodness might be reconciled with the unfortunate conflicts that cause pervasive suffering, pain and evil in the universe. Seen on another level, the Great Dance is a re-mythologisation of the substance of history. It injects into history, both past, present and future, a new (or very old) beauty and morality: a mixture which provides the background for the Cosmic philosophy of life. Over against all competing philosophies – Weston's anthropocentric scientism and emergent evolutionism, Devine's Mammon-worship, the *Totentanz*-like nihilism of Pseudo-Weston/the Un-man – stands the Great Dance, which expresses in full the creative and created vision of reality underlying the Cosmic Trilogy.

The Enemy's Challenge

Ransom is told by the King that Maleldil's[22] incarnation and the redemption of the human race is not "the central happening of all that happens" as he had thought – it is merely a "failure to begin" and the "wiping out of a false start" before the true beginning of cosmic history (*Per* 218). He receives the King's words as a summary dismissal of all Thulcandrian history, not understanding the point of the King's analogies and his talk about the "morning at hand" (218). The King's statements amount to a repetition of something said earlier – although one presumes that it is Lewis as the implied author, not Ransom *qua* focaliser, who says it:

> [y]ou might look upon the Perelandrian story as merely an indirect consequence of the Incarnation on earth: or you might look on the Earth

[21] See p. 16.
[22] Maleldil is the archetypal Christic character of the trilogy.

> story as mere preparation for the new worlds of which Perelandra was the first. (145)

As a result of not apprehending this levelling perspective, Ransom's mind hearkens back to Pseudo-Weston's account of reality, bringing to bear the accusation (as one may see it) that "all is without plan or meaning" (218). For some readers, this turnabout might be a surprising. Such doubts are unexpected, given that Ransom has just triumphed over the Un-man and ascended the Holy Mountain in an apparent state of contentment. One would think that simply being told Earth's history was "a false start" is insufficient to upset his belief in Maleldil's providence. One possible reason why "the enemy's talk" (218) has such an effect on him is because his general view of the cosmos is lacking, having dealt thus far mostly in particulars – i.e. the histories of Malacandra and Thulcandra, and the recently-made history of which he has a part on Perelandra. At this point in the trilogy, perhaps he cannot see beyond the stage's lighting and a few of its more familiar areas; he cannot see any movements of the Dance taking place, or does not yet know how to.

Ransom declares that when "we think we see [a plan] it melts away into nothing" (218); the fact that "the centre" might become "the rim" (218), that "[Ransom's] world and [his] race" might be thrust into a "remote corner," undermines his intuitive understanding of the concept of importance. Important things, after all, are by definition *not* peripheral – to suggest otherwise seems absurd. He is close to "doubt[ing] if any shape or plan or pattern was ever more than a trick of our own eyes": implying, in other words, that scepticism is the only reasonable response to a universe "with no centre at all" (218). He finally asks: "[t]o what is all driving? What is the morning you speak of? What is it the beginning of?" (218). And with this, Ransom is told about the beginning (although 'told' is a poor word to describe what happens to him) "of the Great Game, of the Great Dance" (219). Beginning first with a discussion of the main paradoxes[23] inherent in the Dance, I then examine two choreographic tendencies by which one can characterise its movements – movements toward diversity, and movements toward unity.

The Cosmic Paradoxes

Insofar as there is a 'central' paradox, it is that the periphery is at the centre: therefore, the apparently accidental is always designed. Ransom's accusation that "all is without plan or

[23] I distinguish between paradoxes, apparent contradictions, and actual contradictions. A paradox is mysterious but not logically impossible. An apparent contradiction may be either a paradox or an actual contradiction. An actual contradiction is a logical impossibility.

meaning" is rejected, and the opposite is affirmed: "There seems no plan because it is all plan: there seems no centre because it is all centre" (223). This paradox is not necessarily absurd, because it is not contradictory. If one investigates the presuppositions that lie behind words like 'periphery' and 'centre,' both require a subjective perspective that prioritises certain elements over others. Given that the Great Dance's choreography originates from Maleldil (whom one assumes is omniscient, omnipotent and omnipresent), the frame of reference for the Great Dance is thus one which is objective, impartial and all-encompassing. This is why "each Grain [...] the Dust [...] the Worlds [...] the Beasts [...] the ancient peoples [...] the race that sinned [...] Tor and Tinidril"[24] and even the "gods" are all equally at the centre (222) – and if one wishes to put it differently, they are equally peripheral. Subjective perspectives, and any useful talk of the centre or periphery, break down when seen from Maleldil's perspective, *sub specie aeternitatis*. And thus an equal unity is achieved from an unequal diversity – or as Lewis puts it, each movement of the Great Dance "is equally at the centre and none are there by being equals" (222).

The next major paradox is that creatures of Deep Heaven both need everything and nothing at all. It is claimed that there is "need beyond measure of all that He has made," which is then countered by the fact that we have "no need of anything that is made" (223). If the above discussion about the nature of Maleldil's being holds any weight, it can also be applied in this case: because He is uncreated, it implies that He, at least, would still be needed – He is neither "everything" nor "anything." He is the ground of being, an Atlas supporting and enabling creation – the divine Logos which frames all physical and spiritual matter. Why then the need for "all that He has made"? Perhaps the key is found in a slight qualification: 'all that He has made' does not mean 'all that has been marred.' If all that exists is essentially good, then being-as-goodness is the very thing to nourish one's aesthetic, moral and religious existence. In Sartrean terms, everything Maleldil has made constitutes the facticity which both defines one's identity and ability to transcend; it is at once the springboard and ceiling of all creative effort.

The final paradox, that we are both "infinitely necessary" for the well-being of others and "infinitely superfluous" to their well-being, is clearly related to the previous one: the former focuses on the Other's relation to us, whereas this focuses on our relation to the Other. The paradox is couched as a dual imperative:

[24] The real names of the King and the Green Lady.

> Love me, my brothers, for I am infinitely necessary to you and for your delight I was made [...] Love me, my brothers, for I am infinitely superfluous, and your love shall be like His, born neither of your need nor of my deserving, but a plain bounty. (223)

Lewis's use of the qualifier 'infinitely' may seem hyperbolic, but it is not. Maleldil's *hnau* may be finite creatures, but they will endure for eternity in one form or another. Furthermore, being a conscious, rational *hnau* entails the ability – and necessity – of encountering the Other as a *Thou*: one can only *be* a person through encounter with other people, which is to say, society. But this does not solve the difficulty of the paradox. 'Love' is the key: it is not a necessary feature of existence; beings could be indifferent towards each other and the universe could plausibly be devoid of any sort of loving relationships – but for an existence in which there is "delight," it *is* necessary. Superfluity, which represents anything unnecessary or unneeded, literally means 'flowing above.' Abundance only has meaning in a universe of love. For in a cosmos defined only by pragmatic relations, the superfluous would be ignored or discarded, or somehow made useful. But with the loves 'born neither of need nor deserving,' the superfluous may also be a "delight."

Unifying and Diversifying Movements

With regard to the Great Dance, Rossi observes how "each individual and each group becomes meaningful in terms of its relationships to the complete set of groups and elements" (43). These relationships develop through distinctive movements toward, firstly, diversity and, secondly, unity; the former are exemplified by the differentiation (i.e. separation) of personality, the generation of novelty, ontological hierarchy, and superfluity as mentioned above. In contrast to this 'diversification,' the movements toward unity – 'unification' – are exemplified by the reduction of complexity to simplicity, the ubiquity of 'centrality,' and unifying the antipathies of appearance/reality and endings/beginnings.

Differentiation of personality is foreshadowed in a description of the Green Lady's temptation. It is "part of the Divine plan that this happy creature should mature, should become more and more a creature of free choice [...] distinct from God and from her husband in order thereby to be at one with them in a richer fashion" (*Per* 134). Indeed, this is the essence of the central spiritual conflict of *Perelandra*: that the Green Lady becomes herself freely, becoming less and less a creature who clings to her Creator like a dependent child. This amounts to becoming a creature able to love in a greater and more significant capacity. Such a movement toward distinction is what enables a greater "delight" (that for which all

creatures were made) insofar as it coincides with novelty.[25] But the deepest reason why there is a move towards diversity of personality is that it enables being "at one" with others in a "richer fashion" (134). It is certainly a movement towards complexity, but the fact of complexity (or simplicity, for that matter) holds no necessary moral or aesthetic value.[26] One's identity is sharpened through relationships with other strong identities: the conflict which diversity produces is, in "happy climes" (*OSP* 29), an extremely *fortunate* kind of conflict – the kind which provokes prosperity, depth and beauty, much like the *hnakra*-hunt of the *hrossa*.

The second major example is concerned with how separate entities relate to each other in the Great Dance. I have already discussed the natural hierarchy which governs the interactions between the Green Lady and her adoring animals-cum-companions: an example of "the unions of a kneeling with a sceptred love" (222) and the "perfectly graded hierarchy in which small and great [are] equally at home" (Ward 28).[27] Such a hierarchy, in which the animals are subservient to or dependent on the Green Lady, the Green Lady to the King, and so on, is a basic axiom of the Great Dance; for it to be 'Great,' or a 'Dance,' some elements cannot be equal to others. There must be a real diversification of figures and movements – apparent diversity, in which each entity or phenomenon turns out to be essentially the same, will not do. This, indeed, is the basis of harmony in music: if a choir were to sing the same note at the same pitch, their song would be very loud, but would not produce the deep, complementary beauty found in the simultaneous sounding of different pitches.

Perhaps the strongest example of "the ceremonious interchange of unequal courtesies" (*PPL* 79) is found between the Green Lady and her King. She by nature defers to him in matters of truth, and so in this area (but not necessarily all areas), she is his inferior. For many (post)moderns, this would be a jarring state of affairs. The terms 'inferior' and 'superior' have suffered sufficient word-death such that they are almost exclusively used in negative, dismissive senses; many in our time would understand Lewis's adherence to classical hierarchical conceptions of reality to be regressive. Yet if one properly appreciates the translunary, idealistic view of rationality and ontological relations that Lewis presents in the trilogy – which are not premised on power relations – then it would be a mistake to judge

[25] And even, perhaps, when it does not – a copy is still *itself*, and can delight even if unoriginal. See overleaf.
[26] Ockham and his *lex parsimoniae* might disagree.
[27] See p. 45-46.

the hierarchism according to the sublunary necessities of the Silent Planet.[28] At core, Lewis derives his hierarchism (both within the texts, and without) from a certain theistic presupposition that necessarily entails hierarchy: there is a Creator on the one hand, and there is creation on the other. Yet this does not mean that, within creation, the hierarchy is necessarily fixed. Perelandra's *Oyarsa* abdicates her superiority to the King and Green Lady, who receive it together. Hilder explains that "Lewis's ideal or transformed vision of hierarchy is defined by a fluidity in which every other aspect of creation is at the centre because Maleldil, also identified as the Morning Star, is the centre" (80). Lewis gives one final image to illustrate this. All figures of the Great Dance become "the master-figure" (*Per* 224) or a means of explaining all the rest – but this mastery endures only as long as they are in "focus." For once one looks at the "marginal decorations," soon those peripheral figures claim "the same hegemony" (224). In this 'microdance' of a shifting perspective and shifting centre, each figure finds "in its new subordination a significance greater than that which it had abdicated" (224). This is principally Lewis's defence of the hierarchic element of the Cosmic Trilogy.

The next theme with which I deal is the emphasis on variety and novelty. It is a sign of immaturity to have a monolithic imagination, one which is mundane (in the literal sense) – for the Green Lady says that when she "was young [she] could imagine no beauty but this of our own world" (58). Maleldil, however, "can think of all, and all different" (58). She later claims that "all is new" (60).[29] Juxtaposed against "all different," one sees that Maleldil *qua* Creator tends towards increasing diversity, difference, newness and novelty. His creation evolves and does not remain in stasis. The reader is told that "[t]he new world of Perelandra was not a mere repetition of the old world Tellus. Maleldil never repeated Himself" (145). Perhaps the best textual example of this creative movement is encapsulated in the following passage:

> Never did He make two things the same; never did He utter one word twice. After earths, not better earths but beasts; after beasts, not better beasts but spirits. After a falling, not recovery but a new creation. Out of the new creation, not a third but the mode of change itself is changed for ever. (219-220)

[28]Downing notes, "[t]his is a highly idealized version of hierarchy, one that could succeed only in unfallen worlds" (72).
[29] See Rev. 21:5 (KJV): "Behold, I make all things new."

The final assertion – that the "mode of change itself" would be "changed forever" (220) – is a crucial nuance buffering this cosmic dynamism from objections of banality or eventual tedium. The Great Dance, of which the events in *OSP*, *Perelandra* and *THS* are just "the beginning," will never consist in the repetition of old themes *ad infinitum*, or come to provoke boredom and nausea. For once a medium, genre, type, kind or genus is exhausted and perfected, a new one will arise. Thereafter, even the medium of media, the genre of genres, the type of types (*etc*) will alter and become something new. As spectators and participants, one's apprehension and experience of the Great Dance will never cease to prompt wonder – for all eternity, as the magnitude of infinite creativity and infinite expressions of love work themselves out from the very depths of the Creator God. Compare this soaring cosmic vision to the Un-man's vile repetitions; his temptation of the Green Lady; his repeated killing (and method of killing) the Perelandrian frogs; finally, his 'Ransom / Nothing' irritations. While Maleldil tends towards novel perfections, the Un-man – and his diabolic kin – tend towards imitations, mere repetition, and "Nothing."

The next major unifying movement is phenomenological in nature. The reader is told that appearances are not 'false' – perceptual experience, even if it does not communicate the ultimate essence of beings, is nonetheless "true" (206). With respect to the *Oyéresu's* 'physical' forms, Ransom is told that "[y]ou see only an appearance [...] You have never seen more than an appearance of anything" – for example, "Arbol" (the solar system), "a stone," or Ransom's "own body" (206). In other words, appearances are all we have *qua* finite, physical beings. The *Oyarsa* of Malacandra tells Ransom that "his [the *Oyarsa*'s] appearance is as true as what you see of those" (206). If this is the case, the dichotomy between appearance and reality collapses – reality impinges upon appearance and vice-versa. All is perceived through the senses and faculties available to one; the *eldila* perceive according to their kind, just as the *hnau* do. There is something freeing in this fact, for it prompts an epistemic humility. One can never take the nature of 'the inside' as a known fact; one can only develop a reasonable faith as to its contents – a reasonableness derived from the sum-total of appearance available to one, which one must assume reflects, at least partially, ultimate reality. This amounts to a restatement of the phenomenological dialectic that Ransom employs on Malacandra. If one rejects this intuitive presupposition – that the outside suggests the inside (i.e. laughter suggests joy, or a grimace suffering) – then scepticism is the only other response; conscious rational creatures might just be brains in a vat or plugged into the Matrix.

Related to the appearance-reality dichotomy is the relationship between 'original' and 'copy.' Ransom is transfixed by the sight of the King – or as he calls him, "the Father" (211), whom he immediately understands to be a copy or picture of Maleldil. Ransom's reflections lead him to conclude that copies are not worth less (or worthless) because they are unoriginal. Rather, "the very beauty of [the object] lay in the certainty that it was a copy, like and not the same, an echo, a rhyme, an exquisite reverberation of the uncreated music prolonged in a created medium" (211). The original-copy dichotomy, which hinges on the counterfeit or non-unique nature of the copy, loses its force. Thus even though the Dance inculcates a tendency towards novelty, this cannot be taken too narrowly: for novelty can come from copies too, when seen as a "reverberation" (211) of the original's glory. Being a copy in the Great Dance holds no negative connotations. It is interesting to note that Lewis equivocates when describing the King as "a copy" (211).[30]

The final general movement of the Great Dance that I examine is the way in which endings and beginnings collapse into one another while not losing their historical meaning or importance. One first encounters this idea from the Green Lady. With the *hnau* of Malacandra in mind, she asserts as self-evident the fact that "they are their own part of history and not another. We are on this side of the wave and they on the far side" (60).[31] The ending of a particular historical event does not entail that it is thereafter "rubbish" or to be "swept away" like cosmic dirt (60). Rather, all contingent phenomena which appear in the Great Dance will conform to Solomon's principle in Ecclesiastes that there is a time for everything: "[a] time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance".[32] Endings are appropriate if there is to be a new beginning: death brings new life. It is revealed that even "the fields of Arbol will fade and the days of Deep Heaven itself are numbered" (220). The Great Dance, in other words, will eventually transcend its current stage and find itself in a new milieu altogether.

Looking at the *hrossa* of Malacandra, there is a similarity between their concept of death and the view of human mortality stated in Tolkien's *The Silmarillion* and *The Lord of the Rings*. Before the shadow of evil warps humanity's view of mortality into being the

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[30]In Chapter Eleven he collapses the distinction altogether. In the context of the Thulcandrian temptation and the corresponding Perelandrian equivalent, the reader is told that "nothing was a copy or model of anything else" (145), an idea which follows if indeed "all is new" (60).

[31]One should note that elsewhere in this passage, the Green Lady uses a definite article when referring to history: "*the* history" (60, my italics). By doing so, she implies the objectivity of history; there cannot be many 'histories': there can be only one – Maleldil's. The corollary is that there are right and wrong ways of apprehending this history's meaning, origins and ends.

[32] Eccl. 3:4 (KJV).

"Doom of Men," it was meant to be the "gift" of their creator (*The Silmarillion* 265) – a means by which the characteristic *Sehnsucht* of the human spirit might be quenched. Unlike the Elven race who are immortal and bound to the world while it still exists, the race of men (and those who choose human fate, like Arwen Half-elven) "are not bound for ever to the circles of the world, and beyond them is more than memory" (*The Lord of the Rings* 1100). Death is the threshold of something utterly new and transcendent. In Lewis's Deep Heaven, Hyoi affirms this, and I suspect even the Green Lady apprehends something of this truth. For when she asks the Un-man if he has come "to teach us *death*" (*Per* 65), she recognises death's ambiguity. One form of death entails a deep ontological loss and movement towards "Nothing," whereas the other indicates a transition from one mode of life to another. Lewis also illustrates this sanctified version of death in *The Last Battle* (which Ward aligns with the sphere of Saturn[33]) where the reader is told that the Pevensie children's adventures in Narnia, now concluded through the world's destruction, had only been "the cover and the title page" (*LB* 165) of the story that was to come. Ward calls this idea "a paradox which nicely expresses the good fortune that *Infortuna Major* [Saturn] may bring to those who respond positively to his influence, finding their beginning in their end" (207).

Lewis leaves perhaps the most beautiful movement of the Great Dance for the end: a fitting conclusion to a beautiful cosmic vision. As the movements of the Dance multiply and magnify in Ransom's overwhelmed consciousness, it is written that

> at the very zenith of complexity, complexity was eaten up and faded, as a thin white cloud fades into the hard blue burning of the sky, and a simplicity beyond all comprehension, ancient and young as spring, illimitable, pellucid, drew him with cords of infinite desire into its own stillness. (*Per* 224)

In true form, Lewis offers a final paradox to undermine the paradoxical nature of everything else he has sketched up until this point. Each new movement, each new paradox of the Dance complicates it further – yet in the end, it is reduced it to "a simplicity beyond all comprehension" (224). Many inexperienced dancers might think the movements of a dance initially complex. Yet once they have been mastered, apprehended, digested, there is nothing simpler than spinning away in joyful, harmonious freedom.

[33] See *Planet Narnia* 97.

Chapter 4

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Conflict, Love and Harmony in *That Hideous Strength*

One wonders if Lewis did not think twice about writing a third science fiction novel, especially after the crescendo of the Great Dance; the passage is the kind of soaring diversion which writers can only get away with at the very end of a story: the reader is already committed, and will endure a good deal of pseudo-philosophical meandering to reach the final page. At least, an unsympathetic reader might think so. After such a trip into the beautiful, paradoxical ether of cosmic history and eschatology, a return to more conventional, chronological quest-based storylines – like *OSP* and most of *Perelandra* – is arguably out of place. If there had been three journeys to three different planets of Deep Heaven, then such a passage, situated right at the end of book three, would be an ideal concluding vision: the meaning of each novel's storyline, each as a movement – peripheral and yet central – to the overarching cosmic dance of history. But this vision comes at the end of the book two, not book three. How does one then understand *THS* in relation to *OSP* and *Perelandra*? Regardless of whether Lewis felt the same about the conclusive atmosphere of the Great Dance or not, he *did* write a vastly different kind of novel in *THS*. For one thing, he returns to Earth, or "Thulcandra." This is perhaps an unexpected move for the reader, if s/he judges by the previous two novels. Perhaps one reason is because, as Lewis explains in *DI* (139), Dante gives 'Fortune' to Earth as its presiding intelligence and writes in *Inferno* that "[Fortune] turns her sphere and rejoices in her bliss"; she "equitably distributes light" (qtd. in *DI* 139) and does not illuminate any one place to the exclusion of others. The nature of Fortune's wheel is to turn. With this in mind, *THS* is a story of Fortune's wheel restoring light to those areas where darkness has become too prevalent – in this case, Britain/Logres. There is another reason, however, why Earth is the best location to write a story about Deep Heaven as a whole. This is because "[t]here is no Oyarsa in Heaven who has not got his representative on Earth" (*THS* 351). Thus, by returning to the "Silent Planet," Lewis is able to restate (in earthly terms), the two planetary principles introduced in the first two novels – whether understood as the Martial and the Venereal, Conflict and Love, or the Masculine and the Feminine.

The novel is focalised through the perspective of Mark and Jane Studdock, a married couple whose relationship "turns out to be the mundane expression of mighty cosmic forces" (Ward 49). Mark, a name derived from Mars, is immediately aligned with conflict and with

the masculine gender. Jane, whose name is a female derivation of 'John,' does not possess any explicit, denominative link to Venus. Perhaps Lewis remembered that Jesus's disciple, John, is described in the New Testament as being the disciple "whom Jesus loved."[1] Etymologically, the name has the meaning of "God is gracious" or "Graced by Jehovah,"[2] which would fit thematically given the grace Jane receives during the course of the narrative. Jane's name, however, is of peripheral importance, for as a character, it is clear that she is aligned with Venus and the feminine gender[3] throughout the novel.

My reading of the text centres on this couple, their respective journeys either 'out of' or 'into' new spiritual and material circumstances, and perhaps most importantly, the symbolical "[m]atrimony" (*THS* 1) which frames the beginning and end of the novel. Gibson's claim, that "we can hardly say that [Mark and Jane's marriage] is a motivating force in the unfolding of most of the conflicts of the narrative" (70-1), is incorrect. I agree rather with Hilder, who states "the novel may be read on one level as the story of a troubled marriage [...]" (84). Mark and Jane's conflicts are the result of a spiritual divorce that has taken place in their own souls, and this manifests itself in their troubled marriage. The motivating force of the narrative is how their inner conflicts are overcome and how this enables their own marital reconciliation.

Lewis gives the Great Dance material and spiritual expression in the microcosm of the Studdocks' lives – their 'false starts' are transformed so that the beginning of their own participation in the macrocosmic Great Dance may begin. Mark and Jane approximate Ransom's own cosmic pilgrimages and thereby learn (or begin to learn) the competencies needed to be creatures, both individually and communally, who are oriented towards love and the Divine Logos. For the reader, they briefly become the centre of the Great Dance. They are like two streams of movement, initially at odds, moving towards a consonance and a cleaving. The suggested harmonious outcome is a child, heir to Ransom as Pendragon of Logres, "by whom the enemies [would be] put out of Logres for a thousand years" (*THS* 306-7). Lewis thereby suggests his proposed synthesis: Harmony, known in Greek myth as Harmonia – who is the love-child of Mars and Venus.[4] [5]

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[1] John 20:2 (KJV).
[2] According to the *Online Etymology Dictionary* ("John").
[3] I do not mean this in the linguistic sense, as will become clear in later discussion. See p. 71 in particular.
[4] I credit Michael Ward for making the link between Mars, Venus and Harmonia. See p. 94.
[5] As I explore these themes, I use the original, unabridged version of *THS* as my source. It has greater philosophical depth and is the version Lewis preferred: "I myself prefer the more leisurely pace [of the unabridged version]" – Lewis in the Preface to *That Hideous Strength* (abridged version).

The Plot of *That Hideous Strength*

As noted above, *That Hideous Strength* is the story of an unhappily married couple, Jane and Mark Studdock. Mark is a fellow and aspiring member of the 'Progressive Element' at Bracton, a college attached to the fictional University of Edgestow. An organisation by the name of the "National Institute for Co-ordinated Experiments", or N.I.C.E., manoeuvre their way onto Bracton's land. Their land adjoins Bragdon Wood, where a sleeping Merlin is said to have been entombed. Mark is employed by the N.I.C.E., and soon moves to their newly-built headquarters (at a place called Belbury). This is due to the influence of Dick Devine, a financial backer of the N.I.C.E.; since the events of *OSP*, he has obtained a peerage and is now called Lord Feverstone. At the N.I.C.E., Mark quickly moves up the ranks into the organisation's 'inner circle,' losing his moral bearings in the process. While Mark focuses on his position at the N.I.C.E., Jane is notionally working on a doctorate on Donne's "triumphant vindication of the body" (2) – and begins to have nightmares about beheadings and a man with *pince-nez* spectacles. Because of her mental and spiritual disquiet, Jane decides to visit a doctor. She goes to Grace Ironwood, who is the physician at St. Anne's-on-the-Hill – the community which acts as a foil to the N.I.C.E.. After initially doubting the community at St. Anne's, Jane finds a secure-yet-challenging refuge there. She meets the community's Director, Mr Fisher-King (as Elwin Ransom is now known), and is prompted to work through her desire for spiritual and marital independence. Jane eventually acquiesces to Ransom and the other members' spiritual direction, embracing their faith and the spiritual heroism of obedience. In the meantime, Mark comes to realise that the N.I.C.E. is far worse than its acronym suggests; after meeting the disembodied Head of the organization and being forced to repudiate the aesthetic and moral sensibility that remains to him, he rebels and is imprisoned. In the culminating sequence of the plot, both the N.I.C.E. and St. Anne's compete to find Merlin (who was said to be buried beneath Bragdon Wood). St. Anne's, instead of finding him, are found by him, and for a brief time he becomes part of their community. He then catalyses a nightmarish apocalypse within the N.I.C.E. headquarters, acting as the medium through which the Jovial, Mercurial, Venereal, Martial and Saturnine powers of Deep Heaven destroy the N.I.C.E.'s evil *animus*. Mark escapes the carnage at Belbury and travels towards St. Anne's; the novel concludes as Mark and Jane are about to reunite in nuptial embrace.

Conflict in *THS*

Jane's Psychomachia

The conflict in Jane's soul derives from her conviction that "[she] must keep up [her] own life" and avoid "being invaded and entangled" – she holds "[s]ome resentment against love itself, and therefore against Mark, for thus invading her life" (71). Rossi notes that there is a "vital ethical problem or tension" which affects Jane: her "self-assertion leads to anarchy and solipsism" (37). She has also been described as "a strongly 'masculine' classical hero: proud, independent, hostile to humility" (Hilder 106). Because she is afraid of being absorbed "into the domestic role of faculty wife" and thus "struggles to preserve a shred of personal autonomy" (Schwartz 100), she tends towards solipsism and anarchy – in the sense that she opposes authority and hierarchy, especially in marriage. She sees herself as a vessel, which, if breached too extensively, would sink into the ocean of the Other; her individuality, autonomy, her very life, would be lost if she were to suffer the waters' entrance. Hence, she has an ever-ready supply of bitumen and tar to patch up the holes and prevent further damage to her hull's integrity.

Connected to this is her fear of "being treated as a thing, an object of barter and desire and possession" (352). She wants to be viewed as a subject, one axiologically equal with other subjects. In pursuing this goal, she denies her objectivity and the danger-ridden, yet integral, sphere of interpersonal reciprocity – which relies upon the giving of oneself, objectively, in one form or another. Jane must grasp the paradox that openness to the Other – a quality natural to the Green Lady, and one which Ransom is able to develop – will enable her to receive the materials for building a different, spiritual sort of vessel, an unbreakable identity consisting in a deeper agency and distinction of personality than the one to which she clings so desperately: an identity impervious to irruptive reefs, rocks or ice.

There is furthermore Jane's conflicted understanding of femininity and being a woman. Jane does not encounter the sanctified version of Venus; rather, the "history of [her] life" is characterised by her rejection of such a Venus; she thus encounters the Pagan version who is "raw," "untransformed," and "demoniac" instead of ripe, transformed, and angelic (*THS* 348). Ransom tells Jane that her specific vice is "*Daungier*" (350), the kind of pride which makes her aloof and disdainful of the Masculine. In *PPL*, Lewis describes that there is something about Eve "which compels deference, the possibility of Daungier. The angel hails her more ceremoniously than Adam" (121). The unfallen Eve, however, does not demand

deference: this is the difference between them. Stemming from both her worldview and her distasteful experiences with Mark, Jane experiences the Masculine as an imposition – and any submission to its "irruptive, possessive" (*THS* 350) nature is always a deigning to something lesser – merely tolerated, never appreciated for its quiddity. The "old Woman" (the earthly wraith of Venus) who would embrace without shame or hesitance such a masculinity exemplifies, to Jane, a vulgarisation of femininity, a "[p]agan" expression of "Freudian repressions" and abandonment of all appropriate inhibitions (349). We are told that even "in the very teeth of instinct" Jane recoils from the "invasion of her own being in marriage" (349). Jane is not merely afraid of external invasions – but there are parts of her own nature which she also repudiates. She presumably deems her "instinct" to be animal and uncivilised, something which in the throes of passion would eclipse and mock her desire for autonomy.

Lewis and Gender

Before going any further, I must deal with the issue of Lewis and gender. Like the ancients and medievals before him, he embraced the idea of gender essentialism. In *The Gender Dance*, a critical text which specifically deals with gender in the Cosmic Trilogy, Hilder makes the claim that Lewis's "belief in universal 'feminine' and 'masculine' principles" becomes "an easy target for the critics who resist essentialism of any kind, as well as for the critics who read him as an 'either/or' thinker" (159). She goes on to say that the tendencies to read the trilogy's gender imagery and metaphor literally cause one "to miss the point" of what Lewis is seeking to do (147). This is because Lewis does not equivocate sex and gender: gender is a relational reality, an element of "spiritual adventure," if you will; sex is a biological or physiological reality. Because of this, he makes a "fluid application of gender metaphor" (147) in which a man may become feminine, and a woman masculine. Thus Dimble and MacPhee, although they are men, are spiritually feminine in relation to Ransom. Ransom himself could be called feminine in relation to the *Oyéresu*; and all creatures, including Ransom and the *eldila,* are categorically feminine in relation to their creator, Maleldil. This is exemplified, for instance, when Ransom explains that "[w]hat is above and beyond all things is so masculine that we are all feminine in relation to it" (*THS* 350) – creatures, whether male and female, or neither, are feminine in relation to the Divine. Relating this directly back to Jane, Hilder states that

> Jane's fear of invasion applies to her resistance to involvement with the community of St. Anne's, and, ultimately, to God. This "feminine" fear of invasion, one that Mark and Merlin share, is a metaphor for humanity's

> classical heroic resistance to enacting a "feminine" relation to the "masculine" divine. (109)

It should be apparent that, although he essentialises gender, Lewis undermines any view of masculinity and femininity which reduces their dynamic to one of domination and power differentials. He does this by emphasizing their reciprocity, as in a dance:

> The partner who bows to Man in one movement of the dance receives Man's reverences in another. To be high or central means to abdicate continually: to be low means to be raised: all good masters are servants: God washes the feet of men. The concepts we usually bring to the consideration of such matters are miserably political and prosaic. We think of flat repetitive equality and arbitrary privilege as the only two alternatives: thus missing all the overtones, the counterpoint, the vibrant sensitiveness, the inter-inanimations of reality. (*Miracles* 201)

With this in mind – if one is to grant Lewis's idealistic, *agape*-tinged vision of hierarchy – his characterisation of Jane no longer needs to be seen in purely misogynistic or sexist terms, as some critics suggest.[6] Downing, for instance, states that "[i]f Jane is intended by Lewis as the model for all women, then Lewis's views are certainly sexist" (149). In a discussion about Lewis's descriptions of the masculine and feminine roles of Malacandra and Perelandra respectively, Lee Rossi asserts

> it would not be overharsh to label this position sexist. These stereotypes, which label men aggressive and domineering and women passive and receptive, are obviously only rationalisations of a social system which privileges men and oppresses women. (44)

Rossi's errors are, firstly, to judge Lewis's representation of gender without taking into account the hierarchical metaphysic and ontology of the trilogy – very different from contemporary, deconstructionist anti-metaphysics. Secondly, to suggest that Lewis employs gender stereotypes in which men are "aggressive and domineering and women passive and receptive" is to grossly misrepresent the nuances of Lewis's treatment of gender. If anything, the best example of a "passive and receptive" character is Ransom as encountered in *THS*. He now presents the confusing mixture of being kingly and bearded, while at the same time exhibiting humble obedience and measured passivity in the face of his enemies at Belbury. Certainly, Mark displays elements of domination in relation to his wife, as the reader discovers early on in *THS*. Yet the authorial voice neither approves nor condones this

[6] Ward observes that "[t]he extraordinary thing about Lewis, in Rowan Williams's opinion, is the degree to which he successfully manages 'to relativize his own prejudices'" (209).

behaviour. Once Mark has discovered the truth of the N.I.C.E.'s diabolism and his own moral bankruptcy, he does not become *more* chauvinistic or assertive of his privileged masculinity. On the contrary, he repents of his aggressiveness and disregard for Jane's subjectivity, and decides not to dominate, but to love her instead.

Marriage, Obedience and Inequality

With the above in mind, the conflict in Jane with regard to her marriage to Mark becomes less clouded. Jane tells Ransom that her marriage "was just a mistake" (*THS* 156) – at least, according to her view at the time. On the one hand, Jane thinks that a loving marriage means "equality [...] and free companionship" (156). One presumes that she deems herself and Mark to have failed to achieve both qualities. On the other hand, however, is Ransom's view, which is presumably also Lewis's. He defines marriage negatively: claiming that, for marriage, "[e]quality is not the deepest thing" (156), and that free companionship does not properly describe the nature of a marriage relationship (157). In other words, thinking that marriage is constituted by equality and free companionship is a recipe for disaster. Ransom defines "free companionship" as a relationship that is underpinned by *philia* love:[7] it amounts to a friendship in which companions "enjoy something together" or "suffer something together" (157). In other words, such a relationship is characterised by its intentionality – but the object is *never* the other person. "Friendship would be ashamed" (157) if it were. Of course, friendship might exist within a marriage, but according to this view, it can never be the *basis* of a marriage relationship.

Jane and Ransom's discussion moves on to the role of obedience in a marriage and its relationship to love. Contrary to the idea of Jane and Mark's marriage being an egalitarian friendship, Ransom declares that she has missed the essence of erotic love altogether, having replaced it in her thoughts and actions with something minimally invasive. Ransom speaks under the authority of his "Masters" (155) and explains to Jane that she has "lost love because [she] never attempted obedience" (156). Ransom later adds that "obedience – humility – is an erotic necessity. You are putting equality just where it ought not to be" (157). He is not merely speaking in terms of sexual intercourse, where human physiology requires complementarity rather than equality between a man and woman. Rather, the fabric of a marriage, both a spiritual and physical reality, consists of a constant "kneeling with a sceptred love" (*Per* 222) – and learning to kneel is the "erotic necessity" she must learn to implement.

[7] See his section on *philia* love in *The Four Loves*.

This kneeling, however does not define her role as wife. In light of Lewis's fluid application of gender, it should not surprise the reader when Ransom says that, "between man and woman [...] the roles are always changing" (*THS* 158). As becomes apparent, Mark also must learn "the necessary humility required of lovers" (425).

"Putting equality just where it ought not to be" is Lewis's particular bugbear. Seldom is the word inequality understood on Earth without negative connotations; Lewis therefore has a difficult task to sidestep the word's unpleasantness. This is largely because contemporary views of justice and fairness are predicated on ideas (much like Jane's) of the autonomy of the self and a social contract that levels the playing field.[8] The hypothetical-pragmatic nature of the social contract stands over against the metaphysical-intrinsic nature of the Cosmic Trilogy's worldview, and it is difficult to reconcile the two. Lewis says elsewhere that the "justice or injustice of any given instance of rule depends wholly on the nature of the parties, not in the least on any social contract" (*PPL* 74). Ransom's demurral should thus not be a surprise. The reader has already encountered Lewis's hierarchism in *Perelandra*; a (qualified) structural inequality is revealed as essential to the Great Dance. In *PPL* Lewis explains how "[e]very being is a conductor of superior love or *agape* to the being below it, and of inferior love or *eros* to the being above" (75).

Ransom tries to persuade Jane of this through analogy. He invokes obvious, undeniable relational inequalities, e.g. "[c]ourtship knows nothing of [equality]; nor does fruition" (*THS* 157). Lewis, however, does admit that equality is often necessary in the sublunary realm. For understood correctly, equality is meant to "guard life" and does not "make it"; it is "medicine, not food" (157). Equality is necessary when something goes awry with the natural hierarchy – for example, a husband might require the medicine of equality to learn that the higher should serve the lower – and not the other way around. Experiences of equality should prompt reform and repentance in lapsed souls who have abused their authority, so that they can self-sacrificially use it to serve others once again.

[8] Here I draw on "the veil of ignorance", an idea of John Rawls which states that, behind the veil, no-one knows any contingent facts about who they will be – i.e. their race, sexuality, class and so on. Thus social laws are agreed upon which presuppose a radical ontological equality of all who enter into society. These laws (and thus norms), in a qualified sense, avoid unequal configurations of any sort. Rawls maintains "that the persons in the initial situation would choose two rather different principles: the first requires equality in the assignment of basic rights and duties, while the second holds that social and economic inequalities, for example inequalities of wealth and authority, are just only if they result in compensating benefits for everyone, and in particular for the least advantaged members of society" (Rawls 13).

Finally, the reader is told that, *contra* Jane's understanding, "the last place where [people] are equal" is "in their souls" (157). If Ransom is right in implying that souls can be unequal, the corollary follows that some souls are greater than others. In their greatness, certain souls should command a greater measure of respect and authority. Ransom's soul, for instance, has become something majestic and superior, and all who encounter him, including animals, recognize this.[9] In the process of his spiritual maturation, he has become a kingly representative of Jupiter and the other planetary influences. Similarly, Jane becomes spiritually superior to her husband, as I shall argue – and thus a measure of authority is granted to her over her husband. With this comes responsibility: like the Green Lady, she is now expected to guide Mark to "perfection" and "[s]trengthen the feebler" (*Per* 211).

Mark's Psychomachia

The war in Mark's soul takes place in the context of his descent into, and ascent out of, 'the Inner Ring' of the N.I.C.E. at Belbury. He is "anxious to be admired" (*THS* 90) and assumes that the N.I.C.E. would be the ideal milieu in which to obtain such admiration, and to an extent, he receives there what he seeks. Mark's descent into the N.I.C.E., and his admission to what Lewis elsewhere called the "Inner Ring"[10] of the Institute's hierarchical structure, is enabled by the lens through which he views other people. His brand of sociology (his vocation) tends to objectify and reduce people's polychromatic humanness into something grimly abstract; the reader is told that "he had a great reluctance, in his work, ever to use such words as 'man' or 'woman'" preferring the abstracted forms of "'vocational groups', 'elements', 'classes' and 'populations'" in their stead (87). By virtue of these abstractions and desire for admiration, he is willing to move "from the merely vulgar to the unethical and then to the criminal" (Downing 57) in his service of the Institute. Although he clearly knows that his fraudulent newspaper reports are "criminal," his moral compass is scrambled by "the intimate laughter between fellow professionals" which allows him to "do very bad things" (*THS* 136).

Unlike Jane, Mark is not primarily concerned with subjectivity, whether others', or his own – he is thus very good at treating himself and others (like Jane) badly. Exemplifying a stereotypical masculine stereotype, he is initially concerned with the realm of objectivity.

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[9] If Jane's initial response to his presence is anything to go by.

[10] This essay is found in *Screwtape Proposes a Toast* and in other select anthologies of Lewis's essays. It describes in more straightforward terms the process and phenomenon exemplified by Mark's involvement in the N.I.C.E..

Lewis thus sets Mark on a journey in which he must grapple with views of objectivity in a variety of forms: the nature of Man, Reality, and perhaps most importantly for Mark, his wife. His travail through the realm of objectivity is the only way in which he is able to reclaim his own wraith-like subjectivity which he has plastered over with an "illusion of independence" (Schwartz 100).

Lewis as omniscient narrator calls Mark "a man of straw, a glib examinee in subjects that require no exact knowledge" (*THS* 199). Despite this, he does display an openness, albeit slight, to the subjective world he associates with his wife. The reader is told that Mark feels "rather sorry for old Jewel" and that the "unnecessary brutality of Feverstone's behaviour to the old man had disgusted him" (27). Furthermore, at the Two Bells pub in Cure Hardy, Mark displays a modicum of aesthetic sensibility – one is told that "Jane and his love for Jane had already awakened [in] him a little [sensitivity to beauty]" (86). Thus when Cosser, his colleague, reduces beer to "a stimulant," something which needs administering "in a more hygienic way," Mark responds that he does not "know that the stimulant is quite the whole point" (88). Similarly, Mark is able to perceive how "Jane in the middle of Belbury" would expose all that which is "metallic" and "unreal", turning "the whole of Belbury into a vast vulgarity, flashy and yet furtive" (182). Mark may have these thoughts, but he becomes deeply committed to the "vast vulgarity." He cannot extricate himself physically from the N.I.C.E. – that is left to authorial providence – but in his "training in objectivity" (328), which I examine next, he is still free to choose a way out.

Once Mark apprehends the full import of the N.I.C.E.'s view of objectivity, which the authorial voice ironically reduces to a "despair of objective truth" (219), his descent halts, and there is a fierce conflict in his soul. Frost, Wither, Filostrato and the others think that being objective is to see the world without imputation of value: that there be an "indifference to it" (219). All objects must be devoid of attachment, thus the need for Mark's "systematic training in objectivity" (328) which requires him to not merely ignore, but categorically repudiate ideas of moral decorum and aesthetic value which he has hitherto accepted. His training occurs in a room which is "ill-proportioned, not grotesquely so, but sufficiently to produce dislike" (328). He is made to perform meaningless repetitions of meaningless actions and execute obscene acts of desecration against the holy, with an aim to stifle "all deep-set repugnances" residing in Mark's consciousness. This would free him to act without hesitation, freeing him for "concentration upon mere power" (219). Gibson observes that this training also entails "a denial of the significance of human relationships" (92), something that

Mark cannot quite bring himself to accept – unlike Lord Feverstone and others of the Inner Circle, he is not wholly motivated by a will to power (although it has brought him far). Mark's descent is not irrevocable, and indeed, he is called to ascend out of the self-chosen Hell he has made his spiritual home.

The N.I.C.E.'s Philosophy of Life

The N.I.C.E. embodies the final 'diabolical' philosophy of life found in the trilogy. In many ways it is the intellectual offspring of those philosophies which Weston introduces in *OSP* and *Perelandra* – it combines aspects of a J.B.S. Haldane-inspired scientism, a Henri Bergson-inspired emergent evolution, and the grotesque nihilism of Pseudo-Weston. The acronym 'N.I.C.E.' is deliberately evocative of 'nice': a word subject to considerable etymological upheaval. Originally derived from Latin *nescire,* 'to not know / be ignorant', later used to mean 'subtle' in the context of a distinction, it now acts as a marginally-positive adjectival place-holder. The word easily becomes ironic ('Well wasn't that nice?'), meaning its opposite. The expanded name, "National Institute for Co-ordinated Experiments" is equally vacuous; a title that arguably says "Nothing." Given Lewis's opinion and characterisation of the N.I.C.E., its name is appropriate: a summation of the "diabolical" philosophy that Lewis sees as the enemy of true human progress.

The N.I.C.E. are represented by a Zeus-like "muscular male nude grasping a thunderbolt" (*THS* 233). The heroic, mythological symbolism invoked by such an emblem provides insight into the institute's worldview and aims. Firstly, there are almost no women involved whatsoever, and the one woman who is close to the Inner Circle, Miss Hardcastle, is possibly the most stereotypically 'masculine' character in the entire novel. Hilder helpfully clarifies that "[h]er surname suggests the way in which Lewis points to gender metaphor: she is a 'hard castle,' an ego fortified against the divine, impenetrable, a 'masculinity' that will not submit to the divine" (100). It is thus an unholy masculinity, characterised by a desire to dominate, which motivates the entire N.I.C.E. operation – to make everything feminine in relation to it. Active words like "take," "make," and "control" (*THS* 34) are often used by those on the inside. The fact of muscularity underpins the organisational strength, and in conjunction with the thunderbolt, suggests the willingness of the N.I.C.E. to use it.

On the surface, the N.I.C.E.'s manifesto appears benevolent. It promises to alleviate, indeed eradicate, all social problems while promising a nice-sounding future goal:

> We expect a solution of the unemployment problem, the cancer problem, the housing problem, the problems of currency, of war, of education. We expect from it a brighter, cleaner and fuller life for our children, in which we and they can march ever onward and onward and develop to the full urge of life which God has given each one of us [...]. (140)

The "solution" referred to is more a deletion or annihilation than anything else. In the same way – every word used in the above manifesto is an example of Orwellian double-speak. When talking of a "cleaner" life for children, they mean a sterile life: 'clean' to the point of denying the organic world altogether, replete with its bacteria, microbes, blood and sweat. Lord Feverstone dispenses with the benevolent façade. He tells Mark that it will all amount to the "sterilization of the unfit, liquidation of backward races (we don't want any dead weights), selective breeding [...] biochemical conditioning" (36).

The N.I.C.E. is an institution, like the "Progressive Element" at Bracton College, which is "prepared to scrap" (8) any and all traditions – aesthetic, ethical, religious or otherwise – in service of its goals. Progress is understood to be *the* end in itself; anything which stands in its way must be cleared away – for example, "sentiment" or "beauty" (13). In service of this end, the organisation relies on "[e]lasticity" (125), an attitude amounting to compliant obedience to the whims of those in power. Mark's initial struggle is to decipher his place in the N.I.C.E.'s operations; he does not know "what [he is] supposed to be doing" (125). This only clarifies once he has embraced elasticity and fitted in the governing principle of the organization.

The N.I.C.E.'s aims are remarkably similar to Weston's philosophy of "Spirit," with one qualification. It too is committed to developing Spirit. However, at the N.I.C.E., Spirit is more narrowly defined; it is strictly moving towards the purity of *eldilic*, spiritual being. The dualistic material-spiritual combination, which characterises human being, is soon to be transcended in favour of the dialectical progression towards Spirit alone – towards pure mind and reason, a spiritualised version of Nietzsche's *Übermensch*. As Ransom tells the company at St. Anne's, "[t]he Belbury people seek 'a way of making themselves immortal" by creating "a new species – the Chosen Heads who never die" (*THS* 212). This represents "the next step in evolution" (212). Although the N.I.C.E. might wax eloquent about Progress, Evolution and a new kind of Man, as Mark realises when he finally meets Alcasan's disembodied Head, the unofficial scientific program is itself a front for something much deeper: the attainment and increase of power. The reader is told that "the N.I.C.E. [...] was not concerned solely with modern or materialistic forms of power" but also "eldilic energy and knowledge" and "dark

powers" (217). Lewis elsewhere explains that he understands "devil worship" to be "the adoration of the powerful – predicated upon a philosophy in which might makes right" ("A Reply" 107). Power is thus the God and goal of Miss Hardcastle, Frost, Wither, Filostrato and Feverstone (and all the others). Prioritising one's will to power leads directly to the domination of others, pitilessness, cruelty and hatred of the Other – all things which are seen within the N.I.C.E.'s inner circle. Furthermore, the institute "is a totalitarian organization that demands full conformity" (Hilder 128) for those within – and this obedience to conformity, as Gibson observes, "moves one closer to a vortex, a whirlpool which assimilates and destroys individual characteristics" (96). The N.I.C.E.'s desire for power has the effect of dissolving the Other into itself – it makes absolute the Other's objectivity (whether through Mark's sociological manipulations or through Miss Hardcastle's physical torture) and thereby forces it into submission to the collective will to power. Lewis notes that another tendency of "devil worship" is "the growing exaltation of the collective and the growing indifference to persons" ("A Reply" 108), a fact that almost costs Mark his life.

The N.I.C.E. and the New Man

The N.I.C.E.'s agenda is to remake Man into something wholly objective, immortal, and preternatural in its power over nature. The fact that this entails the gradual destruction of Man as he is currently known is an unfortunate, but necessary, step towards the future of "Man as God" (*THS* 219). The New Man will be a mixture of technology and spirit – like "the Head" who is animated by *eldilic* forces and kept biologically alive through technological means. Stated in different terms, the institute's agenda amounts to "the worship of Man by Man" (*PPL* 133) and "the rebellion of 'civilization' against civility" (135). One prerequisite of the N.I.C.E.'s project is the viewing of Man as an abstraction, an idea, or a goal. Mark represents the institute as a whole when the reader is told that, as far as he perceived reality, "[s]tatistics" are "the substance" while "any real [...] farmer's boy [is] the shadow" (*THS* 87). This conveniently denies individual men or women any substantial importance.

In Nietzsche's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra,* his prophet declares that "[t]he earth has become small, and on it hops the last man, who makes everything small" (46). At one point, Mark invokes the spectre of these "last men" when he uses a similar concept of "the small man" (*THS* 69). He tells Hingest that he thinks he *does* "understand the sentiment that still attaches to the small man" (69). But as he understands "reality," he believes that he cannot *condone* such sentiments, for Progress cannot be bound by sentimentality. Although

Nietzsche might take issue with the N.I.C.E.'s idiosyncratic view of the New Man or *Übermensch*,[11] he would probably agree with their loyalty to immoralism (in the sense of amoralism). *Contra* both Mark and Nietzsche, Hingest replies that "[one] can't study men; [one] can only get to know them, which is quite a different thing" (69). Here Hingest is exemplifying a favourite Lewisian distinction between *connaître* and *savoir* knowledge.[12] The anthropology of the company at St. Anne's takes this into account. Ivy Maggs, for instance, is given back her humanity and not reduced to someone of the lower class – precisely what Jane does to Ivy in the early stages of the novel.

In Mark's sociological abstraction of Man, he has nevertheless paid it a compliment of sorts, by accepting that it is there is a homogeneity amongst men, an essential nature which unites them. Filostrato flatly denies this, however. In his view, "[t]here is no such thing as Man – it is a word. There are only men." (191). *Prima facie* he would seem to agree with Hingest, who tells Mark that "[one] can't study men; [one] can only get to know them" (69). But the meaning of Filostrato's claim is poles apart from Hengist's. Certainly there are only "men" – but this does not mean Man does not exist. Filostrato does not merely reject the abstract concept of Man, but rips from humanity the very quiddity that makes talking about human society useful to begin with – he reduces men to individual animals with a will to power. Ideas of Man and the idealism which goes along with it are sacrificed to the brute, factual simplicity of might makes right. Filostrato is at least straightforward about this fact, and does not attempt to couch it in metaphorical terms like Straik.

Turning now to the proffered conception of the N.I.C.E.'s 'New Man,' a central feature is that it will be built from the necessary disenfranchisement of the common, 'vulgar' Man. People are "[i]nstruments," a means to evolution's goal. As Straik exclaims: "Does clay *co-operate* with the potter?" (78). Despite Straik's broad claim, some men are lucky enough to be the instruments by which all the rest are instrumentalised. Feverstone makes it clear that "Man has got to take charge of Man," and that it is better to be one of "the people who do the taking charge" (35) rather than one of the unfortunates forced to obey.[13] It is revealed that Feverstone and the N.I.C.E. are, like the community at St. Anne's, also committed to a form of hierarchy. Their internal structure and proposed societal structure is based primarily on

[11] At the very least because N.I.C.E. is *contra* biological life and anti-aesthetic. There are probably many more reasons he would write a vitriolic polemic against the Institute.
[12] For an example, see *DI* 109.
[13] Cf. "Man's conquest of Nature, if the dreams of some scientific planners are realized, means the rule of a few hundreds of men over billions upon billions of men" (*AM* 58).

power differentials, a principle consistent with their "devil worship" as Lewis calls it. Furthermore, the New Man will be post-sexual. Sexuality is seen as a free radical which precludes the possibility of "peace and order and discipline" (186), and therefore dangerous to any eugenic program. The N.I.C.E. aim to restrict and eventually destroy sexuality, biological difference, and thus biological procreation. They believe that neutering Man will make him New and truly dignified; after all, as Filostrato explains, "the things that most offend the dignity of man [are] Birth and breeding and death" (187). And with the defeat of death, the New Man will be immortal, will have overcome Nature – in other words, the organic world. The complex character of Man's existence – the synthesis of spirit [*Geist*] and body, is to be destroyed. Organic life is viewed as a "cocoon" which shelters the "babyhood of mind" – simply a means to an end: "the artificial man, free from Nature" (189).

"[F]ree from Nature" – but free *for* what? Straik gives his own metaphysical vision, namely the emergence of "Man Immortal and Man Ubiquitous [...] Man on the throne of the universe" (191). Later, this is simplified merely to "Man as God" (219). The aim is omnipotence, omniscience, even possibly omnipresence. Other qualities, like omnibenevolence, would be lacking – and herein lies the problem. It is not for goodness or love that the N.I.C.E. pursue such a divine vision of Man – it is for cosmic power and domination. The title – *That Hideous Strength* – alludes to the N.I.C.E.'s overall project. Lewis derives it from "Ane Dialog" by the Scottish poet Sir David Lyndsay, who uses it to refer to the Tower of Babel. Like its mythical forerunner, the N.I.C.E. receives the same penalty for attempting to enthrone "Man as God," and thus the title takes on a partial irony – for the N.I.C.E.'s strength – hideous or not – is unable to withstand the apparent weakness of St. Anne's and the realm of Logres which they defend. The conflict is surprisingly one-sided. It is not just at the institutional level that there is a reckoning to be had, but also at the individual level that each member of the N.I.C.E.'s inner circle receives his or her just deserts for self-deification. In some ways, the dissolution of the N.I.C.E. is an inevitable fact – the natural consequence of the philosophy of life and anthropology that it holds.

Love in *THS*

St. Anne's Philosophy of Life

St. Anne's means, literally, 'holy favour/grace' (from Latin *sanctus*, Hebrew *Hannah* 'He has favoured me').[14] Hilder (112) and Schwartz (95) both observe that in church tradition, St. Anne is the mother of Mary, who in turn becomes the *theotokos*, the God-bearer. Thus, in choosing the company's name, Lewis emphasises its auspicious receptivity and welcoming femininity. While the strife-ridden N.I.C.E. at Belbury is defined by its sublunary apprehension of *Infortuna Minor* and associated images of aggressive masculinity, St. Anne's – "a kind of family, a small 'household,' 'company,' or 'society'" (Hilder 113) which is under Ransom's charitable leadership – is an expression of *Fortuna Minor*. It is built upon copper-rich soil (the metal associated with Venus) and during the course of the novel it becomes Jane's home, is visited by the earthly wraith of Venus, and is later visited by Venus herself, the *Oyarsa* of Perelandra. Schwartz echoes this fact when he states that, by "virtue of its ties to the celestial presence of Venus", St. Anne's is identified "with the divine love that is the source of the affections, sympathies, and charity that sustain an organic community" (95).

Love, then, is a central theme of St. Anne's and is expressed through the community's way of life. Hilder characterises the community particularly well: they are "alive to immediate experience and practical matters; thoughtfully respectful of tradition and awake to the present; appreciative of common humanity; working for the common good; and passionately loving nature" (112). Furthermore, she says that St. Anne's "celebrates individuality in community" and "honours the sacredness of individuality and freedom of choice" (128). In stark contrast to Mark's experience at the N.I.C.E., St. Anne's "does not coerce people to become members" (113). This is especially apparent with Jane, who is given a real choice to join the company, to take a "leap in the dark" (*THS* 120) as Arthur Denniston puts it.

St. Anne's is not "predicated upon a philosophy in which might makes right" ("A Reply" 107) which leads to tyranny. On the contrary, St. Anne's is more akin to a spiritual meritocracy. Following Lewis's critique of equality being medicine (and not food), in a healthy, harmonious social organism like St. Anne's, one might expect to find inequality to be prominent, and it is: but only in the spiritual sense. As Schwartz observes, "Jane finds it

[14]According to the *Online Etymology Dictionary* ("Anne").

difficult to square the social equality of the house with the less acceptable notions of spiritual hierarchy to which its occupants assent" (115). At the top of the "spiritual hierarchy" is Ransom, the "spiritual elder of St. Anne's" (Hilder 121), whose surname ("Fisher-King") makes his monarchic status explicit. Beyond Ransom, who is prevented from participating in the practical life of St. Anne's due to his injured heel, there is a "social equality" amongst the company: men and women share tasks, such as cooking and cleaning; class differences are ignored, for example the working-class Ivy Maggs is just as much a member as Jane. Jane, as a woman, is not excluded from the dangerous hunt for Merlin. In practice, social roles, whether gendered, class-derived, or otherwise, are shared amongst all, according to the merits of each and with a mind to harmony and efficiency.

Perhaps the best way to describe St. Anne's social life is to invoke the Pauline analogy of membership within a body.[15] Ransom, as Director, is clearly the head. Grace Ironwood, his physician, may be viewed as the 'chief whip' or discipline of St. Anne's: she is the spine and skeletal structure (which helps connect to head to the rest of the body). MacPhee is a healthy measure of rationality and scepticism – the left brain, one might say. Dimble is the creative intellect – the right brain. His wife, the motherly Mrs Dimble, is the heart. Ivy Maggs acts as a strong-willed, loyal servant – an arm or hand. Jane becomes the company seer through her dreaming – she provides eyesight. Merlin is the muscle: the motive force and weapon against Belbury. Mark, if he were to join (and I believe one can assume that he does at the end), would quite possibly act as the mouth. Although it is something of a stretch to assign each member to a certain body part, it nevertheless exemplifies the ways in which the various members are seen to complement and fulfil certain roles within the company of St. Anne's. There is no pressure on any of the members to be something they are not; the company body takes each member as they are and uses them according to their strengths and capabilities. St. Anne's exemplifies what Confucius called "harmony without uniformity,"[16] and this results in a relational milieu that tends towards peacefulness and rest. Despite the imminent danger of the N.I.C.E.'s schemes, throughout the novel St. Anne's maintains a "merry, holiday love" (*THS* 161).[17]

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[15] I strongly suspect that Lewis wrote the passages at St. Anne's with I Corinthians, chapter 12, verses 12 to 26 in mind, in which Paul uses the metaphor of a body to describe the relationship between the different members of the church, also called the body of Christ.

[16] 和而不同 (qtd. in Berthrong).

[17] Although this is used to describe Jane's experience after her first meeting with Ransom, it seems an appropriate summation of the juxtaposition of reverent holiness and jollity that is found in the scenes at St. Anne's.

The Animals

Perhaps one of the most striking, specific examples of love at St. Anne's is revealed through its relationship to animals. They are not seen as mere dumb beasts or pets by those in the company, least of all by the Director, who formed the company such that both man and beast flourish side by side. This is due to "the way [the Director] has with animals" (175), and, of course, the way he has with other people. Under Ransom's directorship, animals are understood as "jesters, servants and playfellows" (423) – complements to their human cohabitants. The best example of this is when Jane first meets the Director, Ransom. After eating his Eucharist-like meal, he calls in the mice: for "[h]umans want crumbs removed; mice are anxious to remove them" (158). Ransom emphasises here the complementarity of the human will and that of the mice; suggesting at a broader level there is a way for humans and beasts to live together in such a way that intersecting interests need not be "a cause of war" (158) between the two. Lewis uses the mice incident analogically, explaining via the Director that "obedience and rule are more like a dance than a drill – specially between man and woman where the roles are always changing" (158). It saying this, Lewis explicitly alludes to a concrete instance of the Great Dance. A sanctioned relational inequality, foundational to the metaphysic of the trilogy, enables both different species (mice and men) and genders (men and women) to fulfil their intrinsic, yet fluid, roles. The question of inferiority or superiority is meaningful only in a milieu of identity confusion. If one understands the bounds of one's rights and responsibilities in whichever capacity one is acting (whether as a human or animal, husband or wife, director or member), then the constraints of one's given role clearly make a power struggle towards equality or domination (towards individual autonomy) patently inappropriate and rather puerile.

Mr Bultitude represents the most concrete example of an animal recipient of love at St. Anne's. Given that "the Director had brought back with him from Venus some shadow of man's lost prerogative to ennoble beasts" (340), Mr Bultitude is certainly ennobled during his stay at St. Anne's-on-the-Hill. Lewis explains that "[i]n [Ransom's] presence Mr Bultitude trembled on the very borders of personality, thought the unthinkable and did the impossible, was troubled and enraptured with gleams from beyond his own woolly world" (340). Lewis echoes Buber when the reader is told that the bear is brought almost to the point of knowing "everything that is represented by the words *I* and *Me* and *Thou*" (339) – but stops short of self-consciousness.

Ransom as Director and New Man

Ransom, as Director of St. Anne's, is arguably the best example of loving behaviour in the novel. His voyage to Venus has changed him irrevocably, and when juxtaposed against "ordinary earth people [who] appear pale and sick," Ransom's "vigour" (Purtill 90) is striking. He has certainly received "[t]he splendour, the love, and the strength" (*Per* 227) which the King wishes upon him before his return to Earth. I have already noted Ransom's relationship to animals; he is no different with regard to his human companions, excepting of course that he respects them equally as *hnau*. Although he has been given charge of the company at St. Anne's, he nevertheless "embodies the 'feminine' heroic of receptivity to the divine" (Hilder 121) and is thus defined by his obedience and respect for his "Masters" (the *Oyéresu*), as well as their master, Maleldil. Thus, in his capacity as Director, he does not force the members of St. Anne's to follow his orders as a stereotypical view of his masculinity might expect; his followers act out of receptivity to and respect for his recognisable spiritual authority. This is seen particularly in his approach to Jane and her psychomachia, as discussed above. Ransom is sincere and firm in his analysis about the nature of marriage and Jane's relationship to Mark, but he does not force her to accept his perspective. He rather allows her the necessary time and reflection to arrive at agreement (or conceivably, disagreement). In choosing this approach, he reveals a measure of what could be called 'passivity.' Ransom is content to let things take their course. This quality is

> the fulfilment of his spiritual journey in which he has learned receptivity. Unlike the classical hero who seeks personal glory through self-reliant activity, Ransom is the spiritual hero whose obedient openness to the divine brings about victory. (Hilder 119)

When Ransom declares that he has "become a bridge" (*THS* 321), this is an example of the receptivity which Hilder ascribes to him. The idea of a man being a bridge is reminiscent of the imagery employed in *TSZ*. Nietzsche's prophet declares that "[w]hat is great in man is that he is a bridge and not a goal; what can be loved in man is that he is a *going-across* and a *down-going*" (44). At the literal level, there is an obvious correlation; at a figurative level, the link is not so strong. Nevertheless, it is interesting to note the ways in which Nietzsche and Lewis's proffered conception of Man-as-bridge converge and/or diverge. As a bridge, Ransom enables the planetary powers descent to earth. He also bridges translunary Deep Heaven and the sublunary Silent Planet, and, by virtue of his interplanetary journeys to

Malacandra and Perelandra, has become nearly perfect,[18] having attained a physicality and spiritual character alien to the vast majority of the "half *hnau*" (*OSP* 83) upon Earth. Ransom "has become a bridge" between his fellow earthlings and the person of Maleldil (this is certainly true for Jane). In other words, he is a type of the archetypical New Man, the nature of which was first revealed in the incarnated Maleldil. Ransom is therefore a bridge on multiple levels: firstly, to the *Oyéresu*, the representatives of Maleldil, secondly to Deep Heaven, and thirdly, to the first New Man: Maleldil.

As I parse Nietzsche's usage, he is emphasising the essential unity of (his ideal) man. His oft-cited example, the sentence "lightning strikes," expresses this well. He calls it a "seduction of language" to dichotomise 'lightning' as a subject and 'strikes' as a verb or action. This, he claims, "misconceives all effects as conditioned by something that causes effects" (*GM* 481). Thus, to separate a subject from its verb is to make it responsible, to introduce the possibility of morality, and thus guilt, reactivity and *ressentiment*. Nietzsche's *Übermensch* is thus a bridge bent into a circular shape: an eternal "going-across," essentially dynamic and recursive, eternally overcoming itself as action redefines subjectivity.

These two kinds of Man-as-bridge stand over against each other. The foundational difference is in the teleology of each. For Nietzsche, the process and product, the means and end, are consubstantial. His ideal man is essentially and eternally self-concerned, always striving to overcome his limitations in order to flourish. In Lewis's case, however, Ransom is a bridge *for the Other*: a vicar, if you will. Ransom does not attempt to overcome his limitations merely in order to flourish; he willingly accepts who he is because he recognises himself as a work-in-progress: one being moulded and perfected by Maleldil into the man he is meant to be.[19] I must stress that this *telos* ('the man Ransom was made to be') is dynamic in nature, but not dynamic in a Nietzschean sense of perpetual self-creation. The dynamism comes rather from being a figure who participates in the Great Dance with recognition of one's created nature. In Hilder's terms, this amounts to embodying "a feminine ethos" (119) *vis-a-vis* the masculine Divine. The Nietzschean alternative would be to capitalise on what one's 'thrownness'[20] and act as if one were thrown into the world free from constraining facticity – a stereotypically masculine ethos. Ransom is a bridge for others, and *thus* for

[18] I mean this in the sense of the German *vollkommen* ('come to fullness'). Beyond the wound on his heel, Ransom has actualised the fullness of his potential with regard to beauty, goodness and truth.
[19] For this reason, he refuses Merlin's offer to heal his wound using druidic magic, recognising it as an illegitimate means to a desired end.
[20] See p. 42.

himself – he is attuned to his own selfhood through his receptive encounter with the Other. On the contrary, Nietzsche's *Übermensch* is a bridge turned inward, and though this would not exclude encountering the Other, the encounter would invariably lead to the Other's objectification in an effort to maximise self-flourishing. Nietzsche's Man-as-bridge, as I have characterised it, looks surprisingly similar to the N.I.C.E.'s vision for the New Man. Lewis, however, proposes another sort of New Man in the person of Ransom, and challenges the idea that real human flourishing could ever come from the kind of self-interest and power-mongering displayed at Belbury.

A Voyage to Sanctified Venus: Jane's Journey

Jane's journey to encountering a sanctified, unselfish version of Venus begins when she meets Ransom, who exhibits a form of personality utterly New. The reader is told that, upon meeting him, "her world was unmade: anything might happen now" (*THS* 151). Jane's response to him is mediated through her senses, which for Jane (*contra* Mark) are the means to a world of beauty and aesthetic pleasure. Early on in the novel, the reader notes that she is open to the aesthetic realm, if not reliant upon it. She senses, for instance, the "indoor daylight falling on panels, and a whiff of the smell of fresh bread" (9). Mark notes that Jane "could enjoy things for their own sake" (270) and "cared for old buildings and that sort of thing" (89). After Jane's run-in with "Fairy" Hardcastle, the reader is told that "she wanted to be with Nice people, not Nasty people – that nursery distinction seeming [...] more important than any later categories of Good and Bad or Friend or Enemy" (144). Because Ransom and those at St. Anne's are the real "Nice" people, the "Nasty" people from the N.I.C.E. are ironically rejected. The categories of 'nice' and 'nasty,' which I would argue are aesthetic in nature, are then revealed to be markers of good and bad – derived from what Mark calls "the Normal" (331). Jane becomes *nicer* and *better* and more beautiful as the uncharacteristic air of St. Anne's exerts its influence upon her. On her trip home (after seeing Ransom for the first time), she perceives "the outlined beams of sunlight" through the train windows, exhibits a "merry, holiday love," and encounters her own beauty afresh (161) – a far-cry from her initial train journey, in which fog obscures the sunlight and her mind is subjected to doubts (144-5).

One of the crucial moments in Jane's journey towards love is when she comes to understand the nature of her identity, which one might see as a necessary condition of the

love of others.[21] Jane's squeamish femininity, her response to the masculine, her unwillingness to obey or submit – these are all symptoms of what has hitherto been a life in which she has rendered absolute the need to "keep up one's own life" (71). Hitherto she has viewed herself as thrown (*geworfen*) into existence without anchoring values or necessary factical relations;[22] she has thus been within her rights to evaluate and determine them for herself. She is like (as Lewis puts it) "[t]he Existentialist" who believes "that man's nature (and therefore his relation to all things) has to be created or invented, without guidance, at each moment of decision" (qtd. in Purtill 98). Jane's modern outlook has rendered her ignorant of the other possible basis for living, namely discerning one's engirdledness:[23] an apprehension which forms a different path to and realisation of "one's true self" (*THS* 352). In her encounter with St. Anne's and the philosophy of life it's members exemplify, Jane is brought to the point of wondering whether she is "a thing after all – a thing designed and invented by Someone Else and valued for qualities quite different from what [she] had decided to regard as [her] true self?" (352).[24] On the next page, the reader is told that, in reference to Jane, "[t]he name *me* was the name of a being whose existence she had never suspected, a being that did not yet fully exist but which was demanded. It was a person (not the person she had thought), yet also a thing, a made thing [...]" (353). Lewis's usage of *me* as opposed to I (which would have sounded better) is quite intentional. 'Me' is grammatically an object, never a subject. The associations which could be made are numerous: it is thus ontologically secondary, never primary. It is acted upon rather than an actor. It is primarily objective before being subjective. Jane, with her insistence thus far on the absolute 'I' (i.e. her preoccupation with achieving an autonomous self), has denied all this.

Jane is faced with an exclusive disjunction: either, she is absolutely free to define her own subjectivity, and may legitimately decide what personal, gender and sexual qualities are to be valued, invented or designed; or, she concedes the reality that she is not free in an absolute sense, being "a thing, a made thing", and that there is an authority above her who acts as supreme evaluator, designer and inventor. This would entail that the value and nature of her personality must be revealed and/or discovered. If the former is true, her *daungerous*[25]

[21] See Mark 12:31 (KJV): "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."
[22] See p. 42.
[23] Something which Heidegger, if he were amicable to the idea, might call *Umgebenheit*.
[24] This echoes Lewis in *PPL* where he claims that "to be valued is an experience which involves a curious kind of self-consciousness. The subject is suddenly compelled to remember that it is also an object" (123).
[25] This is the adjectival form of *Daungier*.

attitude towards men and masculinity is unproblematic. If the latter obtains – this is of course the author's contention – then her attitude *is* problematic, and needs alteration.

Earlier on, Arthur Denniston reveals the final requirement for Jane's conversion towards love. In the context of inviting Jane to join St. Anne's, he comments to his wife that he is "asking [Jane] to take a leap in the dark" and adds that is like "getting married, or going into the Navy as a boy, or becoming a monk… You can't know what it's like until you take the plunge" (120). For love to become a possibility – for example within a community like St. Anne's – there is a necessary leap to overcome the risk of the unknown, the Other, which may or may not respect one's own subjectivity. There is an element of faith and submission required. Prompted by her Author, she decides to accept her engirdled, created nature. It is a step towards love, for love operates only when one can make a gift out of oneself. Given her acceptance that she is a "made thing" – and thus can no longer hold on to her solipsism or anarchy – Jane takes a leap of faith "into a world, or into a Person, or into the presence of a Person" (353) – a courageous act which, like Ransom's melee with the Un-man, results in a state of contentment (*Per* 197).[26]

In brief, Jane's openness to beauty enables her to develop an openness to the Other; her spiritual transformation is occasioned by her aesthetic receptivity. Encountering someone like Ransom after a season of dreariness and nightmare, she employs the phenomenological dialectic and perceives the uncomfortable kernel of truth in his views on love, marriage and equality. Ransom is, as I have already mentioned, a "bridge." After she takes a leap into the dark and decides to join St. Anne's, healing love is brought into her hitherto rather choked love-life. As the novel progresses, Jane learns to obey and submit to those – like Ransom – who are rightfully her superior in the cosmic hierarchy. Her fortunes therefore change – the sublunary influence wanes while the translunary influence waxes in her life. By the end of the novel, nurtured in the womb of St. Anne's, she is prepared to be "the *theotokos*, the 'God-bearer,' to Mark" (Howard 141).

[26]On a related but side note, I am struck how the trilateral Semitic root s(h)-l-m, as seen in the words *Islam, Muslim, Salaam* (Arabic) *and Shalom* (Hebrew), contain both the idea of peace as well as submission: to be a Muslim, to be one who submits – is to be experience *Salaam* or *Shalom*.

Out of that Hideous Strength: Mark's Journey

As Mark's involvement in the N.I.C.E.'s "Inner Ring" increases towards the end of the novel, his anxious need for admiration is overwhelmed by his "longing for wellbeing in harmony with Jane" (Hilder 151). Gradually the scales fall from his eyes, and he is able to see. Mark leaves his "public self" behind, developing an interiority that conflicts with the "scientific' outlook" (*THS* 269) which has hitherto defined him. He is confronted with himself as an object, a thing formed by a life-time of decision. He begins to understand that "it was he himself – nothing else in the whole universe – that had chosen the dust and broken bottles, the heap of old tin cans, the dry and choking places" (269-70) – images of his barren philosophy of life. When Richard Purtill comments on Eustace's transformation into a dragon in *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*, his analysis also applies to Mark: "[t]he objectification of his inner repulsiveness [...] accomplishes a change in his character" (93). In this moment of self-knowledge, he begins the process of taking ownership for his mistaken direction.

The conclusive moment in Mark's self-conflict is when, submitting to Frost's "training in objectivity", he finds

> [t]he philosophy which Frost was expounding was by no means unfamiliar to him. He recognised it at once as the logical conclusion of thoughts which he had always hitherto accepted and which at this moment he found himself irrevocably rejecting. The knowledge that his own assumptions led to Frost's position combined with what he saw in Frost's face and what he had experienced in this very cell, effected a complete conversion. All the philosophers and evangelists in the world might not have done the job so neatly. (*THS* 327)

In conjunction with his conversion from the N.I.C.E.'s philosophy of life, the extreme psychological and spiritual tension of his "training in objectivity" results in his apprehension of the objective "Normal" (331), which is presented in masculine, Martial terms: it "towered up above him – something which obviously existed quite independently of himself and had hard rock surfaces which would not give, surfaces he could cling to" (344).[27] Mark, who has been bent out of shape by his conformance to the required "[e]lasticity" (125) of the N.I.C.E., finds something straight and firm – and it gives him courage, because he can "cling" to it. His perception of reality receives "the clearness of Mars" (362). After accepting the "Normal,"

[27] In *AM*, Lewis speaks of "the Tao" in the same terms as Mark's "Normal": it "is the doctrine of objective value, the belief that certain attitudes are really true, and others really false, [it describes] the kind of thing the universe is and the kind of things we are" (18).

Mark measures himself by this new objective standard, and discovers the extent of his spiritual poverty. Downing notes that "when Mark gradually comes to see the emptiness and squalor of his life, he feels that somehow he has violated his wife, made her the object of his lust, not his companion in love" (95). Furthermore, Mark desires the secret of how "people like Denniston or Dimble" are able to live "with all their muscles relaxed and a careless eye roving the horizon, bubbling over with fancy and humour, sensitive to beauty, not continually on their guard and not needing to be" (*THS* 402). He wants the contentment that his wife finds – the "jovial liberty to enjoy life in all its fullness" (Hilder 130).

Lewis earlier compares Mark's life to a web which has grown from his infancy, consisting of strands and threads – decisions he has made – which solidify and constrain the overall web's structure. Mark's life, then, is a construction: organic, but taking a certain design or form. Depending on the type of spider a person is (to continue the analogy), one's web will be either a tangled cobweb or an ordered weaving. Mark's is the former. As a result of his "moment of martyrdom" (Ward 86) when he refuses Frost's instruction to trample upon a crucifix, Mark expects, and accepts, that he will soon die. He reveals a modicum of translunary "Charity," which is "ready to kill, ready to die" (*THS* 359). Schwartz notes how this "existential encounter with death" shocks Mark "into self-awareness" (120) and the "clearness of Mars" (362). This correlates with "the first courageous thing he has ever done in his life" (Downing 57). Thus with Mark's anticipated execution for his disobedience, he acknowledges that "there was no harm in ripping up the web" (*THS* 269) and beginning again – a process completed by "irrevocably rejecting" his previous philosophy, a so called "complete conversion" (327). Lewis makes the suggestion, however, that there is a "bill to be paid" if one wishes to remake one's life-web with "truth" in mind: and this would take the form of "arduous decision and reconstruction" (269). To quote Frost out of context (and rather ironically), "[a]n explicit action in the reverse direction is therefore a necessary step towards complete objectivity" (372). I am here reminded of Nietzsche, who says that

> The essential thing 'in heaven and earth' is [...] that there should be *long obedience in the same direction*; there thereby results, and has always resulted in the long run, something which has made life worth living. (*BGE* 93, my italics)

Mark's problem is that his original obedience to the governing directive of the "Normal" is short lived and sporadic. Likewise, his submission to the tyranny of N.I.C.E. increases, but does not persevere. Nietzsche's formulation of a "life worth living" does not take into

account the content or direction of one's obedience: only the form ('long' and 'same'); as such, it can only be seen as a measure of a life's authenticity, but not necessarily its goodness. Lewis says as much himself: "Progress means movement in a desired direction, and we do not all desire the same things for our species" ("A Response" 311). For all their odiousness and despicability, Frost and Wither's consistency is to be seen in their favour. They follow their "desired direction" to the end: their webs are structured towards a goal, however diabolical it may be. If one acknowledges Lewis's moral presuppositions, however, one would need to reform the Nietzschean phrase: it is 'a long obedience in the *right* direction' which makes "life worth living" or leads to Progress, which Lewis defines similarly as "increasing goodness and happiness of individual lives" ("Progress" 311). Mark's task now, having changed direction, is to make his obedience "long" – "a real philosophy believed with blood and heart" (*THS* 269).

By becoming receptive to a fortunate Martial influence, Mark eventually triumphs against the spiritual tyranny of the N.I.C.E.'s "objectivity" and returns to the "Normal," which in his mind is the world in which his wife lives (182). He finds a way out of the sublunary version of *Infortuna Minor*, a way out of cultivating a New Man in "that hideous strength" of Belbury (an unfortunate *Mars Silvanus*), out of subduing the "little men" through his fraudulent newspaper missiles (*Mars Gradivus*).[28] He finds the courage to repudiate all this, and finds that the conflict in his mind – between the N.I.C.E.'s view of Progress, and the conservative[29] "Normal" – has been resolved. It is indeed true that "once Mark has recovered himself and realised how weary, flat, stale, and unprofitable all his ambitions have been, he discovers also that he really does love his estranged wife" (Downing 81). After escaping the Babel-like meltdown at Belbury, he knows he must return to her. Jane prepares the "marriage chamber" (*THS* 424) for him, where a new chapter in their life together is to be inaugurated: it will no longer be contractual, but sacramental. All is ready for a true matrimony in which "the mutual society, help, and comfort that the one ought to have of the other" (1) is expressed: a loving state which hitherto has been missed in their conflicted relationship.

[28]The epithet *Silvanus* relates to the pastoral, generative aspect of Martial influence, while *Gradivus* relates to the pugnacious aspect of Martial influence. See p. 14.
[29] I do not mean this in the political sense, but in the sense of 'conserving.'

Harmony in *THS*

Producing harmony between Mars and Venus – and consequently, the masculine and the feminine principles – is a central concern of the "whole work of healing Tellus" (414). The goal towards which the entire novel drives is the marital and sexual (re)union of Mark and Jane.[30] As a frame for this final section of the chapter, Ward observes that "in myth, Mars and Venus had a child, Harmonia: in *That Hideous Strength*, the story ends with Mark and Jane about to become parents, helping bring harmony to planet Earth in the form of that child who will be the new Pendragon" (87).

Reconciling Matrimony

Seth Wright seems to think that only once "Malacandra descends and meets with Perelandra" (99) is harmony engendered. Without this matrimonial meeting, if I understand Wright correctly, receiving the influence of only Mars or Venus would not produce the radically changed Ransom seen in *THS*; both influences are needed. He observes that "Ransom learns courage in Malacandra" while "he learns war in Perelandra" (102). Both courage and war are associated with the Martial; war, however, is courage put into practise – courage that has an object. Given the doubts Ransom experiences after his return to Earth from Malacandra (whether his journey was not perhaps a hallucination),[31] it is clear that his sojourn in Mars merely enabled his courage but did not fortify it. Both are fortunate in the translunary realm – but together, they overcome sublunary immaturity characterised by fear, doubt, misperception, and egocentrism. Instead, they produce an Other-focused milieu in which all act courageously to love the Other as they love themselves.

With this in mind, Hilder says that "the rebirth of the marriage of Jane and Mark Studdock is a microcosmic view of gender harmony," and this harmony is one characterised by a mutual humility (156). Both Jane and Mark come to terms with their own respective "illusion[s] of independence" (Schwartz 100), which they then relinquish. Jane relinquishes hers completely, becoming dependent upon Maleldil instead. Her "meeting with the masculine God allows a healed relationship with the masculine Mark" (Wright 100). Mark is half way, one might say; through his wife's tutelage, he must still become fully receptive – to

[30] Rather than having more dreams, Jane is told by the Director to "[h]ave children instead" (*THS* 424).
[31] The reader is told that Ransom "found himself in considerable doubt as to whether what he remembered had really occurred" (*OSP* 158).

his wife, who will no longer give herself to him *daungerously*, or to his Creator, who will expect him "to discover the true meaning of the word 'lady'" (Ward 87). Together in their small corner of the "grand cosmic romance" (Hilder 161), they are now able to exemplify – like the King and Queen of Perelandra – "the resolution of discords, the bridge that spans what would else be a chasm in creation (*Per* 212).

Harmonia as Pendragon

With Lewis in particular, "[p]olarities yield trinities" (Zogby 36). When the two poles – Mars and Venus, the Masculine and the Feminine – are reconciled to each other according to cosmic design, Harmonia is the result. This reconciliation is a kind of structured, healthy tension, curiously analogous to how the *yin* (feminine principle) and *yang* (masculine principle) of Taoist philosophy combine to symbolise the harmonious *Tao*.[32] As types of the aforementioned archetypes, Jane and Mark's re-union is, I believe, a necessary and sufficient condition for Ransom's successor, the next Pendragon; this child will follow in Ransom's footsteps, and work to overcome the silence (and dissonance) of the Silent Planet.

Critics occupy varying positions regarding whether Jane and Mark's sexual reunion does actually result in the next Pendragon. Ward is quite certain of it. He states that their child "will be the next Pendragon, Ransom's successor" because the Jovial, "monarchal presence presiding over Mark and Jane's bed will bring to life that eightieth Pendragon" (53). As he notes, Jane's maiden name was "Tudor" and Lewis elsewhere traces the Tudors' (mythological) heritage back to Arthur and Jupiter (53). Hilder seems uncertain (131), much like Wright. The latter claims that due to the sublunary air of Earth, there is no certain way to know whether they do indeed become parents of the next Pendragon: "one can only assume that this miraculous child will be conceived in the immediate future – but it is only assumption, never knowledge" (101). He adds that "there are two other potential successors, the significantly named Arthur Denniston, and his and Camilla's unborn child" (101). Ward's view seems to be most probable, despite Merlin's assertion that their use of contraception has made this impossible for certain astrological reasons (*THS* 307). Ransom, who (given his history) is a far more reliable astrologer than Merlin, responds that "[t]he child may yet be born" (*ibid*). Holding this in mind, if one also considers the structural movements contained in the narrative of *THS* as well as the trilogy as a whole, there seems to be a strong suggestion that Jane and Mark's marital harmony (into which they most certainly enter) is reified by

[32] See p. 90 n27.

becoming parents of the eightieth Pendragon. Inheriting the spiritual office of Uther Pendragon and his son Arthur of legend,[33] the Studdocks' child is to be aligned with the renaissance of Logres and the motive force behind a Britain that sings harmoniously with the "hauntings" of other countries like France or China (414), which are spread over the rest of Thulcandra. Venus, *Fortuna Minor*, sounds the final note of the novel as Jane and Mark's harmony is engendered. She has overcome a narrative largely dominated by conflict and the misfortunes of the sublunary Martial wraith. Or, as Ransom puts it, she "comes more near the Earth than she was wont to – to make Earth sane" (423).

Conclusion

In the *Politics of Fantasy*, Lee Rossi claims that *THS* "fails to solve the thematic concerns developing in the first two novels" and that "the novel falls into two basically unrelated actions" (48). I hope to have shown that this view is false. On multiple levels, *THS* is a dialectic which moves from apparent oppositions which resolve in synthesis. It reformulates the themes of Ransom's journeys to Malacandra and Perelandra in earthly terms, transposing the "spiritual adventures" he has on these planets onto the drought-ridden souls of the Studdocks. Lewis thereby explores the ways in which Conflict and Love relate, and how Harmony is the *Major* result of two *Minor* planetary spirits when properly received.

[33]Significant here as the unifier of Britain, who brought peace and prosperity to an island of warring tribes by virtue of his martial strength and vitality.

Chapter 5

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The Cosmic Philosophy of Life

> All human life is carried out in the tension between self-centeredness and openness to the world.
>
> Wolfhart Pannenberg, *What is Man?*[1]

I now look to what my exploration of the texts has yielded in terms of a philosophy of life. I have focused upon instances and characterisations of Love and Conflict in the trilogy, as well as the Great Dance and Harmony in Chapters Three and Four, both of which suggest the ideal way Unity and Diversity might be related. Referring back to my initial definition of a philosophy of life, I characterised it as a worldview (*Weltanschauung*) with an emphasis on its practical, concrete outworking. It is something that seeks to offer a "unified solution [to] all the problems of our existence," producing definite answers to life's questions and taking into account "everything in which we are interested" (Freud "Lecture XXXV").

There are two elements to the philosophy of life as seen in the Cosmic Trilogy. It is a "way of life" in two senses. Firstly, there is the 'journey of life' which describes a gradual apprehension of the philosophy, a pilgrimage as it were. At each stage certain truths or lessons are learned; these build upon each other until the traveller has reached the third stage, which is a reconciliation of the first two. Here, the way ('manner') of life may be understood as the philosophy of life in its quotidian expression. Embarking on the journey does not produce the "unified solution" described by Freud; it is only once one has reached one's destination that one "feels secure in life, one knows what one ought to strive after, and how one ought to organise one's emotions and interests to the best purpose." In the following sections, I examine firstly the 'journey' in the form of the Cosmic Dialectic, and then the 'way' in the form of the Cosmic Manifesto.

The "Stages in Life's Way": Lewis's Cosmic Dialectic

I briefly mentioned in my introductory chapter Kierkegaard's idea of "the three stages or spheres of existence – life viewed aesthetically, ethically, and religiously" (Evans 52). This triad is a particularly useful explanatory framework and means of ordering the

[1] *What is Man?* 56.

phenomenology of human existence. Holmer indirectly (but intentionally) links Lewis and Kierkegaard's triads when he says that "Lewis [...] can give now credence to the idea of the expert in areas like religion, morals, and [a]esthetics" (25). This, I believe, is especially apparent in the Cosmic Trilogy, which is "like a lived dialogue or a lived dialectic" (17) that incorporates each Kierkegaardian sphere of existence into Ransom's journey, as well as the journeys of both Jane and Mark in *THS*.

The location of each story suggests this dialectic or triadic pattern: Mars, Venus, then the planet (Earth) in which types of the Martial and Venereal are enabled to produce Harmony. Whether by Lewis's intention or not, the fact that the trilogy remained a trilogy (and not a tetralogy) is suggestive of his consciousness of its dialectical structure. If one accepts Michael Ward's hypothesis (as I do) that *The Chronicles of Narnia* consists of seven books because each conforms structurally to one of the seven planetary spheres of the Ptolemaic universe, then it means that Lewis did not always choose to divide his fictional texts up merely according to convenience, whim or productivity. Ransom's *theosis* and imminent return to Venus at the end of *THS* conclude his character arc – the trilogy is often called the Ransom Trilogy for this reason.[2]

Lewis does not have the view that being human entails full-fledged selfhood to begin with. On the contrary, "he would have us remember that [...] it is to be so constituted that we make ourselves into subjects" (Holmer 7). In a similar vein to Kierkegaard, who thought that "to be a self is to be assigned a task" (Evans 51), Lewis reveals a developmental view of the self in Ransom, Jane and Mark – one which was shared by his literary forebears like Spenser and Bunyan, both of whom had a profound influence on Lewis's own thought.[3] All four would agree that it is hard work to become a *humane* self, and often requires "arduous decision and reconstruction" (*THS* 269) for the subject on his/her journey. It also relies on idealism about "life as it was intended to be lived" (Evans 59) and selves "becoming what they are intended to be" (Pannenberg 54) – there is an objective *telos*, a final goal in view – in other words, a destination. This journey to selfhood, furthermore, "cannot be achieved simply through knowing propositions" – the propositions must be known in concrete fashion for

[2] The *Dark Tower* fragment, which still divides critical opinion about its chronology and relation to the trilogy, does feature Ransom – but he is marginal, and it does not serve his character arc in any obvious way. The fact that Lewis abandoned the story, whatever its relation might have been to the three books making up the Cosmic Trilogy, is telling.

[3] I am thinking in particular of Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*, to which Lewis devotes much attention in *The Allegory of Love*, and Bunyan's classic *The Pilgrim's Progress*, which Lewis rewrote using his own philosophical journey in the form of *The Pilgrim's Regress*.

"existential growth" to occur (Evans 38). Holmer weighs in on this point too, claiming "Lewis does not believe that [...] becoming moral" is a matter of "believing in a theory of the good" (32). Rather, in Lewis's terms, one must come to know existentially (*connaître*) what one might know theoretically (*savoir*). This means practising being good and seeing goodness practised for oneself (as Hyoi does for Ransom). There must be lived encounter and habituation for it to take root in the human soul. Another integral point is Lewis's view of human nature. Although he would assert that, at core, it is essentially good, he would nevertheless affirm that "there is an inherent tendency in the [human] ego to adhere to one's own purposes, conceptions and customs" (Pannenberg 55). He would agree with Pannenberg when he claims that, "left to their own initiative, men by no means live in a constant movement beyond themselves in an openness to the world" (55). The phenomenological dialectic is absent in those who are focused upon themselves. As Pannenberg states, "egocentricity does not stand in an obvious harmony with man's openness to the world" (55).[4] The egocentric tendency results in "the death of true personhood" (Ware 34) if it cannot be overcome.

According to Evans, Kierkegaard thinks "it is natural for human beings to begin as children in the aesthetic stage and progress to the ethical and eventually the religious stages" (68). This assumes the child is encouraged to develop an "openness to the world," or what I also called 'openness to the Other.' I understand the cosmic dialectic in light of this natural progression; each stage naturally follows from the last, and their order is not arbitrary. In "First and Second Things," Lewis proposes the idea that "[y]ou can't get second things by putting them first; you can get second things only by putting first things first" (280), and this applies to the cosmic dialectic. Ransom, importantly, does not go to Perelandra first, nor do we encounter him as Mr Fisher-King immediately after his trip to Mars. Nevertheless, the dialectic as outlined below is only symbolic of the soul's journey through life, and not an exhaustive explanation of the trilogy's lived dialectic. This is because

> Lewis held that, symbolically speaking, 'in a certain juncture of the planets each may play the other's part' and that, in any case, 'all the planets are represented in each.' Given the interanimation of these seven spiritual symbols we should not expect the imagery [...] to be chemically pure. (Ward 232)

[4] This reminds me of a question in *The Imitation of Christ*: "Who hath a greater combat than he who striveth to overcome himself? (à Kempis 10).

For instance, Schwartz points out that "Jane's search for Merlin echoes Ransom's pursuit of the *hnakra*" in *OSP* and "Mark's solitary self-examination recalls the silent self-debate on Venus" in *Perelandra* (145). Despite this, the general features of the Mars-Venus-Harmonia graduation are quite clear. Another thing to note is that, as Evans says, it is possible for a person to become "fixated" on a particular stage and not go any further, even when that person is "aware of the higher possibilities he or she is refusing" (68). When this happens, the term 'stage' becomes inappropriate, for it "really has become an existentially-chosen sphere of existence" (68). This fixation is particularly evident among the trilogy's antagonists.[5] Yet in the case of Ransom, Mark and Jane, simply because they pass one stage of life does not mean that they then leave it behind: "the person who begins to live ethically or religiously does not leave the aesthetic behind, because it is a universal dimension of human life" (Evans 69). Every stage of life becomes an accessible sphere to those who have passed beyond it.

The Journey and the Way

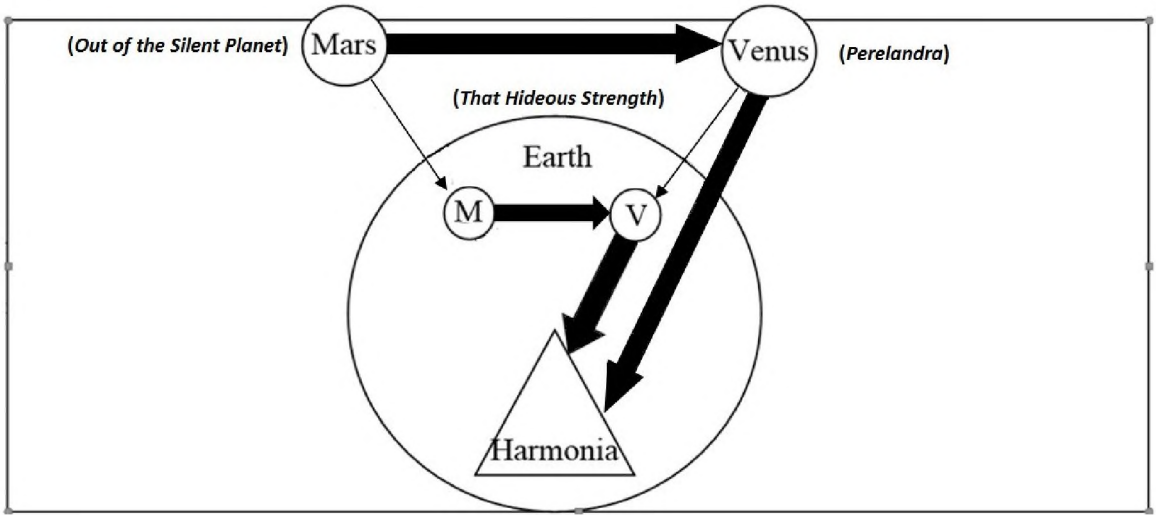

Figure 1: A visual representation of the trilogy's dialectic. Ransom travels to Mars, then to Venus; and having breathed from both atmospheres, he is encountered on Earth as having grasped the essence of Harmonia. Ransom's journey on Mars informs Mark's journey out of the Silent N.I.C.E., into a perception of reality. Ransom's journey on Venus likewise informs Jane's journey into the fullness of love and the self-sacrifice it demands. In their reunion, their collective journeys lead them to a relational Harmonia as well as Harmony in their souls (although Mark must still traverse the Venereal stage) and conclude his own psychomachia).

For the immature soul, the psychomachia is inevitable and should be embraced. For human beings are parochial creatures, characterised by diverse forms of disunity and fear of the Other. The soul must journey beyond itself into the realm of the Other, the *Thou*, and therein encounter itself, the *I*. Through a kind of humility, it must become more open to the

[5] Devine, for instance, has remained within the aesthetic sphere – he has no conception of the ethical, for ethics do not serve his desire for wealth and power. MacPhee seems fixated within the ethical sphere. Weston, arguably, goes all the way to the religious, however, he follows the shadow version of the cosmic dialectic – the grotesque dialectic, one might say – for his ethics lead him to a diabolical faith that ends in his own destruction.

immediate world of sensation – an *aesthetic* commitment – and less fearful of what it finds. The extent of its parochialisms must be discovered, and the soul ought actively to seek clarity of perception as it relates itself dialectically to the Other. In this process, the soul gets roomier, and individual and relational potentialities arise which were previously impossible. At this point, the first major battle of the psychomachia concludes, and it is no longer a child. The next stage through which it must pass is puberty, in which the new potentialities must become actualised and put into practise. The accompanying doubts must be overcome, for now the soul must act courageously. Mere openness to the Other is insufficient; the soul must risk itself on behalf of the Other, and begin to love in concrete terms – an *ethical* commitment. This love is self-sacrificial, and it means freedom from the parochial old self, which seeks to make itself the centre of all striving. In overcoming the old self's doubts through action, the soul leaps – and this leap is towards the third, final stage: faith, the psychomachia's psychosynthesis: the dynamic conclusion of the soul's journey. It is the stage of adulthood, of ever-increasing maturity and wisdom. It is the stage in which love flows naturally from one's being, in which evil is fought against vigorously. It is characterised by contentment, peace and receptivity to the Divine Other – a *religious* commitment. It places one in a harmonious relation to the diversity of creation, and at a deeper level, it unites the soul with all that is beautiful, good and true. Here, the cosmic way of life is revealed.

The Aesthetic: Mars, Conflict & Clear Perception

What unifies Kierkegaard's account of the aesthetic stage or sphere is his preoccupation with "the immediate," (qtd. in Evans 70) which "refer[s] to the natural, spontaneous sensations that lie at the heart of conscious human existence" (70). In my reading, this view of the aesthetic (which has little, though not nothing, to do with beauty) captures the major focus of Ransom and Mark's journeys under Martial tutelage.

The starting point for understanding this stage of the cosmic dialectic is Lewis's own characterisation of *OSP* as being "Ransom's *enfance*" (qtd. in Downing 104). Ransom has a base level of openness to the world; rather than "striv[ing] to assert [himself] and to prevail" (Pannenberg 55) over the alien sensations of Malacandra, he exhibits a willingness to apply the phenomenological dialectic and thereby submit to the reality of the Otherness he encounters. He allows his perception to be corrected, quickly in the case of the environment, decently in the case of the *hrossa*, but rather slowly in the case of the *sorns*. This corrected perception repeats the thematic movement "'Out of' something" (Manlove 28) which typifies

the Martial journey. Ransom leaves behind his "own purposes, conceptions and customs" (Pannenberg 55) for those of benevolent Malacandra. His perceptions, originally rather anthropocentric and geocentric, are revealed to be skewed and he embraces what I have called a logocentric view in its stead, one which takes into account the diverse cosmic expressions of the Logos and does not embargo any non-anthropic versions thereof. The Martial spirit is primarily expressed in the struggle between fear and suspicion of the alien Other and "the shy, ineluctable fascination of unlike for unlike" (*OSP* 58), perhaps the supreme example of Ransom's openness to the world, which quells his fears and habituates him in minor expressions of courage, not the least being an affectionate love for the *hrossa* and appreciation of Martian beauty. Schwartz captures exactly what Lewis does with Ransom on Malacandra: he is "grooming the unsure Ransom for future warfare" (143). The central example of battle on Malacandra is one expression of this grooming; Ransom's part in it is that of an honoured guest, a "spectator" rather than a "witness"[6] (*Per* 106); he is made to perceive the nature of true courage, true commitment, and in Hyoi's death, true love and forgiveness. Having received the perceptual "clearness of Mars" (*THS* 360) and encountered the fortunate Martial spirit in concrete, existential terms, he is given the instruction to "Be courageous" (*OSP* 148) – and he now has the capacity, the "roominess" (Holmer 20), to put such an instruction into practise.

Like Ransom's, Mark's journey is also one which is 'out of' something. In his case, however, he has descended into the lowest depths of the Silent Planet, and his openness to the world and to the Other is well-nigh extinct. His conflict is likewise one of perception, of his inability to appreciate the Other – whether it be his wife, or the men and women whose humanity he obscures through abstractions like "vocational groups," "elements," "classes" and the like (*THS* 87). Yet he is not wholly incapacitated: though he does not perceive beauty as his wife does, he has some sensitivity to it, insofar as it is something recognisably part of her world. He is thus not entirely fixated in his misperception, and thus there is sufficient room in his soul for "the Normal" to mount its defence against the onslaught of the N.I.C.E.'s so-called "objectivity" (372). The aesthetic apprehension of the Normal enables him to stand straight against the bending elasticity of the N.I.C.E. and risk execution; he reveals the beginnings of courage and a willingness to accept martyrdom, rejecting the "Crooked" in favour of the "Straight" (375). Following this, he becomes aware of his wife's goodness and

[6] 'Witness' is etymologically related to 'martyr' – which is exactly what Hyoi becomes in his death at the hands of Weston and Devine.

purity: he has developed sufficient roominess in his soul to feel chastened at his previous dismissal of her subjectivity in favour of his 'masculine' objectivity. He thus submits to the inversion, willing to beg her forgiveness. Recognising his misperception and the moral failings to which it has led, he finds a newfound capacity for Other-love, and therefore, courage in the face of his own vulnerability and lack of independence. This reveals how he becomes fully open to the world. Mark escapes the N.I.C.E.'s clutches and, like Ransom, has apprehended both "the clearness of Mars" (360) as well as the beginnings of courage and willingness to die for, rather than alter, what he believes in. He is ready for the next journey, which, although it does not take place in *THS*, is suggested by virtue of his reunion with Jane who acts as the bearer of the Venereal influence upon his life.

The Aesthetic stage is thus defined by a kind of conflict that is the precondition for the next stages of the dialectic. Descartes' *cogito ergo sum* reveals a certain approach to how one may understand selfhood. Descartes' formulation takes for granted 'I.' Phenomenologically, this makes sense; humanity is defined by self-consciousness rather than Other-consciousness. However, this means that the realm of objects (the aesthetic realm), which one perceives or senses as being beyond one's own subjectivity, is phenomenologically distanced, and does not appear to be the foundation of the 'I.' In other words, the self appears to be prior to the outside world. The psychomachia begins with the question of how one should navigate the outer world, given the inner world's apparent priority (and priorities). The navigator has two possibilities. He can chart a course through the outer world that either presupposes the priority of the self, and thus will choose the safest, most self-serving route, or chart a course lacking such a presupposition. The former leads increasingly to selfishness and egocentricity, and thus alienation of the Other. The latter (the way that exhibits an "openness to the world") may lead to the discovery of the Other in all its beauty, goodness and truth. But this way requires vulnerability, a willingness to risk the one certain thing – one's self – and submit to the future demands of clear perception.

The Ethical: Venus, Love and Right Action

Evans notes that "what all the forms of the ethical life have in common is what I would call the quest for identity" (90). And the "ethical task as Climacus [one of Kierkegaard's pseudonyms] describes it is therefore the task of becoming the person God created one to be" (114). As a result of this, "[t]he person who exists ethically has a kind of self-confidence [...] she sees herself as someone who can achieve the ethical task assigned to her" (116).

On Perelandra – the conflict is less to do with perception, but more to do with the will and right action, that is, love – at least as far as Ransom is concerned. Having developed the capacity to love, Ransom is tested by being given a responsibility to love the Other, rather than love himself. This test manifests itself in the need for an *act* of courage rather than the stayed hand of self-preservation. Ransom tells Merlin in *THS* that "[i]n the sphere of Venus I learned war" (*THS* 301).[7] This is because the Martial influence, which gives courage (an ambiguous thing, susceptible to both good and evil applications), is only fully realised when it comes into contact with the Venereal influence; one must have something to be courageous about – an object, as it were, for the Martial spirit to protect. By apprehending the fullness of the Martial influence, Ransom is "eased of all fickleness and protestings" (360) and goes to war against the Un-man, exhibiting the "Christic self-surrender" (Schwartz 148) which is the hallmark of *agape* love and the basis of an Other-centred ethic. Ransom's piebald skin (*Per* 113) reflects the continuation of his psychomachia begun on Mars;[8] no longer is the conflict about clear perception, but rather whether he will undertake what Schwartz calls "the arduous course of right action" or not (148). Once he does, and vanquishes the Un-man in the caves, his piebald nature disappears and he reaches a wholesome state of peace. His split identity is rendered whole, and after the conclusion of the novel, the fruits of his obedient victory over egocentric doubts produce in him a transcendent "self-confidence," as he becomes the person he was created to be – a type of the archetypal New Man, Maleldil.[9]

In *THS,* Jane's conflict is likewise less to do with perception, but more to do with the dichotomy between self- and Other-love. Like Ransom in *Perelandra*, Jane already has developed a *capacity* to love – she has the required "roominess" (especially apparent through her aesthetic awareness).[10] The temptation she faces is whether to avoid at all costs "being invaded and entangled" (71) or not, and thus, she is full of doubts about the wisdom of graciously, rather than *daungerously*, embracing either Mark's or Maleldil's advances. Although she does need to perceive (with the help of those at St. Anne's) the necessities of love, marital or otherwise, she primarily needs to *decide* to accept what I have called her engirdledness, her objectivity and receptivity: this is the precondition for her ability to

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[7] See p. 14.
[8] See p. 53-4.
[9] Ransom, throughout his various adventures, has been a Christ-figure, which is what Maleldil has been called on Thulcandra: a scapegoat or ransom for others (*OSP*), who dies, descends into hell and defeats the devil (*Per*), and then is raised into new life and receives a crown of glory (*THS).*
[10] Given the fact that Ransom's "legs presented an odd spectacle, for one was brownish-red (like the flanks of a Titian satyr) and the other was white – by comparison almost a leprous white" (Per 55), one might say that Jane is Mark's spiritual superior, being in a spiritually piebald state rather than being a spiritual leper like him.

sacrifice herself on behalf of the other, both erotically (*eros*) and spiritually (*agape*). Similar to Ransom on Perelandra, she must courageously 'take the plunge' and make war against her self-centredness. By doing so – joining St. Anne's, accepting her creaturely objectivity and thus embarking on the humility of spiritual, 'feminine' heroism – she acts rightly, *ethically*, and begins loving her husband, her Creator, and thus herself. Entering into a stage of peace and self-confidence, Jane can thus journey from Venus towards the stage of Harmonia.

The ethical stage, best exemplified in loving action, is secondary in the cosmic dialectic. Given the primary nature of conflict, love need never occur, other than in the form of egoism and egocentricity (which is paradoxically self-hatred, for it closes off human potentiality). Kallistos Ware clarifies this well:

> Love cannot exist in isolation, but presupposes the other. Self-love is the negation of love. As Charles Williams shows [...] in his novel *Descent into Hell*, self-love is hell; for, carried to its ultimate conclusion, self-love signifies the end of all joy and all meaning. Hell is not other people; hell is myself, cut off from others in self-centredness. (35)

But if this second stage of the psychomachia manifests in action for the sake of the Other – selflessness – then this is the highest form of love, what the Greeks called *agape*. This, then, is the realm of the ethical. The Martial manifests itself fully in the form of the Venereal. The negative relation of conflict (being *against* something), transforms into a positive relation (being *for* something). Love is the relation of being 'for' rather than 'against.' It is a movement towards rather than a movement away, towards a diverse unity rather than a disunited diversity. Martial capacity for courage and clear, incisive perception finds its object and completion upon encountering the receptive, loving Venereal; in their conjunction, they give birth to Harmonia.

The Religious: Harmonia, Unity in Diversity, and True Faith

The final stage is unlike the two before it. It has less definite content and is rather a hypostasised reconciliation or resolution of the previous two stages than anything else. Phenomenologically speaking, however, its sojourners are markedly different from those inhabiting the ethical stage, who are still visibly fallible human beings, albeit loving, ethical ones. Those who travel the religious stage are no longer quite open to the world; they are partially beyond this world, and will remain so. The religious stage is thus "marked by a quest for ethical character and eternal life, and [Kierkegaard] sees those goals as intertwined"

(Evans 123). To progress within this stage "requires a person to recognize the limits imposed by their creatureliness, to understand what is within a person's power and what must be accepted as something one cannot control [...] the religious task is to learn that 'without God a person can do nothing'" (129).

Ransom's obedience to the phenomenological dialectic, to the logocentric perspective, to the "Voice" telling him to attack incarnate Evil – all these contribute to the Ransom portrayed in *THS*, where his psychomachia has visibly concluded in a psychosynthesis. After the events of *Perelandra*, he has entered into *sanctus otium*[11] – a state of harmony with himself, others, and the cosmos at large. As director of the company at St. Anne's, he is no longer a knight-protector for the virtuous Green Lady. Rather, he is the Jovial, king-like bridging agent of the *Oyéresu* as Ward observes (50). Hilder understands "Ransom's passivity" in *THS* to be "the fulfillment of his spiritual journey in which he has learned receptivity [...] Ransom is the spiritual hero whose obedient *openness to the divine* brings about victory (119, my italics). Through this openness, he becomes who he was meant to be (Pannenberg 54). No longer striving to overcome his timidity or self-centredness, Ransom is in a state of self-knowledge, certain of both what is within his power and what he cannot control (Evans 129). Particularly after his initiation into the Great Dance, Ransom's faith becomes *true;* his "quest for certainty" (qtd. in Evans 56) concludes. This is what brings about his psychosynthesis and new identity as a bridge. In his capacity as a "bridge" (*THS* 321), he successfully links the temporal and eternal, the spiritual and the material, the natural and the supernatural – he is the "bridge that spans what would else be a chasm in creation" (*Per* 212). In *Fear and Trembling*,[12] Alistair Hannay's translation of Kierkegaard's Danish is particularly apt: "to express the sublime in the pedestrian absolutely – that is something only the knight of faith can do – and it is the one and only marvel" (70). Ransom the "Pedestrian" (*OSP* 1) now expresses the sublime, a marvel to the reader who has seen his spiritual *enfance*. He has become an alien to the reader, as if his home were no longer amongst the men and women of Thulcandra. He is no longer 'of Thulcandra,' having no share in the silence of his birth-planet. Ransom's new home is Perelandra, where he will join the other Pendragons of Logres.

By the end of *THS*, neither Mark nor Jane approximate the extent of existential harmony exhibited in Ransom's character. At the narrative level, one might say that this is

[11] Holy peace or leisure.
[12] The title is derived from Philippians 2:12 [KJV] "[…] work out your own salvation with fear and trembling."

because they are not given an interplanetary journey to Perelandra, to breathe in that blissful air. However, such a view is to reduce the Venereal to the material – and more than anything else, the planets are "spiritual symbols" ("The Alliterative Metre" 24). The main reason is that neither of them are near to Ransom's level of obedient submission to his Masters and Maleldil. In Jane's case, her journey of faith has just begun. Mark's, however, has not really started. Yet both have cast off their "illusion[s] of independence" (Schwartz 100) as I mention in the previous chapter: under Jane's tutelage, the suggestion is that Mark will be receptive to Maleldil just as he has been receptive to "the Normal" (*THS* 331). The Harmonia in which their "connubial reunion" (Ward 87) results is not, primarily, the kind of harmony which puts each's psychomachia to rest. The Studdocks' Harmonia is found, rather, in the reconciliation of their collective journeys and in their suggested future as progenitors of the eightieth Pendragon. Between the two of them, they have – as 'one flesh,' a united diversity – traversed both the Aesthetic and Ethical stages of existence, and are both ready to embody "the necessary humility required of lovers" (*THS* 425) as they enter into the Religious stage as a unit. Both of them "understand what is within a person's power and what must be accepted as something one cannot control" (Evans 129). In Hilder's terms, "cosmic masculinity and femininity unite in receptivity, becoming dancers in the grand cosmic romance" (Hilder 161). While Ransom exhibits the harmony of an individual soul, the Studdocks instantiate the harmony of "unity-in-difference" (166), a social unity which will be expressed at higher levels as Logres and its allies work to mend Britain's ills.

The Cosmic Philosophy of Life

I have now discussed the central argumentative movement of the trilogy's philosophy of life. Each text may be seen as a "stage in life's way" or alternatively as a "sphere of existence." Within each stage, more of the trilogy's proffered *Weltanschauung* is revealed. Right at the end of *THS*, Dimble makes a useful distinction:

> [I]f one is thinking simply of goodness in the abstract, one soon reaches the fatal idea of something standardised – some common kind of life to which all nations ought to progress. Of course, there are universal rules to which all goodness must conform, but that's only the grammar of virtue. It's not there that the sap is. [Maleldil] doesn't make two blades of grass the same: how much less two saints, two nations, two angels. The whole work of healing Tellus depends on nursing that little spark, on incarnating that ghost, which is still alive in every real people, and different in each. (414)

I have attempted to show this in the cosmic dialectic – the way in which the spiritual adventures of Ransom, Jane and Mark "incarnate that ghost" in their lives. Having concluded this, in the following appendix I relate elements of Dr Dimble's "grammar of virtue": the propositional distillation of my exploration into the trilogy's philosophy of life. As will become apparent, the cosmic philosophy of life incorporates many traditional responses to a world in which selfishness holds sway: the development of regard for the Other; an openness and acceptance of the Other; humility and love; an appreciation for beauty and pleasure. Otherness is seen as an antidote to selfishness, and this open way of life is neither ascetic nor Dionysian. Yet, to balance these qualities, the trilogy's philosophy of life cannot affirm relativism, whether epistemological, ontological, ethical or otherwise; a view which is characteristic of Weston's various philosophies. Relativism is, however, also fundamental to the postmodern worldview of much of the West, which embraces relativist views of truth. In contrast, the cosmic philosophy of life is predicated upon an objective view of reality. It does not rely on a metaphysic in which human beings find themselves devoid of ontological and epistemological support, but it relies on one in which human beings are engirdled, in which values are discoverable and in which there are sure guidelines for what qualifies as "diabolical" or not. The acceptance of a transcendent, divine reality beyond oneself underlies this metaphysical vision, for it is this divine reality that possesses the requisite authority to define human objectivity and yet give to it the gift of subjectivity. This undermines human pretentions of autonomy and radical freedom, and any socio-political systems that proceed from such assumptions. The cosmic philosophy of life means that all is gift and nothing is deserved – therefore, that nothing can be demanded, and humility is the only appropriate way to approach living one's life.

Appendix

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The Cosmic Manifesto of Unity and Diversity, Love and Conflict

The following points may be seen as a series of 'rules' (in the sense of a monastic rule of life) distilled from my reading of the text, all of which relate categorically to the triads discussed in the concluding chapter. Each subsequent triad of headings relates to the three dialectical categories (nine headings in total). Though highly subjective in nature, I have attempted to capture something of the transformative wisdom manifest in the Cosmic Trilogy.

1. Clear Perception

- Conceive of the cosmos infused with life rather than indifference and death.
- Accept that reality, and thus truth, is something discovered, not constructed. It is found through common sense, through experience, through encounter. It is inspired, revealed, given.
- Everything is important, no matter how peripheral it might appear from a subjective perspective.
- Metaphysics, and thus physics, are contingent. Take it that miracles are possible.
- Recognise that 'what is' and 'what should be' are distinct and cannot be conflated.
- Realise that inferiority and superiority need not be expressions of power; learn from the superior, teach the inferior.
- Remember that there is no exact science of 'human being.' Humanity can neither be reduced to Man in the abstract nor the identity-erasing collective of men. "One can't study men; one can only get to know them" (*THS* 69).
- Celebrate gender as a metaphysical reality, an expression of the Creator-creation dichotomy; it is not to be relativised or seen in narrowly biological terms.
- Embrace the organic, animal nature of human being. "Birth and breeding and death" (*THS* 187) are not to be ignored, glossed over as embarrassing or evil, nor sterilised in society – but are to be accepted and celebrated.

2. Selfhood as a Task

- Know thyself. Self-knowledge begins with humility.
- Remain open to the psychomachia; it takes courage and self-mastery to progress through the dialectic of life.

- Embrace the Green Lady as a model: develop patience and kindness, trust, perseverance and hope; leave behind envy, pride, self-centredness, grudge-holding and S*chadenfreude*. Rejoice rather in the truth, as she does.
- Diminish any "dramatic conception of the self"; accept who you are. Embrace Being, rather than Seeming.
- Enter into your freedom – not as 'terror with delight in it' but rather as "delight with terror in it!" (*Per* 67).
- You have not been thrown into an indifferent universe. Recognise your engirdledness. You are part of the cosmic Great Dance.
- Embrace an identity founded upon something outside of yourself; this is the key to realising your own selfhood.
- Do not fear the Other, for this leads to the stagnation of the Self and to self-alienation.
- Become a bridge for the sake of the Other, and observe how you become beautiful, confident, and wise.

3. Epistemic Virtue

- Embrace epistemic dependence instead of asserting its opposite; cultivate epistemic humility, recognising the limits of human knowledge and accepting the freedom that such limitation brings. This humility will preserve the subjectivity of the Other.
- Do not entertain that epistemic pride which results in objectification.
- Recognise and celebrate both your objectivity and subjectivity.
- Leave behind anthropocentric, anthropomorphic rationality.

4. Pleasure

- Pleasure is to be enjoyed and appreciated; it is a gift, never something to be taken for granted – "the fruit we are eating is always the best fruit of all" (*Per* 80).
- Do not fall into comparison. Embrace the given good, whether it maps on the expected good or not.
- Practise appreciative restraint: do not arrest or repeat experiences of pleasure inappropriately. Follow rather the middle way.

5. Right Action

- Remember that right action produces contentment, just as Ransom's actions to protect the Green Lady result in an eased conscience.

- ❖ Support the innocent; there is a moral harm in passively allowing corruption to succeed.
- ❖ Approach the animals as kindred, as fellow creatures and potential subjectivities; repudiate the idea that they are objects that can be used and dominated.
- ❖ The will to power must be resisted, for it leads to the subjugation of the Other and of yourself.
- ❖ Do not desire equality as an end in itself, but desire it as a medicinal remedy which helps restore appropriate hierarchy, as a measure to "guard life" but not "make it" (*THS* 157).
- ❖ Cultivate flexibility rather than elasticity; fit 'alongside' rather than fit 'in.'
- ❖ Respect and obey leaders like Ransom in *THS*. True leaders should persuade followers, respecting their Otherness – never forcing or using them as if they were objects.

6. The Grammar of Love

- ❖ Understand that love requires obedience: there is a 'rule of love' that cannot be ignored.
- ❖ Communicate your love not in your own words – but learn the language of the Other.
- ❖ In your openness, love the Other: as Ransom loves the Green Lady.
- ❖ In your openness, forgive the Other: as Hyoi forgives Ransom.
- ❖ Retain openness to the Bent Ones: love your enemies despite their evil.
- ❖ Express your love firstly in commitment and secondly in emotion. A love that does not persevere is no love at all.
- ❖ Like the *hrossa* of Malacandra, be guided by instinct, but do not replace love with lust – it will lead only to unnecessary conflict.
- ❖ As a *hnau*, treat non-*hnau* in a way that maximises their flourishing. "Guide all natures to perfection. Strengthen the feebler, lighten the darker, love all" (*Per* 211).
- ❖ Recognise that delight is to be found in loving the Other. Let your love be like Maleldil's – "born neither of your need nor of my deserving, but a plain bounty" (*Per* 223).

7. Vocations

- ❖ Believe, with Ransom, that you have been called "not for nothing" (*Per* 147).

- ❖ Become a xenologist; develop an existential orientation towards the Other in all its manifestations. Cultivate openness to the Other, recognise it, and encounter its beauty.
- ❖ See that membership in a body is the highest calling of social life: to live out a vocation, to contribute with one's talents, to complement other members with the gift of one's life.
- ❖ Create. The Great Dance's movements are predicated upon new creation. Creativity must be accepted, encouraged, and even expected: it is a cosmic reality. Creativity will not be exhausted – thus be open to an eternity of creative striving, and do not settle for less.

8. The Unity in Diversity

- ❖ Desire 'harmony without uniformity' as the greatest interpersonal configuration of society.
- ❖ Embrace both the diversity and unity of being, as well as the movements which produce each. Plurality and singularity are not to be understood as enemies.
- ❖ Recognise social complementarity and diversity as opposed to a difference-obliterating equality and unity.
- ❖ Pursue the ultimate unity in diversity; you must "take the plunge" or a "leap in the dark" (*THS* 120) to find it. For membership means the acceptance of your vulnerability and the willingness to risk your life.

9. True Faith

- ❖ Know that true religion is concrete, expressed in intentional actions and reactions: it is not abstract or ephemeral.
- ❖ Live a life worth living: practise 'a long obedience in the right direction.'
- ❖ Do not despise paradox. For life is complex, profoundly complex, while simultaneously being of the greatest simplicity.
- ❖ Know that harmony is based on mutual, but unequal, submission. Embrace true hierarchy and authority: "To be high or central means to abdicate continually: to be low means to be raised" (*Miracles* 201).
- ❖ Know that everything participates in the divine nature by virtue of its connectedness and dependence upon "[w]hat is above and beyond all things" (*THS* 350).

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