

THE LAST BATTLE:  
VIOLENCE AND THEOLOGY IN THE NOVELS  
OF C. S. LEWIS

By

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In memory of  
my cousins  
Bernard Carrather  
d. St. Lô 1944

and

Christopher Lyon  
d. Southeast Asia 1968

Thou turnest man to  
destruction; again  
thou sayest, Come again,  
ye children of men.

Ps. 90:3

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## CHAPTER I

### THE LAST BATTLE: VIOLENCE AND THEOLOGY IN THE NOVELS OF C. S. LEWIS

The struggle between good and evil was a central concern of C. S. Lewis, recurring in his theological writings, in his novels for adults, and in the Narnia Chronicles which he wrote for children. The extent to which Lewis' assumptions about the nature of good and evil may have fostered violent solutions to the conflicts posed in his novels deserves more detailed consideration than it has previously received. In my survey of critical writings on C. S. Lewis, I have discovered a number of references to his concept of battle but this element has not been the focus of extended treatment. Dainis Bisenieks, Kathryn Lindskoog and Elizabeth Ann Parker have pointed out the importance of warfare in the Narnia series. Margaret R. Grennan, Charles Moorman, Robert Reilly, Nathan Comfort Starr, Gunnar Urand and, in particular, William Luther White have drawn attention to the concept of battle underlying Lewis' novels for adults. In approaching this topic, a brief summary of Lewis' exposure to violence in his own life is of interest.

Perhaps one episode in Lewis' early life, antedating his war experience, accounts for a certain sense of being faced by hostile forces. Born in 1898 in Northern Ireland, Lewis suffered the loss of his mother during his boyhood. This loss, followed by an increasing estrangement from their father, drove Lewis and his brother to form a kind of shield-wall against an unfriendly world. William Luther White quotes the mature Lewis on his personal outlook:

'To this day,' he said, 'the vision of the world which comes most naturally to me is one in which "we two" or "we few" (and in a sense "we happy few") stand together against something stronger and larger.'<sup>1</sup>

Perhaps his later identification with the "Inklings," a literary group that met in the unsympathetic environment of Oxford where Lewis taught for many years, represented a continuation of a siege mentality developed early in life.<sup>2</sup>

Lewis had described much of his early schooling as unhappy. In one respect, his service in World War I offered him something his school years had lacked.

I am surprised that I did not dislike the army more. It was, of course, detestable. But the words "of course" drew the sting. That is where it differed from Wyvern. One did not expect to like it. Nobody said you ought to like it. Nobody pretended to like it. Everyone you met took it for granted that the whole thing was an odious necessity, a ghastly interruption of rational life. And that made all the difference.<sup>3</sup>

The comradeship Lewis experienced in the army was not limited to the men of his own side. In his early days of trench warfare, when Lewis suggested "pooping" a rifle grenade into a German

post, a sergeant gently deterred him, introducing Lewis to "the neighborly principles which, by the tacit agreement of the troops, were held to govern trench warfare," (Surprised by Joy, p. 194). Lewis reached the front on his 19th birthday, in November 1917, and saw most of his service around villages before Arras. In April of the following year he was wounded near Lilliers. His account of these happenings is much more understated than, for example, Robert Graves' Goodbye to All That. Indeed, John Wain has accused Lewis of repressing the type of personal reactions that would have been appropriate to an autobiographical writer. Lewis' autobiography, however, is more concerned with his intellectual life and with his conversion to Anglicanism than with other matters; so the reader must glean what he can from the brief comments about Lewis' war experience in Surprised by Joy. Two things stand out: Lewis' state of mind when he enlisted and the admiration for ordinary men which he developed in the process of trench fighting.

As a native of Ireland, Lewis was exempt from the conscription which applied to English boys of his age. He made the decision to enter the army but does not describe his reasoning at length:

I did not much plume myself even then for deciding to serve, but I did feel that the decision absolved me from taking any further notice of the war...Accordingly I put the war on one side to a degree which some people will think shameful and some incredible. Others will call it a flight from reality. I maintain that it was rather a treaty with reality. (Surprised by Joy, p. 158)

Lewis felt that by adopting this attitude he was "fixing a frontier," indicating his willingness to die in his country's wars if need be, but refusing to let them occupy his attention. He was determined to live his own life and felt skeptical about the reliability of information which reached England from the front. For this reason he avoided reading about the war and engaging in conversations about it, except those of the most superficial sort. Those who consider his position escapist could find material to ponder in a comment on Lewis by Lee Rossi, who believes he

seems to have had a horror of revolutionary Leftism as hopelessly philistine and, in extremity, wicked...Lewis' concern with politics and his flight from political society into fantasy is a response to a situation in which all political and social realities assumed a threatening aspect. These realities--his family, his schools, and Europe of the First World War--presented a panorama of such self-seeking that he despaired of the public world.<sup>4</sup>

In one respect, at least, the war introduced Lewis to a type of reality he had seldom encountered in his middle-class, academic surroundings: the outlook of the average person. Along with the hardships and horror of the war--the corpses, the experience of falling asleep while marching and waking up still marching--Lewis discovered a happier reality.

I came to know and pity and reverence the ordinary man: particularly dear Sergeant Ayres, who was (I suppose) killed by the same shell that wounded me. I was a futile officer (they gave commissions too easily then), a puppet moved about by him, and he

turned this ridiculous and painful relation into something beautiful, became to me almost like a father. (Surprised by Joy, p. 195)

Out of all his war experiences, what Lewis seems to remember most vividly is the moment he first heard the sound of a bullet, a sound signaling, "This is War. This is what Homer wrote about."

In a lecture given years later Lewis refers to his youthful expectation that life in the trenches would be "all war," and to his dawning realization that "the nearer you got to the front lines the less everyone spoke and thought of the allied cause and the progress of the campaign." Lewis adds that Tolstoi and Homer have successfully captured this aspect of war.<sup>5</sup>

Many of his own comments give an understated impression of the war; at one point a more emotional note occurs when he mentions "the unskilled butchery of the first German War," (Surprised by Joy, p. 158), but on the whole his remarks are restrained. In a letter, however, Lewis revealed that his experience in the war haunted his dreams for years (Image of Man, p. 177). If Lewis' autobiographical account gives little direct information about this time, his fictional works have obviously absorbed many of his impressions of what battle is like. Much in Lewis' earlier fiction supports White's contention that his "imagery of war often suggests more nearly the chivalry of medieval battle than it does the horrors of modern warfare," (Image of Man, p. 176). Evidence can also be found for White's judgment that

Lewis has no sympathy for the sort of semi-pacifism which fills a soldier with shame for fighting and robs him of the gait (sic)

and wholeheartedness which are the natural accompaniments of courage. (Image of Man, p. 157)

In The Problem of Pain, Lewis includes the authority of the soldier, derived from civil society, among sanctions to hurt or even to kill one's fellow, adding that, in addition to such authority, there must also be an urgent necessity and an obvious good to be attained.<sup>6</sup>

White, who has given more attention to Lewis' views of war than have other critics, asserts that "Lewis's reflections upon warfare are certain to strike many readers as inadequate, if not callous and uncompassionate." According to White, Lewis' view of war "seemed to be dominated by an individualistic perspective, in which the major issue involved either private salvation or private damnation." White believes that Lewis failed to grasp the fact that war is an event in the life of society as well as in the lives of individuals. Further, he maintains that

Lewis never concluded that war itself is a fundamental evil. He viewed battle as a rather neutral affair through which certain souls are dispatched to their ultimate destinies. (Image of Man, pp. 176-77)

To the extent that this charge is true, Lewis' outlook would seem more reminiscent of the Bhagavad-Gita than of other writers of modern fiction who "are more sensitive to the consequences of war than was Lewis." In sum, notes White, Lewis "tended too quickly to accept evil (even war) as spiritually useful," (Image of Man, p. 180).

In attempting to assess the accuracy of this charge, the reader will be struck by Lewis' efforts to maintain a clear distinction between violence which he considers malignant and violence which he presents as directed to constructive ends. In at least two respects Lewis insists upon this distinction: he condemns offensive warfare (The Horse & His Boy) and gratuitous violence (Perelandra). Lewis' view of life obviously encompasses violence within a context of both good and evil, but he makes it clear that surrounding circumstances must be taken into account. His viewpoint is grounded in the theology of what he termed "mere Christianity." Only a minority of sects within Christendom have repudiated warfare as an evil in itself. According to Elbert Russell,

Pacifism has been confined to a weak acceptance in the early church in the first 150 years of Christian history, a few individual teachers, such as the humanists, and a half-dozen tiny movements, only two of which still exist, the Quakers and Anabaptist derivatives. Proportionately these groups never constituted more than a tiny part of Christianity.<sup>7</sup>

Russell notes that the spirit of crusading warfare has been the dominant attitude of Christendom during certain periods but that, even when the crusading zeal was at its height, some opposition to it existed. He concludes that "for most of its history Christianity has generally accepted the just war doctrine," (Christianity & Militarism, p. 11). This is the position that appears throughout the novels of C. S. Lewis.

Despite White's comment above on Lewis' lack of sympathy for "semi-pacifism," it would be a mistake to regard Lewis as doggedly

opposed to conscientious objectors. It is true that he does not consider pacifism an essential feature of Christian witness. Two of his characters--Eustace in The Voyage of the Dawn Treader and the Tousle-Headed Poet in The Great Divorce (an allegorical work which falls outside the scope of this study)--identify themselves as pacifists; in the context of their other traits, which are objectionable ones, it is plain that Lewis attached unpleasant connotations to their pacifism. But a passage in The Screwtape Letters makes plain his belief that, for some individuals and in some circumstances, pacifism is a mark of moral strength rather than weakness. He has his elderly tempter encourage a younger devil to fix either "Patriotism" or "Pacifism" as a sort of fetish in the human consciousness; either view can be motivated by high purposes and either can be corrupted.

Let him begin by treating the Patriotism or the Pacifism as a part of his religion. Then let him, under the influence of partisan spirit, come to regard it as the most important part. Then quietly and gradually nurse him on to the stage at which the religion becomes merely part of the 'Cause,' in which Christianity is valued chiefly because of the excellent arguments it can produce in favour of the British war effort or of pacifism.<sup>8</sup>

While these comments by Lewis' devil fail to reflect the fact that, for the member of certain Christian sects, pacifism is a part of his religion, it is free from the intolerance which White's condemnation of Lewis' war views might lead one to expect.

Russell's survey of attitude studies on war that have been conducted over the past 30 years concludes: "it can be observed that the more devout and more orthodox a person or group is, the

more militarist their attitudes are likely to be. Thus, orthodox devoutness is related to militarist attitudes, and not to pacifist ones," (Christianity & Militarism, p. 26). If Lewis is considered an exponent of orthodox Christianity--and many persons, Catholic and Protestant alike, regard him as such--it is clear that his perspectives on war do not conform to Russell's summary of findings. Nor do his fictional characters appear to conform to this pattern. Louise Gossett, writing on Flannery O'Connor, states that "the most violent and unattractive characters in Miss O'Connor's work are those obsessed by religious fervor."<sup>9</sup> In one sense, perhaps, some of Lewis' characters do conform to this pattern, but their religious fervor is directed towards a sociological aim rather than towards Christian dogma. The embittered Straik, the member of a totalitarian group in That Hideous Strength, has transferred his earlier religious zeal to the aims of the organization he now serves.<sup>10</sup> His eschatological view of society contains a fierce embracing of violence. A superior in the organization, Frost, points out "advantages" of modern warfare, which weeds out backward members of society and increases the hold of the technocracy. The aims these men serve are identified by Lewis as a kind of Satanic religion whose exponents have no scruples about the use of violence. In a way, then, his characters exhibit the link between violence and religious fervor detected in the fictional work of O'Connor and in the research findings summed up by Russell: it is necessary to add, however, that the religion which elicits

a violent response from its adherents is presented by Lewis as a false religion.

The reader of Lewis is thus faced with a complex pattern. In his theological writings Lewis notes the sanctions for killing other human beings--and also acknowledges the possibility that pacifist views may be espoused for worthy motives. In his fiction he glorifies battle--and points out its meaninglessness. Particularly in the later fiction, misgivings about battle are expressed. In his finest novel, Till We Have Faces, Lewis has the seasoned soldier Bardia say to the Queen,

Women and boys talk easily about killing a man. Yet, believe me, it's a hard thing to do; I mean, the first time. There's something in a man that goes against it.<sup>11</sup>

Having waged a successful combat against an invading prince and slain him, the Queen feels a sense of loss rather than gain. In his description of that combat, Lewis departs sharply from earlier writings which appear to glamorize battle. As the novel continues, Lewis moves the struggle to a different plane: conquest of self becomes the main issue. Similarly, the fragmentary work "After Ten Years," a novel begun toward the end of Lewis' life, presents a character, Menelaus, who turns away from earlier patterns of heroism to examine his own emotions and convictions. The reconciliation toward which these two works point is initiated but not accomplished through violent means. Interestingly enough, a gap of some ten years separates these later works from Lewis' earlier fiction, and it is possible that, with increasing age, he reappraised

the role of outward strife and found it necessary to seek a different level for the war between good and evil which suffused his imagination. It is notable that, in both of these later works, Lewis turned to mythic material to present this conflict.

In this respect Lewis may be moving in a direction that differs from much contemporary work. Bernard Bergonzi has pointed out the transition from a myth-dominated to a demythologized world view which took place in the literature of World War I:

Violent action could be regarded as meaningful, even sacred, when it was sanctified by the canons of heroic behaviour; when these canons came to seem no longer acceptable, then killing or being killed in war appeared meaningless and horrible.<sup>12</sup>

According to Leonard Lutwack, the progress of the soul became more important than prowess in arms during this period.<sup>13</sup> This "demythologization" does not necessarily mean that the instinct for battle was no longer treated in fiction; Stanley Cooperman has pointed out how Robert Jordan of For Whom the Bell Tolls

retreats to the front (not really a contradiction either for Jordan or Hemingway) whenever complexity threatens to create that nightmare of the American imagination; stasis, a lack of justification for a crusade.<sup>14</sup>

In adopting a mythological world-picture, Lewis is going counter to the trend described by Bergonzi but in his replacement of prowess in arms with the progress of the soul as his fictional theme, he is following the pattern observed by Lutwack. He also seems to retrace in his fiction the pattern identified by Frederick J. Hoffman:

The history of violence in the twentieth century (and in its literature) follows somewhat along these lines, in terms of the character of the assailant: the assailant as human being, as instrument, as machine, and as landscape. In this last case, the assailant is neither human nor mechanical but the entire environment, the land itself, or the world or the solar system: whatever extent of space the instrument of the assailant has put at his disposal.<sup>15</sup>

The scientist Weston of Out of the Silent Planet is a human adversary; in Perelandra he has become transformed into an instrument of Satan. That Hideous Strength, the third volume of the trilogy, features a collective adversary, a totalitarian force that relies upon technological skill (plus occult powers) for its domination of others. This power of the machine is overthrown by the power of the landscape, as natural forces set in motion by the magician Merlin overwhelm it. In a psychological rather than a literal sense, the heroine of Till We Have Faces perceives the land as her enemy. The entire "silent planet" metaphor might be seen in terms of this pattern as earth's linguistic corruption echoes a planetary failure in communication.

The concept of struggle, approached in various ways, is central to Lewis' novels. White states that

A battle motif permeates many episodes in the Narnia chronicles and in the science-fiction trilogy. One does not become good or carry out God's will effortlessly. Righteousness is always accompanied by struggle. It is impossible to remain neutral in the great battle. (Image of Man, p. 152)

Certainly the Narnia Chronicles contain many instances of violent conflict. Apparently the times of peace are less newsworthy in

these chronicles than are the times of war. Lewis attempts to account for the warlike nature of the Narnian world when Jill and Eustace are told in The Last Battle,

The Sons and Daughters of Adam and Eve were brought out of their own strange world into Narnia only at times when Narnia was stirred and upset...In between their visits there were hundreds and thousands of years when peaceful King followed peaceful King till you could hardly remember their names or count their numbers, and there was really hardly anything to put into the History Books.<sup>16</sup>

Sometimes a battle may be raging on more than one front: in The Horse and His Boy, Edmund goes to the aid of an ally while the High King Peter is off fighting giants on the northern border.

Lewis makes it clear, however, that Narnia is not alone in its experience of conflict situations: the children who enter Narnia in The Silver Chair come directly from a threat of violence in their English school, and return to that milieu prepared to mete out physical punishment to the classmates who had bullied them. Similarly, Ransom leaves a world at war to journey to Perelandra. After his physical combat on that planet, he returns to earth charged with a leadership mission that will cast him in the role of dux bellorum against Satanic forces.

Adding to the complexity of Lewis' work is the fact that violence functions both as an identifying characteristic of evil and as an instrument for the chastisement of evil. Thus violence erupts in a riot deliberately engineered by an unscrupulous organization (That Hideous Strength) and as a divine sanctioned response to the challenge of evil (Perelandra).

Robert T. Reilly, who is critical of Lewis for not rendering effectively the tedium of battle, notes that "the image of battle has always suggested itself as the appropriate one to convey the human religious situation."<sup>17</sup> According to Margaret R. Grennan,

The application of this modern fairy tale is no less clear for the world than for an England always under the necessity of choosing between the 'sweet and the straight' and the 'sour and the crooked,' and always in the serious danger of imagining that there really is no struggle.<sup>18</sup>

Perhaps Lewis' inclination to cast his struggle between good and evil in terms of mythological stories, or Christian traditions featuring Satan, encourages some readers to regard his novels (and the struggle they depict) as unreal. George Steiner has stated,

Very few of us in fact hold a dogmatic, explicitly religious view of man's personal and social disasters. For most of us the logic of original trespass and the image of history as purgatorial are, at best, a metaphor.<sup>19</sup>

White points out that "devil concepts or Satan-images are more associated in the minds of most persons with comedies, cartoons, and Halloween costumes than they are with serious theological insight." He suggests that Lewis--despite the inadequacies of such associations to suggest the power of evil--still employed them in an effort to convey a dimension of human experience that might not be grasped at all if such traditional terminology is abandoned (Image of Man, p. 50). The "Un-man," the Satanically-possessed scientist of *Perelandra*, may seem like a stereotype of evil but this figure does convey something of the tragedy of

dehumanization. Margaret Grennan believes that, in all three novels of his trilogy, Lewis

considers the central conflict of our times... between those forces that will realize the potentialities of human nature and those forces that will destroy that nature as we know it, and will eventuate in "the abolition of man." (The Lewis Trilogy, p. 339)

In Language and Silence and other works, George Steiner has pointed out that literature and education have failed to act as humanizing influences. "As George Steiner has so convincingly argued, the dutiful Germans of the 1940's--and, one might add, their American counterparts in the 1970's--may be taken as symptomatic of a new development in our culture: the appearance of great masses of people who have simply not been humanized by their education!"<sup>20</sup> His essays serve as a reminder that readers as well as writers require moral alertness in order to detect the implications of works they read.

As a writer, Lewis was moved by didactic as well as aesthetic aims. His works thus demand a twofold response. The purpose of this study is to explore the nature of the struggle between good and evil in Lewis' fiction and to examine the role of violence in resolving this struggle. When possible, the causes and results of such violence will be identified.

The scope of the study will encompass not only warfare--often a prominent feature of Lewis' novels--but other types of violence as well: interpersonal violence, intergroup violence, and the inner conflicts which are related to them. Gould and Iorio raise the question,

Does violence always involve physical force? Can there be psychological violence? When a man screams abusively at his wife, humiliates another person, ridicules a child, is he doing violence even though he does not physically harm another? Is it possible then for institutions to degrade people and would this constitute violence?<sup>21</sup>

In order to take this question into account, a wide rather than a narrow definition of violence will be needed. Louise Gossett has pointed out that

Violence may be either the inner drive toward the use of force or the external action of this force...Psychological violence is relayed in states of mind and feelings. Physical violence is the consequence of force exerted by a character against himself or against others, resulting in extreme acts like arson, rape, mutilation, suicide and murders. (Violence in Recent Southern Fiction, ix, x)

One work which has given outstanding, though brief, consideration to the psychological violence which accompanies physical violence is Simone Weil's commentary on the Iliad, a work which will be quoted a number of times in the following pages and to which a special debt is owed. Because violent intentions as well as violent actions are included in the compass of the present study, both physical and psychological aspects of violence must be considered. This study will also attempt to trace the issues over which Lewis' wars are fought; the victories won through violent methods and the conquests that do not involve violence; and the effects of combat. Depiction of foes; emphasis upon weaponry, the use of martial imagery and the function of verbal violence will

be taken into account. More difficult to measure than the outward strife of battles, the inner strains suffered by characters must be considered; particularly in Till We Have Faces and "After Ten Years." These novels, written in 1956 and 1959 respectively, suggest that toward the end of his life Lewis shifted his attention from the vigorous physical combat of earlier stories to a more reflective appraisal of character motivation and attitude change. These later books in particular illuminate Lewis' concept of the struggle for salvation, a struggle that (he implies) is real; requires courage; but cannot be won through violent means.

A limitation in the scope of works treated must be clarified. This study will consider the seven volumes of the Narnia series for children; the space trilogy for adults (Out of the Silent Planet, Perelandra and That Hideous Strength); Till We Have Faces and an incomplete novel entitled "After Ten Years." The few short stories by Lewis are mentioned only when they clearly relate to the theme of the study. Theological writings are referred to under the same circumstances. The Screwtape Letters has been considered not as a work of fantasy but as a means of illuminating, through the theological views expressed, the conflicts which appear in the novels. Similarly, The Pilgrim's Regress and The Great Divorce have been excluded from this direct consideration in this study because of their subordination of fictional characters and dialogue to philosophical purposes. Though Perelandra includes a protracted philosophical debate, Lewis does not permit this element to overwhelm

the novel as a whole. In Wayne Shurmaker's view, the space novels are fantastic without becoming vision or allegory.<sup>22</sup>

The organization of this study will move from a consideration of the Narnia series, with its relatively clearcut presentation of battle situations, to the space trilogy, which adds ideological considerations to its sphere of conflict and finally to Lewis' later works with their internalizing of conflict. Certain cautions are necessary in approaching a study of this nature. Because Lewis included such an abundance of ideas in his novels as well as in his other writings, these creative works may invite an excessively literal appraisal by readers who find themselves enraged or delighted with his train of thought. But it would be unfortunate to overlook, for example, the acid humor in Lewis' portrait of the violent Rabadash, or the gentler spoofing of the heroic Reepicheep, with "the whole contingent of Talking Mice, armed to the teeth and following a shrill trumpet."<sup>23</sup> Lewis takes evil seriously, yet there is a lack of total solemnity in his presentation of it. When he equates violence with evil, as in the depiction of Rabadash, he gives full rein to his view that evil cannot tolerate ridicule.

Lewis pursues his ideas vigorously in his fiction but many readers have found his images more memorable than the rational structure in which they are embedded. Like stained glass windows in a massive church, these images shine with their own radiance and with that of the light filtering through them. Hence a reader who has reservations about some aspects of Lewis' thought can still

take satisfaction in the glowing colors and lofty aspirations of his world. These things have a mysterious life of their own, like the book of spells read by Lucy or the living tableaux that Orual saw in the sunlit room where she waited for judgment. Like them, Lewis' images are meant to be studied--but in the spirit Eric Voegelin described in a lecture at the University of Florida: a seeking of the positive and joyful through philosophical inquiry, not merely an anxious sifting of ideas.<sup>24</sup> An episode in Prince Caspian may illustrate the dangers of a literal approach to Lewis' novels:

Caspian's uncle, King Miraz, rebukes the boy for his interest in the old days "when all the animals could talk." He tells Caspian sternly that the stories are nonsense, fit only for babies; "At your age you ought to be thinking of battles and adventures, not fairy tales," (Prince Caspian, p. 35). Caspian assures his uncle that there are plenty of battles and adventures in the old stories, referring specifically to the struggle with the White Witch. His reply sends his uncle into a rage and results in the dismissal of the nurse who had told Caspian the stories.

Miraz' attitude toward the unknown is similar to that of Eustace, a character introduced in The Voyage of the Dawn Treader. When a picture of a ship suddenly acquires a life of its own, and a real wave breaks over the children who are looking at it, his reaction is: "I'll smash the rotten thing." (In view of his earlier

expressions of hostility towards his cousins' reminiscences of the land of Narnia, this is hardly a surprising stance for Eustace to adopt.)<sup>25</sup> Eustace's rejection of the image before him shows Lewis' realization that some temperaments view fantasy as a threat to be stamped out--particularly when it seems uncomfortably close to the "real" world.

As fatal as this rejection is the embracing of fantasy for some didactic purpose. Keith Mano's declaration that "The Chronicles of Narnia are surely the most delightful and efficient teaching tools a Christian parent could possess" continues with a warning against too literal an approach to the stories.<sup>26</sup> Any study which approaches creative works primarily from the standpoint of the ideas they embody must avoid praising or condemning them exclusively because of these ideas. As Edward Rosenheim points out, "The true universality of fiction does not lie in the breadth or importance of its themes, but in its unflinching power to delight thoughtful men in all places and at all times."<sup>27</sup>

Finally, it is hoped that this study will avoid the sin of Brother Juniper in The Bridge of San Luis Rey. An ambition to grasp any creative pattern in its entirety--whether to vindicate or condemn the purposes of its creator--is bound to fail. This study aims neither to "explain" the total fabric of violence and theology in Lewis' novels nor to minimize its presence, but to examine those parts of the pattern that seem most immediate "after ten years" of Lewis' absence from our midst.

## NOTES

1. William Luther White, The Image of Man in C. S. Lewis (Nashville: Abingdon, 1969), p. 29. Hereafter referred to in the text as Image of Man.
2. John Wain, "C. S. Lewis," Encounter, XXII (May, 1964), p. 51. Hereafter referred to in the text as "C. S. Lewis."
3. C. S. Lewis, Surprised by Joy; The Shape of My Early Life (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1955), p. 188. Hereafter referred to in the text as Surprised by Joy.
4. Lee Donald Rossi, "The Politics of Fantasy: C. S. Lewis and J. R. R. Tolkien," Abstract #5196-A, Cornell, in Dissertation Abstracts International, March, 1973.
5. C. W. Lewis, "Learning in War-Time," The Weight of Glory and Other Addresses (New York: Macmillan, 1949), p. 46.
6. C. S. Lewis, The Problem of Pain (New York: Macmillan, 1959), p. 111. Hereafter referred to in the text as Problem of Pain.
7. Elbert W. Russell, "Christianity and Militarism," Peace Research Reviews, IV (Oakville, Ont.: Canadian Peace Research Institute, 1971). Hereafter referred to in the text as Christianity and Militarism.
8. C. S. Lewis, The Screwtape Letters and Screwtape Proposes a Toast (New York: Macmillan, 1961), p. 35. Hereafter referred to in the text as Screwtape Letters.
9. Louise Gossett, Violence in Recent Southern Fiction (Durham: Duke University Press, 1965), p. 88. Hereafter referred to in the text as Violence in Recent Southern Fiction.
10. C. S. Lewis, That Hideous Strength; A Modern Fairy-Tale for Grown-Ups (New York: Macmillan, 1946), pp. 258-259. Hereafter referred to in the text as That Hideous Strength.
11. C. S. Lewis, Till We Have Faces; A Myth Retold (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans, 1966), p. 215. Hereafter referred to in the text as Till We Have Faces.

12. Bernard Bergonzi, Heroes' Twilight: A Study of the Literature of the Great War (New York: Coward, 1964), p. 198.

13. Leonard Lutwack, Heroic Fiction: The Epic Tradition and American Novels of the Twentieth Century (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1971), p. 10. Hereafter referred to in the text as Heroic Fiction.

14. Stanley Cooperman, "American War Novels: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow," Yale Review, LXI (Summer, 1972), 528.

15. Frederick J. Hoffman, The Mortal No: Death and the Modern Imagination (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964), p. 14.

16. C. S. Lewis, The Last Battle (New York: Macmillan, 1956), p. 152. Hereafter referred to in the text as Last Battle.

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24. Eric Voegelin, Distinguished Scholar at Stanford's Institute on War, Revolution and Peace, made this point in a lecture delivered May 6, 1974, at the University of Florida.

25. C. S. Lewis, The Voyage of the Dawn Treader (New York: Macmillan, 1952), p. 7. Hereafter referred to in the text as Voyage of the Dawn Treader.

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## CHAPTER II

### THE TROOPS OF ASLAN

Though the Narnia Chronicles offer a convenient starting point for this study because of their clearcut approach to battle a surprising variety of combat situations is included. The seven volumes composing this series for children have gained wide recognition as modern classics of fantasy.<sup>1</sup> Set in the imaginary realm of Narnia, a land ruled by a lion named Aslan, these books interweave Christian values with an insistent battle ethic. An effort to appraise the importance of this battle ethic in the series as a whole must encompass the role of Aslan; the heroic ethic with its possibilities and its pitfalls; the extent to which female characters participate in this traditionally male ethic; the emphasis on weaponry which forms a conspicuous part of this ethic; the issues over which battle is joined and, finally, the opposition between man and nature which constitutes one strand in the struggle between good and evil. From these specific considerations a general understanding of the clash of good and evil in the Narnia Chronicles will be sought.

One must begin with Lewis's own trenchantly expressed attitudes on the subject of writing for children:

Since it is so likely that they will meet cruel enemies, let them at least have heard of brave knights and heroic courage. Otherwise you are making their destiny not brighter but darker...I side impenitently with the human race against the modern reformer. Let there be wicked kings and beheadings, battles and dungeons, giants and dragons, and let villains be soundly killed at the end of the book.<sup>2</sup>

Like Kornei Chukovsky, Lewis believed in the value of fairy tales but his defense is somewhat one-sided: his comments are concerned with the possibility that children will be frightened by violent episodes in these tales rather than with the concern that violent episodes may reinforce a tendency to regard violent action as the most appropriate means of conflict resolution.

In the entire Narnia series, the episode of violence which displays the most obvious theological overtones is the sacrifice of Aslan in The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe.<sup>3</sup> Lewis presents this sacrifice as an act of redemption, not of an entire society, but of an individual whose actions have jeopardized the survival of that society. Elizabeth Parker stresses the cause-and-effect relationships in Lewis' plot:

A clear example of causality occurs when the children in The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe repudiate Edmund for lying about Narnia, and he responds by muttering, 'I'll pay you all out for this, you pack of stuck-up, self-satisfied prigs.' The process whereby he attempts to do so becomes also the process through which the tensions of good and evil are resolved.<sup>4</sup>

Basic to Aslan's suffering is the Witch's insistence that the "debt" of Edmund's treachery be paid: "You know that every traitor belongs

to me as my lawful prey and that for every treachery I have a right to kill." Underlying the Witch's claim is a pre-existing condition, "the magic which the Emperor put into Narnia at the very beginning." When the witch declares that Edmund's life is forfeit, one of the Narnian creatures, a bull with a human head, challenges her to come and take it.

'Fool,' said the Witch with a savage smile,  
'do you really think your master can rob me  
of my rights by mere force?...He knows that  
unless I have blood as the Law says all Narnia  
will be overturned and perish in fire and  
water.' (The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe, p. 139)

By her insistence on her claim for Edmund's life the Witch reveals an affinity with the Calormene god Tash on whose altars human beings are sacrificed (The Last Battle). Presumably, however, the Witch did not invent this condition: it was placed into the scheme of things by the Emperor, the power above Aslan himself. The violence of the Narnian universe is not exclusively a feature of the evil forces symbolized by the Witch. One is reminded of the insistence of the priest in Till We Have Faces that the gods will have sacrifice.

In Narnia, no one questions the premise of the Witch's claims except for one child who suggests that Aslan oppose the laws of deep magic on which the Witch bases her claim. Aslan's incredulous and angry response makes it plain that this premise is an unquestionable one. Either Edmund or a substitute must be sacrificed. By electing to serve as victim, Aslan takes on the heroic role of Narnia's savior (he has already acted as its creator in The Magician's

Nephew and will appear as a source of on-going inspiration in following novels). Like Campbell's archetypal hero,<sup>5</sup> Aslan returns to his society with the power to bestow boons on others. This power is manifested in scenes following his resurrection, when he restores to life those creatures who had been turned to stone by the Medusa-like power of the witch.

In one respect Aslan's victory seems atypical of the victories defined by Campbell's formula: he overcomes his superhuman foe not by slaying his foe in combat, as Ransom does on Perelandra, but by voluntarily suffering death himself. His most decisive role is thus a non-violent one. Following his resurrection, however, Aslan adopts a more militant course of action, leading his subjects into battle, killing the witch and helping to defeat her followers. Once the battle is over he resumes a healing role as he exhorts Lucy to make haste in her task of curing the wounded. In his own leadership Aslan embodies the qualities symbolized by the gifts bestowed upon the children by Father Christmas, whom they meet soon after their entry into Narnia. His gifts include weapons of war and a flask of healing medicine; both war and peace pertain to Aslan's kingship.

Kathryn Lindskoog notes a number of scriptural passages associating the lion with power, with divine wrath, and with Christ (e.g., "the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered...", Rev. 5:5). She believes, however, that Lewis used this symbol less because of Biblical influence than because "the

nature of Narnia demands it." In a world of assorted ordinary animals and privileged Talking Beasts, Aslan appears as a "super-animal."<sup>6</sup> She quotes a statement by Lewis in The Problem of Pain:

If there is a rudimentary Leonine self, to that also God can give a 'body' as it pleases him--a body no longer living by the destruction of the lamb, yet richly Leonine in the sense that it also expresses whatever energy and splendour and exulting power dwelled within the visible lion on this earth...I think the lion, when he has ceased to be dangerous, will still be awful.<sup>7</sup>

When Jill asks Aslan, "Do you eat girls?"

'I have swallowed up girls and boys, women and men, kings and emperors, cities and realms,' said the Lion. It didn't say this as if it were boasting, nor as if it were sorry, nor as if it were angry. It just said it.<sup>8</sup>

But the same lion shed tears over the illness of Digory's mother (The Magician's Nephew).

In view of the dual aspect of Aslan's sovereignty, it is not strange that across Peter's shield "there ramped a red lion" (The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe, p. 104) or that Aslan's face suddenly glowed from a plain shield after Prince Rilian slew the witch (The Silver Chair). Like the Spenserian knight, the Narnian hero bore on his shield "the dear remembrance of his dying Lord." In the first days of Narnia Aslan assumes a need for battle, as evidenced by his challenge to the first king: "If enemies came against the land (for enemies will arise) and there was war, would you be the first in the charge and the last in the retreat?" (The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe, p. 137). A later volume echoes

this view of kingship, as King Lune tells his long-lost son: "This is what it means to be a king: to be first in every desperate attack and last in every desperate retreat, and when there's hunger in the land (as must be now and then in bad years) to wear finer clothes and laugh louder over a scantier meal than any man in your lands."<sup>9</sup> Aslan exemplifies this selfless concept of kingship.

The role of passive suffering, first expressed in his sacrifice, is resumed in a later command that Eustace pierce his paw with a thorn so that the shedding of blood may restore King Caspian to life (Silver Chair, p.212). Along with these powerful examples of non-violent action, however, Aslan performs a number of military functions, and many of his messages to the children reflect a highly militant stance. He advises Peter on details of battle strategy and scolds him for failing to clean his sword after killing a wolf (The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe, pp. 143 and 129); he provides Jill with a riding crop and advises her and Eustace on chastising their schoolmates.<sup>10</sup> Thus Aslan leaves his followers both a pattern of non-violent action and a tradition of violent warfare. The former element accounts for much of the emotional impact of The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe but the latter receives more emphasis in the series as a whole.

Perhaps it is not surprising to find, in children's books written by a scholar of medieval literature, a stress upon chivalric concepts of warfare. Lindskoog maintains that

The medieval ideal of chivalry and knighthood is venerated throughout Lewis' writing. Lewis believes that this old tradition is practical and vital. It taught the great warrior humility and forbearance, and it demanded valor of the urbane and modest man. Lewis feels that if we cannot produce brave and gentle Lancelots we will produce men who are either brutal in peace or cowardly in war. (Lion of Judah, pp. 87-88)

Two characters in the Narnia series, the "gay and martial Mouse" Reepicheep and the Calormene Rabadash, exemplify the strengths and weaknesses of a martial code. Both characters indulge in a considerable amount of violent rhetoric but Reepicheep's perpetual readiness for combat is tempered by his respect for reason (as when he outwits a sea serpent and declines to fight an invisible foe) and by his generosity of spirit (as when he consoles his old opponent Eustace, temporarily transformed into a dragon, with tales of famous men who endured changes in the wheel of fortune). An encounter with Eustace in his pre-dragon state illuminates Reepicheep's outlook. Catching the dignified mouse and swinging him by his tail, Eustace is startled to discover that he has been jabbed in the hand by Reepicheep's sword.

'Why do you not draw your own sword, poltroon!' cheeped the Mouse. 'Draw and fight or I'll beat you black and blue with the flat.' 'I haven't got one,' said Eustace. 'I'm a pacifist. I don't believe in fighting.'

Reepicheep promptly proceeds to give him a drubbing with his sword. "Eustace (of course) was at a school where they didn't have corporal punishment, so the sensation was a complete novelty," (Voyage of the Dawn Treader, pp. 27-28). At last, when he realizes that all his

companions take quite seriously the possibility of a duel, Eustace apologizes to Reepicheep.

Personal honor is paramount in Reepicheep's thinking. When he and Lucy play chess on board ship, he wins except when he is

thinking of a real battle and making his knight do what he would certainly have done in its place. For his mind was full of forlorn hopes, death or glory charges, and last stands. (Voyage of the Dawn Treader, pp. 55-56)

Reepicheep fails to comprehend why Caspian orders the ship turned back from a dense fog of darkness in which nightmares assume palpable form. When he is told that "there are some things no man can face," Reepicheep replies, "It is, then, my good fortune not to be a man," (Voyage of the Dawn Treader, p. 157). Flight from perils, real or psychic, has no meaning for the mouse. The humans on board, however, refuse battles that are beyond their limitations. Only with the help of Aslan, who has assumed the form of an albatross, do they manage to make their way out of the fog. Whether because of bravery or because of lack of imagination, the mouse is not subject to the reservations that plague the humans in the party. When others speculate on the identity of certain mysterious objects on an island, Reepicheep declares that the way to find out is to go right in among them. True to this philosophy, he expresses his trust in a beautiful lady they meet by drinking her health in wine which his friends fear is enchanted. The wine is not enchanted; the Narnian exiles whom Caspian is searching for have fallen into an enchanted sleep for other reasons. On learning that their spell

will be broken only when a ship sails to the Utter East and leaves one crew member behind, Reepicheep eagerly volunteers to be the castaway. As they journey on, Lucy is pleasantly hypnotized by glimpses of the sea people in the waters below the ship but Reepicheep plunges into the water to respond to their challenge.

Without his readiness for action, Reepicheep's mentality would be liable to charges of boastfulness and swagger. At times his intense feeling for his own dignity does arouse the amusement of others. When he asks to be allowed to serve as a Marshal of the Lists in the single combat between Peter and Miraz, a giant finds this humorous. Reepicheep's response is predictable: "If anyone wishes to make me the subject of his wit, I am very much at his service--with my sword--whenever he has leisure," (Prince Caspian, p. 182). If outsiders sometimes find Reepicheep ridiculous, his own group does not. The loyalty of his followers appears when Reepicheep loses his tail in a battle. The rest of the mice are instantly ready to cut off their own tails if his cannot be restored: "We will not bear the shame of wearing an honour which is denied to the High Mouse," (Prince Caspian, p. 187). Touched by their steadfastness, Aslan restores the missing tail.

In striking contrast to Reepicheep is Rabadash, a Calormene prince whose zest for battle is unchecked by considerations of honor. Treachery and ruthlessness characterize his military adventure into Archenland. The ruler of the country he has invaded condemns Rabadash's behavior in these words:

By attacking our castle of Anvard in time of peace without defiance sent, you have proved yourself no knight, but a traitor, and one rather to be whipped by the hangman than suffered to cross swords with any person of honor. (Horse and His Boy, p. 187)

Whereas the mouse is permitted at last to journey to the Utter East, Rabadash finds himself forced into a narrower orbit than before. If he ventures more than ten miles from his capital city, he will return permanently to the donkey shape which Aslan has imposed on him as a temporary punishment.

As he enters upon the last stage of his journey toward Aslan's country, Reepicheep voluntarily casts away his sword: "He took off his sword ('I shall need it no more,' he said) and then flung it far away across the lilled sea," (Voyage of the Dawn Treader, p. 213). Rabadash, on the other hand, is coerced into relinquishing his aggressive designs on other nations. Implied in this contrast is the suggestion that adherence to a code of chivalric warfare--in spirit, not merely in letter--may lead one to a state where weapons are no longer required; violation of it will make one a menace to others or else an object of contempt, committed to peace for the sake of expedience rather than principle.

Bravery tempered by mercy is the code Lewis presents in the Narnia stories. Digory despises in a dangerous quest for knowledge: his verbal violence, "By gum, don't I just wish I was big enough to punch your head!"<sup>11</sup> is a response to the violence implicit in Andrew's decision to send the children, willy-nilly, to explore a world he is too cowardly to enter himself.

Throughout the series Lewis' child characters are called upon to be heroes and heroines. Aslan urges Peter to kill the wolf that threatens the life of his sister. When Peter has performed this feat, Aslan knights him. In Prince Caspian, Peter challenges the usurper Miraz to single combat.

'I say,' said Edmund as they walked away,  
'I suppose it is all right. I mean, I  
suppose you can beat him!'  
'That's what I'm fighting him to find out,'  
said Peter. (Prince Caspian, p. 182)

This combat is not, however, merely a test of skill between two contenders; it is undertaken with the aim of avoiding more general bloodshed. This hope is doomed when one of Miraz' own followers stabs him in the back and accuses Peter of the murder. Lewis describes the following melee with gusto:

Peter swung to face Sopepian, slashed his legs from under him and, with the back-cut of the same stroke, walloped off his head. (Prince Caspian, pp. 189-90)

A comparable zest for battle emerges in such descriptions of warfare as the following: "King Edmund is dealing marvelous strokes. He's just slashed Corradin's head off," (Horse and His Boy, p. 184).

"The Unicorn was tossing men as you'd toss hay with a fork."

The calling to be a hero or heroine sometimes acquires an aura of bloodthirstiness. At other times it simply reflects the sense of comradeship or of excitement which the presence of danger can evoke. When the Dawn Treader crew prepares to face the dragon, not realizing it is Eustace they will meet, they feel a heightened love for one another: "Everyone felt fonder of everyone else than

at ordinary times," (Voyage of the Dawn Treader, p. 79). Though the last battle in Narnia adds ideological confusion to the physical challenge that must be met, it is not devoid of happier moments:

Even Tirian's heart grew lighter as he walked ahead humming an old Narnian marching song which had the refrain

Ho, rumble, rumble, rumble, rumble,  
Rumble drum belaboured. (Last Battle, p. 87)

Despite the enjoyment that colors some of the battle scenes, Lewis limits the glorification of war. Though the noise of Aslan's army is compared to the noise of an English fox-hunt ("only better because every now and then with the music of the hounds was mixed the roar of the other lion and sometimes and far deeper and more awful roar of Aslan himself"), a more sombre note is struck when the battlefield is at hand. Lucy hears

another noise—a quite different one, which gave her a queer feeling inside. It was a noise of shouts and shrieks and of the clashing of metal against metal. (Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe, p. 172)

In the battle described in The Horse and His Boy, Shasta is almost overwhelmed by his fear:

All swords out now, all shields up to the nose, all prayers said, all teeth clenched. Shasta was dreadfully frightened. But it suddenly came into his head, 'If you funk this, you'll funk every battle all your life. Now or never.' (Horse and His Boy, p. 179)

Even when the zest for battle shades into a more sober mood, certain realities of war are kept in the background if they are mentioned at all. Lucy must heal the wounded after the battle (Lion, the

Witch and the Wardrobe, p. 177) and the bodies of the creatures that assailed Caspian at Aslan's How must be disposed of (Prince Caspian, p. 145), but Lewis does not dwell on these matters.

Once the battles are over, treatment of defeated enemies is chivalric. "The Telmarine soldiers, firmly but without taunts or blows, were taken across the ford and all put under lock and key in the town of Beruna and given beef and beer," (Prince Caspian, p. 204). Aslan encourages King Lune to be merciful to Rabadash, little though he deserves it. The king himself is disinclined toward vengeance: "To have cut his throat in the battle would have eased my heart mightily: but this is a different thing," (Horse and His Boy, p. 206). Throughout the series, Lewis draws a sharp distinction between violence meted out in battle and violence that erupts outside the setting of formal warfare.

In some situations violence is presented as heroic; in others it is not. This is a boundary Lewis tries to keep quite clear. When Digory injures Polly's wrist in his determination to remain in Charn and strike the mysterious bell, his violent action requires forgiveness. Aslan asks Polly specifically whether she forgives the boy "for the violence he did you in the desolate palace of accursed Charn," (Magician's Nephew, p. 136) but in some situations, Lewis suggests, violence has beneficial consequences. In such a light is presented the exploit of Corin Thunderfist against the Lapsed Bear of Stormness,

which was really a Talking Bear but had gone back to Wild Bear habits. Corin climbed up to its lair on the Narnian side of Stormness one winter day when the snow was on the hills and boxed it without a timekeeper for 33 rounds. And at the end it couldn't see out of its eyes and became a reformed character. (Horse and His Boy, p. 216)

Other instances of violent punishment occur in The Horse and His Boy:

Shasta is scratched by a cat for having thrown rocks at a stray cat and Aravis is scratched by a lion so that she may realize what a slave girl suffered when she was beaten as a result of Aravis' actions. (In both these instances, the animal meting out the punishment is later identified with Aslan.) A threat of force is levied by Caspian when Reepicheep catches Eustace trying to obtain more than his fair share of water during the voyage:

I had to apologize or the dangerous little brute would have been at me with his sword, and the Caspian showed up in his true colours as a brutal tyrant and said out loud for everyone to hear that anyone found 'stealing' water in future would 'get two dozen.' I didn't know what this meant till Edmund explained it to me. It comes in the sort of books those Pevensie kids read. (Voyage of the Dawn Treader, p. 61)

In The Last Battle there is an exception to the invoking of disciplinary violence. When Jill rescues the donkey Puzzle on her own initiative, Eustace's praise for her success is countered by Tirian's brusque comment that, if she were a boy, she would have been whipped for disobedience. This episode, indicating that female characters are not subject to the harsher penalties of the Narnian social code, raises the question of the extent to which female characters participate in the traditionally male heroic ethic so important to these books.

Implicit in their privileged status is the fact that the girls do not participate as fully in violent action as do the male characters. As Joan Lloyd states, "The girls in Narnia are more sensitive to violence and less competitive than their male counterparts."<sup>13</sup> In The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe, Aslan makes it clear that *in the words of Father Christmas* he does not intend for Susan and Lucy to take part in the battle: "Battles are ugly when women fight," (Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe, p. 88). When Eustace and Rilian slay the witch-serpent in The Silver Chair, Jill suffers from faintness. But the same Jill tells Eustace that "I'd rather be killed fighting for Narnia than grow old and stupid at home and perhaps go about in a bathchair and then die in the end just the same," (Last Battle, p. 96).

There is some ambivalence about the extent to which female characters identify with violent scenes. King Tirian includes both Jill and Eustace in his exhortation to warrior-like conduct during the last battle:

If you must weep sweet heart (this to Jill)  
turn your face aside and see you wet not your  
bowstring. And peace, Eustace. Do not scold,  
like a kitchen-girl. No warrior scolds.  
Courteous words or else hard knocks are his  
only language. (Last Battle, p. 121)

Jill takes these words to heart and later in the story, as their reverses continue and Eustace is overpowered by the Calormenes, takes care to protect her bowstring.

Incidents in Prince Caspian suggest that the boys respond to martial circumstances differently from the girls. A dwarf rescued by Susan's archery is skeptical of the children's ability

to help Prince Caspian's cause in actual battle, so the children undertake to prove themselves through a demonstration of their skill in martial arts. Trounced by Edmund at swordsmanship, the dwarf is given another chance in an archery contest with Susan, who

was not enjoying her match half so much as Edmund had enjoyed his; not because she had any doubt about hitting the apple but because Susan was so tenderhearted that she almost hated to beat someone who had been beaten already. (Prince Caspian, p. 102)

In a later volume, The Horse and His Boy, Susan emerges as a non-participant in warfare, in contrast with her sister Lucy. When the army has mustered, Shasta inquires, "Where is the Queen Susan?"

'At Cair Paravel,' said Corin. 'She's not like Lucy, you know, who's as good as a man, or at any rate as good as a boy. Queen Susan is more like an ordinary grown-up lady. She doesn't ride to the wars, though she is an excellent archer.'  
(Horse and His Boy, p. 176)

This comment may suggest a simple contrast between the temperaments of Susan and Lucy, but a second incident in Prince Caspian indicates a possible sex-role typing on the question of interest in warfare. When Edmund recognizes the site where the children had fought the Battle of Beruna in a former adventure,

this cheered the boys more than anything. You can't help feeling stronger when you look at a place where you won a glorious victory, not to mention a kingdom, hundreds of years ago. Peter and Edmund were soon so busy talking about the battle that they forgot their sore feet and the heavy drag of their mail shirts on their shoulders. (Prince Caspian, p. 117)

There is no indication that this sight affects the girls as it does the boys, or that they even take part in the conversation.

In The Voyage of the Dawn Treader, Lucy undergoes a type of testing unlike the combats experienced by male characters in the stories, a testing that may throw light on the real link which Lewis perceives between women and battle. She is singled out to read a spell which will remove a curse of invisibility from inhabitants of an island. As Lucy reads the book of enchantments she comes across a spell for achieving superhuman beauty, and has a vision of herself as she might appear:

She saw herself throned on high at a great tournament in Calormen and all the kings of the world fought because of her beauty. After that it turned from tournaments to real wars, and all Narnia and Archenland, Telmar and Calormen, Galma and Terebinthia, were laid waste with the fury of the kings and dukes and great lords who fought for her favour. (Voyage of the Dawn Treader, p. 130)

Then the vision moves closer to home as Lucy imagines the jealousy of Susan, who has always been considered the beauty of the family. One is reminded at this point that the destruction of Charn resulted from rivalry between two sisters; that this destructive impulse has the power of spanning worlds is indicated in the witch's utterance, upon arriving in London: "Tomorrow I will begin the conquest of the world" (Magician's Nephew, p. 72).

Lucy, the child who often is keenest in understanding Aslan's will, comes perilously close to the mentality of the White Witch when tempted by desire for beauty and the power that derives from it. She is indeed about to say the spell when a momentary glimpse of Aslan deters her, and she returns to her original task:

removing the spell of invisibility from others. An implication of this testing is that others become truly visible only to the extent that one is not preoccupied with one's own personal appearance--a theme which Lewis explored sans overtones of violence in a short story, "The Shoddy Lands."<sup>14</sup>

It is significant that Lucy's daydream casts her not as a champion of battles but as an arbiter or object of battle. Lewis stresses the moral pitfalls accompanying the equation of feminine power with beauty,<sup>15</sup> but he fails to point to other, more laudable sources of power. By ruling out both the attraction of glamor and the possibility of leadership in battle, Lewis appears to leave no way open for a full realization of identity by his female characters. This dilemma is highlighted by the situation of Aravis, the most enterprising female character in the Narnia stories. Having fled home to escape an arranged match, Aravis possesses an independent, even arrogant personality; she is critical of her friend's preoccupation with clothing and social occasions. As it happens, Aravis overhears a conversation which reveals Rabadash's plan to invade Archenland. Having obtained this knowledge, she is not the one who acts upon it and gains recognition from society. The boy Shasta must race onward to warn King Lune; Aravis lacks the physical stamina to do so (she has just been punished by the lion for her treatment of the slave girl, whereas Shasta's courage in facing the lion has increased his incentive for continuing his arduous task). After arriving in Archenland and participating

in the battle against the invaders, Shasta learns that he has been fighting for a kingdom that will one day be his own. It also becomes Aravis' kingdom, but her role is dependent upon the bounty of Shasta's family, which takes her in after her flight from Calormen, and upon Shasta himself, who eventually marries her. Thus the career of Aravis demonstrates sharp limits to the autonomous action of even the most enterprising female character--limits determined only in part by the moral inadequacies of these characters.

Within these limits, the female characters share in the dangers and rewards of the Narnian world. Outside these limits lies the realm of the White Witch, a character representing Lewis' view of evil, in terms suited to children's stories. The origin of the Witch's evil qualities is not accounted for but she resembles the villain of Perelandra in that she attempts to wield forbidden power. Disregarding the injunctions of Aslan, she steals magic fruit and eats it. The sickening effect of the apple derives not from the fruit itself but from her desperate and unscrupulous striving for it. She goes after it in the same way she has pursued other goals--without regard for purposes outside her own.

Her effect is deadly. She crumbles a huge door by magical means and states, "This is what happens to things, and to people, who stand in my way" (Magician's Nephew, p. 60). When she parleys with Aslan, the three children who had not yet seen her "felt shudders running down their backs at the sight of her face. . . . Though it was bright summer everyone felt suddenly cold" (Lion,

The Witch or the Wardrobe, p. 137). But the witch's effect on the dwarfs is especially baneful in that they are not wholly repelled by her. In Prince Caspian the dwarf Nikabrik declares,

'I'll believe in anyone or anything . . . that'll batter these cursed Telmarine barbarians to pieces or drive them out of Narnia. Aslan or the White Witch, do you understand?'

'Silence, silence,' said Trufflehunter. 'You do not know what you are saying. She was a worse enemy than Miraz and all his race.'

'Not to dwarfs, she wasn't,' said Nikabrik. (Prince Caspian, p. 73)

His words foreshadow the treachery of the dwarfs in The Last Battle. The immediate effects of Nikabrik's would-be alliance with the witch's kind is his own death at the hands of Caspian and his friends. (One of the marks of Caspian's leadership is his insistence on selecting his own allies.) The long-term implications of the mentality expressed by Nikabrik appear in the behavior of the dwarfs who slaughter the adherents of both sides in The Last Battle. Thus the words of the Wer-Wolf, one of the witch's party in Prince Caspian, assume dreadful significance: "I can drink a river of blood and not burst. Show me your enemies" (Prince Caspian, p. 160)

The Voyage of the Dawn Treader contains a reference to the deadly power of the witch. A mysterious lady reveals that three Narnian lords fell into an enchanted sleep after a quarrel during which one of them snatched up a stone knife, the knife used by the Witch to slay Aslan centuries before. To reverse this spell someone must be left at the world's very end. The enchantment

begins with the seizing of a weapon; it ends with the discarding of a weapon as Reepicheep casts his sword into the sea. According to Lindskoog, "This Arthurian symbolism ratifies him as the ideal of Christian valor" (Lion of Judah, p. 106). In Reepicheep's action, the power of the witch is overcome without the use of weaponry. This fact reverses the expectations created by the words of the Badger, who had pointed out the witch's giant-and-jinn-ancestry with the warning:

When you meet anything that is going to be human and isn't yet, or used to be human once and isn't now, or ought to be human and isn't, you keep your eyes on it and feel for your hatchet. (Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe, p. 78)

Obviously Reepicheep has passed to a stage beyond the practical realism expressed in the Beaver's counsel. Prince Rilian, however, adheres to the Beaver's philosophy when he slays the witch-serpent, a successor of the White Witch. When Rilian is under her enchantment, he believes her promise that he will be freed "once she has made me king of a land in the Overworld and set its crown upon my head." He anticipates the day when "with her to guide me and a thousand Earthmen at my back I shall ride forth in arms, fall suddenly on our enemies, slay their chief men, cast down their strong places, and doubtless be crowned king within four and twenty hours." It is Rabadash's dream all over again. When Eustace remarks to Rilian that "It's a bit rough luck on them, isn't it?" Rilian is briefly troubled, but insists on finding humor in the situation. "I don't think it's funny at all. I think you'll be a wicked tyrant," are Jill's words on the subject (Silver Chain, pp. 137-38).

After Rilian overcomes his enchantment he faces the witch, who assumes the forms of a snake and is killed by him and Eustace.

And now they all saw what it meant: how a wicked Witch (doubtless the same kind as that White Witch who had brought the Great Winter on Narnia long ago) had contrived the whole thing, first killing Rilian's mother and enchanting Rilian himself . . . and how he had never dreamed that the country of which she would make him king (king in name but really her slave) was his own country. (Silver Chair, p. 200)

Like Shasta, Rilian finds through violence the key to his identity. Lewis goes on to point a moral that his child readers can easily comprehend:

'And the lesson of it all is, your highness,' said the eldest Dwarf, 'that these Northern Witches always mean the same thing, but in every age they have a different plan for getting it.' (Silver Chair, p. 200)

In this precarious world, stability is found through courage and comradeship. The presentation of foes is not devoid of complexity. Dwarfs who are expected to be friendly may reveal themselves as foes; the Calormene Emeth, serving his people's ominous god with integrity and courage, wins the acceptance of Aslan. The witch embodies absolute, but not invincible, evil. Her power is overcome-- at times through violent action, at times through redemptive, non-violent suffering. As Lindskoog points out, Lewis rejects dualism, which he defines as

the belief that there are two equal and independent powers at the back of everything, one of them good and the other bad, and that this universe is the 16 battlefield in which they fight out an endless war.

Throughout the Narnia stories Lewis insists on the possibility of happy endings, on the idea that good can overcome evil; however, an impression might still remain that Narnia is a battlefield of endless war. The oblivion surrounding the names of the peaceful kings and the frequency of violent encounters testify to the continuing turbulence of the Narnia celebrated by Lewis. Warfare and weaponry are often crucial to establishing a sense of identity in these stories. As Lindskoog points out in connection with Prince Caspian and The Silver Chair, "The idea of invasions and battles is basic to these books" (Lion of Judah, p. 40). Her comment might be extended to include the other volumes of the series. The very name of the children who take part in several of the adventures, Pevensie, is similar to the modern name of the site of the Battle of Hastings (Pevensey).

The gifts of Father Christmas indicate the warlike nature of the society these children enter. As Parker points out:

it is the gifts he brings that foretell the future conflict. These gifts--a sword, a dagger, a flask of magical medicine, a bow and a quiver of arrows--clearly predict a battle. (Teaching the Reading of Fiction, p. 33)

The significance of his armor emerges when Prince Caspian questions a Centaur about the idea of doing battle against the usurper:

'Do you mean a real war to drive Miraz out of Narnia?' asked Caspian.  
'What else?' said the Centaur. 'Why else does Your Majesty go clad in mail and girt with sword?'  
(Prince Caspian, p. 74)

On various occasions, Lewis draws attention to the importance of the use and care of weapons. Susan, who does not relish beating Trumpkin at the archery match, is nevertheless sensitive to the possibility that the others may think she missed Trumpkin's enemies by mistake. "'I wan't shooting to kill, you know,' said Susan, who would not have liked anyone to think she could miss at such short range" (Prince Caspian, p. 31). Aslan rebukes Peter for failing to clean his sword after killing the wolf (Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe); Tirian, who scolds Eustace for replacing his sword uncleaned after killing the Calormene soldier, is careful to wipe his own sword on the only dry part of his cloak after crossing a river (Last Battle); Caspian rebukes the captain of the guard of an island garrison for the poor condition of his men's armor (Voyage of the Dawn Treader). When the travelers encounter invisible people, Reepicheep thinks at once of a basic touchstone of reality: "I wonder . . . do they become visible when you drive a sword into them?" (Voyage of the Dawn Treader, p. 114).

Two instances in Prince Caspian reveal the extent to which weapons are crucial to a sense of identity. Finding the Cair Paravel treasure house, the children look for armor and weapons. Peter locates the sword with which Aslan had knighted him in The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe:

'It is my sword Rhindon,' he said. 'With it I killed the Wolf.' There was a new tone in his voice, and the others all felt that he was really Peter the High King again. (Prince Caspian, p. 24)

Similarly, in his swordplay with the dwarf, Edmund felt that "he was King Edmund once more" (Prince Caspian, p. 100).

Despite the emphasis on weaponry that pervades these stories, one weapon is forbidden: the weapon made use of in the destruction of Charn. The White Witch describes in this way the escalation of this war with her sister:

'Even after the war had begun, there was a solemn promise that neither side would use Magic. But when she broke her promise, what could I do?' (Magician's Nephew, p. 62)

She decides to invoke the secret of the Deplorable Word which, if spoken with proper ceremonies, destroys all living things except the one who speaks it. Hence, the statues the children discover in the palace of Charn--a foreshadowing of the statues that will appear in the courtyard of the witch's palace in Narnia. Aslan warns the children concerning the fate of Charn:

Let the race of Adam and Eve take warning. . . .  
It is not certain that one of your race will not find out a secret as evil as the Deplorable Word and use it to destroy all living things.<sup>17</sup> (Magician's Nephew, pp. 175-76)

Reassurance, however, is drawn from the "different incantation" of the Emperor's Magic, which caused death itself to work backwards when a willing victim was sacrificed (Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe, p. 159). The cracking of the Table where this sacrifice took place indicates that the violence of the Witch has been overcome, her spell has been broken. This theme pervades the Narnia Chronicles: the statues are restored to life; Prince Caspian returns from the dead; Tirian experiences a reunion in the garden of the true Narnia.

It was his own father, the good King Erlian; but not as Tirian had seen him last when they brought him home pale and wounded from his fight with the giant, nor even as Tirian remembered him in his later years when he was a grey-headed warrior. This was his father young and merry as he could just remember him from very early days. (Last Battle, p. 177)

Places as well as people are restored. The very house where the children spent the war years is seen to be intact. When Edmund comments that he thought the house had been destroyed, a faun tells him that in the real England, as in the real Narnia, no good thing is destroyed. The Last Battle ends with an idyllic scene suggesting that nothing real is ever lost. This scene will linger in the reader's mind, along with other pictures: Eustace painfully shedding his dragon armor so that he can be born into a more fully human state; Reepicheep casting away his sword on the edge of Aslan's country; Aslan breathing on the stone giant's feet with the promise, "Once the feet are put right, all the rest of him will follow."

The violence of the Narnia stories pales into insignificance alongside the power of these images. Despite the emphasis on weaponry and battles, Lewis infuses his stories with a sense of vitality and joy. It is also important to recall that the violence of Narnia is defensive rather than aggressive in nature. The kingdom undertakes no wars of conquest, nor does it try to extend its dominion in Aslan's name. An island realm which becomes attached to Narnia does so voluntarily, agreeing to offer tribute in gratitude for being rid of a dragon. Years after this

tribute has lapsed, Caspian exerts force to restore the former relationship in an episode which Lindscoog finds reminiscent of Christ's driving of the money-changers from the temple.

War is waged by Narnians for a number of reasons: in defense of its neighbor, Archenland (Horse and His Boy); to achieve liberation from the rule of the White Witch (Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe); to overthrow a murderous usurper (Prince Caspian); to stave off the enemies of Narnia for as long as possible (Last Battle). Prince Rilian uses force to eliminate the witch who has planned an invasion of Narnia (Silver Chair); Prince Caspian literally unseats a governor who refuses to outlaw the slave trade (Voyage of the Dawn Treader); and the volume containing the least violence emphasizes the dangers implicit in the destruction of Charn (Magician's Nephew). This summary makes it clear that important issues in Narnia are often resolved through violent means, but that the protagonists do not initiate the chain of violent action.

Violence is used by the Pevensie children to consolidate their rule in Narnia:

At first much of their time was spent in seeking out the remnants of the White Witch's army and destroying them . . . but in the end all of that foul brood was stamped out. . . . And they drove back the fierce giants . . . when these ventured across the border. And they entered into friendship and alliance with countries beyond the sea and paid them visits of state and received visits of state from them. (Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe, p. 180)

The concluding section of the above quotation leaves the impression that peaceful times are ahead, but The Horse and His Boy, set during the reign of the Pevensie children, makes it clear that state visits can cloak hostile intentions. Prince Rabadash's suit for Queen Susan's hand is sincere, but he also desires to swallow up both Narnia and Archenland. On his own visit to Narnia he manages to dissemble his true purposes; but a return visit paid by Susan and Edmund to Calormen reveals Rabadash's tyrannical nature. This novel, perhaps the most politically astute of Lewis' tales for children, reveals Rabadash as the product of a land which exemplifies the violence of the status quo in its daily life. This aspect of his country is brought home to the boy Shasta not only in the slap he receives from a soldier but even in his observation of traffic patterns in the city of Tashbaan: "in Tashbaan there is only one traffic regulation, which is that everyone who is less important has to get out of the way for everyone who is more important; unless you want a cut from a whip or a punch from the butt end of a spear" (Horse and His Boy, p. 80).

Shasta is not alone in recognizing this aspect of Calormene society. Susan, as a royal guest, is confronted by the probability that Rabadash will make her his bride by force if she refuses his suit. Susan's peril not only echoes the situation facing Aravis, that of marriage arranged for reasons of policy rather than because of personal inclination, but it also gives a further insight into a culture where both individual life and social institutions are dominated by considerations of power.

Some characters in the Narnia stories regard not only the world of men but also the world of nature as an arena for their ambitions. Uncle Andrew is depicted as a man who looks upon the new world of Narnia with the eye of a less-than-scrupulous real estate developer. He recoils from its teeming animal life:

"He had never liked animals at the best of times, being usually rather afraid of them; and of course years of doing cruel experiments on animals had made him hate and fear them far more" (Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe, p. 126). Andrew thinks that Aslan's death is a necessary preliminary to the development of Narnia: "The first thing is to get that brute shot." "You're just like the witch," said Polly. "All you think of is killing things" (Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe, p. 109). The dwarf who drives the Witch's sleigh is cruel to the reindeer who pull it because he regards them merely as a source of power. In contrast to the attitudes of the Witch and her followers is the charge given by Aslan to Narnia's first rulers: "You shall rule and name all these creatures, and do justice among them, and protect them from their enemies" (Magician's Nephew, p. 123). Tirian, the last ruler of Narnia, attempts to do just that when he finds a Talking Horse of Narnia being abused by foreign merchants who are engaged in felling the trees of the sacred wood. Tirian's violent intervention, however, fails to rectify the situation.

The enmity between man and nature is described in violent terms. We are told that in the days when Miraz held unlawful

sway in Narnia, the Telmarines--heirs of the conquerors who "silenced the beasts and the trees and the fountains, and who killed and drove away the dwarfs and fauns"--have a dread of the woods (Prince Caspian, p. 47). Like Uncle Andrew, they fear what they have wronged: "Because they have quarreled with the trees they are afraid of the woods" (Prince Caspian, p. 51). Significantly the Witch cannot remember the peaceful Wood between the Worlds where she and the children stop en route to earth from Charn (Magician's Nephew, p. 73).<sup>18</sup>

At length, the rebellion against the usurper encompasses the world of nature as well as the world of men. Lewis outdoes the natural upheavals described in That Hideous Strength; like his friend Tolkien, author of The Lord of the Rings, he utilizes the idea of trees which are not fixed to one spot: trees which might dance, or fight.

Soon neither their cries nor the sound of weapons could be heard any more, for both were drowned in the ocean-like roar of the Awakened Trees as they plunged through the ranks of Peter's army, and then on, in pursuit of the Telmarines.

As Peter's troops advance, a bridge is destroyed by a mysterious outbreak of vegetation; a dull classroom is invaded by green, growing things; when a man is seen beating a boy,

The stick burst into flower in the man's hand. He tried to drop it, but it stuck to his hand. His arm became a branch, his body the trunk of a tree, his feet took root. The boy, who had been crying a moment before, burst out laughing and joined them. (Prince Caspian, pp. 190-91)

(Like Maurice Druon's Tistou of the Green Thumbs, this novel shows the triumph of vegetation over implements of destruction.) Not only do humans join the victorious army; "at every farm animals came out to join them" (Prince Caspian, p. 195). All of nature responds to Aslan's challenge by transforming the world of ordinary life. The miracle of Cana is re-enacted with overtones of healing. When a dying woman is revived by Aslan, the god Bacchus dips a pitcher into her cottage well and draws it back up filled with wine. As Miraz' army fling down their swords, this old woman rushes to Caspian and they embrace. She is the old nurse whose stories had foreshadowed the reality of the Narnia he has helped bring back to life.

The description of natural forces contributing to Caspian's victory recalls the episode in The Magician's Nephew when the White Witch hurls an iron bar at Aslan; it takes root and grows into a lamp-post whose light becomes a landmark in the country. Powerful through the Witch may be, the world of nature is stronger than she. With Aslan's coming, in The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe, her long winter is destroyed by spring.

But nature seems helpless in The Last Battle. Dryads are slain as the Calormenes cut down their trees. Caspian had succeeded against great odds in harmonizing the world of the goal-oriented Telmarines with the world of natural forces represented by Old Narnia. His successor Tirian, however, is not able to muster sufficient support to overcome his foes. Nature,

symbolized by the sacred trees, can no longer defend itself against the depredations of the greedy. Tirian's effort to protect his subjects, the trees and animals of Narnia, meets with defeat in part because his righteous indignation leads him to adopt violent measures similar to those of his foe. His declarations, "I will not leave one of them alive" (Last Battle, p. 17), indicates his violent response to the danger facing his kingdom. He and his companion, the delicate but war-like Unicorn, are appalled by the violence being done to the natural environment of Narnia. As they gaze on the devastation these two friends, who had saved each other's life in earlier wars, "both looked more frightened than they had ever been in any battle" (Last Battle, p. 20).

Tirian's desire to wipe out the foe meets an unexpected check in the form of his own scruples. He views himself as culpable: not for having killed two Telmarines but for the manner in which he did it.

To leap on them unawares--without defying them--while they were unarmed--faugh! We are two murderers, Jewel. I am dishonoured forever. (Last Battle, p. 24)

Unlike the treacherous Rabadash, Tirian realizes bitterly his failure to live up to accepted codes of warfare. He decides to give himself up to the Calormenes for judgment by Aslan, not realizing that the "Aslan" they claim as their authority for action is an imposter.

The abuses and deceit Tirian observes in the Calormene camps focus his attention once more on the magnitude of the opposing power; his own wrong-doing fades into the background of his consciousness. Accusing the ape of lying to the Narnians, Tirian is prevented from speaking further: "Two Calormenes struck him in the mouth with all their force, and a third, from behind, kicked his feet from under him" (Last Battle, p. 33). Tirian is fighting a totalitarian rule like that of the White Witch and her secret police, though it is less well organized. Some of his animal subjects aid Tirian by bringing him food and drink, but they are afraid to release him because they have been convinced that Aslan supports the Calormenes' purposes. Their comments to Tirian on this point reveal an ideological confusion not encountered in the earlier struggles in Narnia.

The children from earth can free Tirian and help him slay the foe once he is free, but they cannot dissipate the cloud of confusion that prevents his subjects from uniting. In some cases, it is not confusion but a narrow self-interest that forms an obstacle to unity. The defection of the dwarfs provides a striking example: though Tirian liberates them from probable death in the salt mines they refuse to join forces with him; later, when the tide of battle appears to be turning in his favor, they shoot down the loyal Talking Horses who are coming to his aid.

Tirian's is the only losing battle for protagonists in the Narnia series; not only because of the defection of the dwarfs, who refuse to place their faith beyond their own group, but because of the times themselves. Aslan makes it clear that the time has come for Narnia to draw to its end. This fact, however, does not exempt Tirian and his companions from waging war to the very limit of their resources. Some values are worth defending, Lewis suggests, without counting the cost or considering the fruits of action.

## NOTES

1. The final volume of the series, The Last Battle, was awarded the Carnegie Medal in 1965.
2. C. S. Lewis, "On Three Ways of Writing for Children," Of Other Worlds; Essays and Stories, ed. by Walter Hooper (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1966), p. 31.
3. Kornei Chukovsky, "The Battle for the Fairy Tale: Three Stages," Children's Literature: Views and Reviews, ed. by Virginia Haviland (New York: Scott, Foresman, 1973).
4. Elizabeth Ann Parker, Teaching the Reading of Fiction: A Manual for Elementary School Teachers (New York: Teachers College Press, 1969), p. 31.
5. Joseph Campbell, The Hero With a Thousand Faces (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1949), p. 30. Hereafter referred to in the text as The Hero With a Thousand Faces.
6. Kathryn Lindskoog, The Lion of Judah in Never-Never Land (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans, 1973), pp. 50-51.
7. C.S. Lewis, The Problem of Pain (New York: Macmillan, 1948), pp. 130-31.
8. C. S. Lewis, The Silver Chair (New York: Macmillan, 1953), p. 17. Hereafter referred to in the text as Silver Chair.
9. C. S. Lewis, The Horse and His Boy (New York: Macmillan, 1954), p. 215. Hereafter referred to in the text as Horse and His Boy.
10. Aslan himself participates in this chastisement.
11. C. S. Lewis, The Magician's Nephew (London: Bodley Head, 1955), p. 30. Hereafter referred to in text as Magician's Nephew.
12. A distancing of the violence results from the fact that it is reported at second-hand.

13. Joan Lloyd, "Transcendent Sexuality as C. S. Lewis Saw It," Christianity Today, XVIII (Nov. 9, 1973), 10. Hereafter referred to in the text as "Transcendent Sexuality."

14. C. S. Lewis, "The Shoddy Lands," Of Other Worlds; Essays and Stories, ed. by Walter Hooper (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1966), pp. 99-106.

15. Susan is excluded from Narnia for having grown too interested in lipstick, nylons, etc.

16. C. S. Lewis, Mere Christianity, rev. ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1958), p. 33.

17. Dainis Bisenieks, "Tales from the 'Perilous Realm': Good News for the Modern Child," Christian Century, XCI (June 5, 1974), 618.

18. Lewis, Magician's Nephew, p. 73.

### CHAPTER III

#### RANSOM VS. WESTON: THE DEMONOLOGY OF VIOLENCE

The ideological factor which appears in The Last Battle receives fuller expansion in the interplanetary fiction of Lewis. The matter-of-fact opening of Out of the Silent Planet<sup>1</sup> gives little hint of the tense and violent drama to follow. By gradual stages Lewis wins the confidence of his readers; then he sends his hero off to fabulous realms. In the first volume of the trilogy, Ransom is pitted against human foes on the planet Mars (Malacandra). In the second volume, Perelandra,<sup>2</sup> Ransom meets one of his former foes on a different planet, Venus (Perelandra), and discovers that his foe's humanity has all but disappeared under the influence of a demonic force. The third novel, That Hideous Strength,<sup>3</sup> is set on earth, but an earth where fabulous forces from the Arthurian past aid in Ransom's continuing conflict. The third novel will be considered in a separate chapter. In length and in scope of material, as well as in its terrestrial setting, it differs from the first two volumes of the trilogy. A brief summary of events traced in the first two volumes may serve to clarify the role which violence assumes in their plots.

Ransom's departure for Malacandra and his eventual return to earth are both accompanied by expectations of battle. There is a difference in the degree of belligerence adopted by Ransom at the beginning and end of Out of the Silent Planet, but his final resolute frame of mind has grown out of his first reluctant involvement. His initiation into the unknown world of Malacandra is achieved through violent methods to which his own violent countermeasures from an ineffective resistance. Though Ransom does not set the chain of violent events in motion, he deliberately chooses to become engaged rather than remaining detached. (In this response, Ransom resembles the Pevensie children attempting to rescue the imprisoned Faun.) This engagement occurs when he trespasses on walled-off property to look for a retarded boy whose mother has voiced to Ransom her anxieties about his safety, and then when he interrupts two men who are trying to force the boy on board a space craft. The vagueness of the threats he overhears cannot conceal from Ransom the fact that something ominous is taking place. A Cambridge philologist who savors the solitude of his walking tour, Ransom is hardly a likely candidate for breaking-and-entering or disturbing-the-peace charges, but his effort to honor his promise to the boy's mother causes him to act in an uncharacteristically aggressive manner.

Perhaps this incident, which gets the plot moving, also reveals the heavy moral weight of the C. S. Lewis universe, where small acts can have momentous consequences. In Joseph

Campbell's terms, Ransom could have refused to heed the call to adventure presented by the old woman's request. Because he accepts it, he attempts to rescue the boy. He succeeds in this purpose but is duped by offers of hospitality and then drugged.

Not surprisingly, Ransom's first reactions to his imprisonment are violent in nature. As soon as he begins to shake off the effects of the drug he makes a desperate and violent effort to escape. Overcome once more by the greater violence of his captors, Ransom is placed on board a space-ship with his two sinister companions. Later he learns that these two men, one a former schoolmate who has prospered by unscrupulous means and the other a scientist whose ruthlessness is oddly mingled with altruistic motives, plan to offer him as a human sacrifice to the inhabitants of Malacandra. Further developments in the story make it clear that Weston, the scientist, also has in mind the destruction of the Malacandrian natives with the aim of providing lebensraum for the inhabitants of earth.

The unscrupulous nature of Ransom's opponents, Devine and Weston, is indicated by the following exchange as Weston says, I daresay . . . he would consent if he could be made to understand." Devine's rejoinder to this is "Take his feet and I'll take his head" (Out of the Silent Planet, p. 19). Terse though it is, this bit of dialogue reflects something of the difference in temperament of these two men. Weston would like to think that even his victim could appreciate the nobility of the cause

which he (Weston) envisions; Devine, troubled by no such reflections, simply wants to get on with his task and make his profit as quickly as possible. These two characters correspond to types outlined by Lewis in an essay in which he condemns violence:

Our ambassador to new worlds will be the needy and greedy adventurer or the ruthless technical expert. They will do as their kind has always done. What that will be if they meet things weaker than themselves, the black man and the red man can tell. If they meet things stronger, they will be, very properly, destroyed.<sup>4</sup>

While Devine is depicted as a greedy and ambitious social climber, little inclined to introspection, a certain charm and enterprise also enter into his personality. Weston, the man of principle, is presented as the duller and more dangerous of the two: his scientific brilliance and his obsession with the future of mankind lead him to seek powers that a Devine, at this stage at least, would not be able to imagine.<sup>5</sup> Weston makes some effort to justify his admitted infringement of Ransom's rights: "My only defence is that small claims must give way to great" (Out of the Silent Planet, pp. 26-27). By identifying these claims with himself, Weston sets the stage for his metamorphosis into the satanic figure which will attack the stability of Perelandra in the second volume.

Yet it is Devine, for all his relative appearance of ordinary humanity, who has chosen Ransom as sacrificial sheep. Lewis indicates that a childhood antagonism lies at the root of this adult revenge:

He had been picked because Devine had done the picking; he realized for the first time--in all circumstances a late and startling discovery--that Devine had hated him all these years as heartily as he had hated Devine. (Out of the Silent Planet, p. 35)

In this way, Lewis implies, Providence causes negative factors to contribute to events ultimately yielding positive results. It is not only Ransom's wish to rescue the boy that leads to the scholar's involvement in action; his past failure in a human relationship also becomes a factor.

Realizing the implacability of the persons with whom he is dealing, Ransom steals a knife from the ship's galley, and

reflected that the knife could pierce other flesh as well as his own. The bellicose mood was a very rare one with Ransom. Like many men of his age, he rather underestimated than overestimated his courage; the gap between boyhood's dreams and his actual experience of the War had been startling, and his subsequent view of his own unheroic qualities had perhaps swung too far in the opposite direction. (Out of the Silent Planet, p. 37)

But Ransom is not called upon to use his knife. In Out of the Silent Planet he is an observer and a potential target of violence, but he himself is not involved in violent pursuits--with the exception of his participation in the hnakra hunt after winning acceptance by a group of native Malacandrians.

With the hnakra, a non-rational creature inhabiting the lakes of Malacandra, Lewis introduces the concept of the beloved enemy. It is interesting that this concept is presented in terms of a "bestly" rather than a human foe. Occasionally the hnakra

will kill one of the hrossa, a sub-group of the rational beings (hnau) inhabiting Malacandra. According to the hross Hyoi, who befriends Ransom, "it is not a few deaths roving the world around him that make a hnau miserable. It is a bent hnau that would blacken the world" (Out of the Silent Planet, p. 75). Indeed, it is a bent hnau, one of Ransom's former captors, who kills Hyoi later in the story, though Ransom's delay to kill the hnakra causes him to share a sense of responsibility for Hyoi's death.

The sense of respect, even affection, directed to this animal predator is not extended to Ransom's human enemies, for their motives are not explicable in terms of the zest for battle surrounding the hnakra hunt, or the hnakra's corresponding desire to kill the hrossa. In Malacandra, where (to Ransom's amazement, the different species have not exterminated one another) war is known only in the form of a sport that is heartfelt and lethal but devoid of hatred.

A comparative absence of fear characterizes the hnakra-hrossa contest in which Ransom takes part. His anxiety lest he display cowardice is less intense than the chilling fears he must overcome when he confronts human or superhuman foes. It is notable that, once his fears have been overcome, Ransom is able to meet his challenges successfully and that the experience of fear itself can serve as a spur to his actions. Lewis interprets fear in both positive and negative ways as he displays its effect upon Ransom in varying situations.

Fear may be directed toward a real or an imaginary threat. The vivid though inaccurate fear that the Malacandrians want him as a human sacrifice is formidable enough in itself, but Ransom's real terror is stimulated by his mental picture of the type of creature that might be awaiting him:

He saw in imagination 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 nerve-ends. (Out of the Silent Planet, p. 35)

Ransom's fear of the hnakra, though undeniable, is a far cry from this dread of imaginary foes. But even the latter fear serves a purpose: far from immobilizing Ransom, it goads him to steal the knife and to plan on making a break for freedom once the space ship reaches the strange planet. Having escaped, however, Ransom is terrified by the unfamiliar landscape of Malacandra: "His eyes darted hither and thither in search of an approaching enemy and discovered only how quickly the darkness grew upon him" (Out of the Silent Planet, p. 49).

His experiences on Malacandra reveal to Ransom that his fear of the seroni, an intellectual class of beings, was as ill-founded as his fear of the hrossa, the more poetic and intuitive creatures. As a result of his stay on this planet Ransom extends his knowledge of various rational though non-human forms of life. In this process he becomes more courageous. (Perhaps it is no accident that Lewis shows the growth in courage as accompanying

the growth in knowledge.) At the end of Ransom's adventures the Oyarsa (Spiritual ruler) tells him, "You are guilty of no evil, Ransom of Thulcandra, except a little fearfulness" (Out of the Silent Planet, pp. 142-43). This statement suggests that Lewis viewed excessive fear as a moral failing which could be overcome--not merely as a psychological state of mind. The Oyarsa, at any rate, underscores such a view when he urges Ransom, "Be courageous." In the context, this exhortation has an echo of the Scriptural "Be strong and of good courage."

When the Oyarsa charged Ransom to "Be courageous. Fight them," Ransom's future role was outlined. The foes who had been ready to sacrifice him were only temporarily set back; the Oyarsa tells Ransom that they may yet do much evil in, and beyond, his (Ransom's) world. As in the Peter-Miraz combat, there was no guarantee that the hero would be triumphant or that, were he triumphant, his battle would not leave real scars. Ground might be lost as well as gained. Perhaps, in the mind of Maleldil, a higher spiritual authority than the Oyarsa, that also was part of the battle.

Before departing for Perelandra for his second round of adventures, Ransom acknowledges his fears openly to a friend; but this trip, unlike the former one, is voluntary. Later on Ransom's fear of grappling with Weston is also vanquished, though with difficulty. In the interval before Weston attempts to drown him, Ransom listens to a dread-inspiring recital designed

to evoke all his fears of death. When Ransom tries to silence this monologue Weston suddenly warns him of the breakers ahead of them:

Horror of death such as he had never known, horror of the terrified creature at his side, descended upon Ransom; finally, horror with no definite object. (Perelandra, p. 171)

Even in the fact of this terror Ransom tries to brace himself and Weston through prayer. And it is at this point that he is plunged into the sea--not by the waves but by Weston.

Ransom's following ordeal in the undersea cave makes real the claustrophobic fears suggested by Weston's monologue, but fear of thirst serves a positive purpose by forcing him to keep moving in hopes of finding some exit. The physical strength and mental stamina he has gained in various trials are taxed to the uttermost.

In the caves Ransom's old fear of creeping things is revived. The terrors he had imagined during the voyage to Malacandra assume palpable form on Perelandra in the apparition of an insect-like creature:

a huge, many-legged, quivering deformity, standing just behind the Un-man so that the horrible shadows of both danced in enormous and united menace on the wall of rock behind him. (Perelandra, p. 181)

Ransom's response to this challenge, and to his own fear, is similar to his response to information overheard in the earlier novel when his fear of the Malacandrians ran riot: he looks around for the nearest weapon. Unlike the knife stolen from the

space-ship galley, the rock Ransom seizes from the floor of the cave is put to immediate use. He hurls it--not at the insect creature which embodies his morbid fears--but at the "Un-man" Weston, who has obviously conjured up the creature. He attacks the source rather than the symptom of his fears, but the symptom has served a purpose by alerting him to danger and arousing his rage. Ransom's anger at its appearance gives him the physical energy and mental resolve to carry through his attack. Thus Lewis portrays the therapeutic value of rage and its links with fear. The formula he presents proceeds from fear through rage to violent action, which results in triumph over fear. Clearly, the effect of Ransom's attack (in addition to killing Weston) is to exorcise the horror from the object he has seen:

The creature was there, a curiously shaped creature no doubt, but all loathing had vanished clean out of his mind. . . . All that he had felt from childhood about insects and reptiles died that moment: died utterly, as hideous music does when you shut off the wireless. Apparently it had all, even from the beginning, been a dark enchantment of the enemy's. (Perelandra, p. 182)

Just as his perception of the seroni was radically altered by removal of his fears, Ransom's sight of the insect apparition is corrected. As in The Pilgrim's Regress whose hero must slay a dragon, Lewis insists that vigorous, even violent, action accompanies a transformation in vision. This linking of forceful action with transformation of vision is especially apparent in Perelandra because the terms of the conflict are more sharply

drawn in this novel than in Out of the Silent Planet. Lewis' concentration of focus upon Ransom's dilemma also results in a sense of depth, which the first volume fails to achieve. Perelandra presents a struggle that is essentially solitary in both its mental and physical aspects. Ransom is companioned by his memories of great religious and literary works of the past, but he is not surrounded on Perelandra by friendly eldila (angelic beings), seroni or hrossa who offer him advice. Rather Ransom himself is cast in role of adviser--to a being whose moral innocence and intellectual gifts make his task seem all the more demanding. His influence upon the Lady is obviously intended to counteract that of Weston, a now-Satanic figure of evil whose temptation parallels the serpent's temptation of Eve.

Ransom is pitted against no human adversary, though Weston has provided the vehicle for the temptation. In Perelandra, Ransom is assigned the task of protecting an unfallen world, whereas his mission to Malacandra had been more in the nature of gaining knowledge and courage from a world unfallen and nearing its end. The evil introduced into the older world of Malacandra was rebuked directly by a superior being, the Oyarsa; the evil which intrudes on Perelandra is forestalled by Ransom, acting as an agent of the divine will as he perceives it.

A significant point is that neither novel represents evil as being in any way changed by exposure to goodness. The first

novel shows the humiliation of evildoers; the second novel displays the destruction of the evil force itself--a final destruction so far as Perelandra is concerned.

By choosing to become involved in an unexpected and purely individual protest, Ransom has precipitated a complicated series of events whose outcome he could not have predicted. In this process he enlists reader interest and sympathy. Lewis makes it clear that Ransom is not merely a victim of hostile forces or individuals; rather, he is a would-be protector of the defenseless--the retarded boy on earth, the Lady on Perelandra--who are threatened by an evil they cannot grasp. Ransom's indignation in the face of evil is one of his more attractive traits. As Rollo May has stated:

However it may be confounded or covered up or counterfeited, this elemental capacity to fight against injustice remains the distinguishing characteristic of human beings.<sup>6</sup>

Because of his responsiveness to a need for justice, the apparently unheroic Ransom steps into a heroic universe. His adventures here conform to the heroic pattern described by Joseph Campbell:

A hero ventures forth from the world of common day into a region of supernatural wonder: fabulous forces are there encountered and a decisive victory is won: the hero comes back from this mysterious adventure with the power to bestow boons on his fellow men. (Hero with a Thousand Faces, p. 30)

In his first adventure, chronicled in Out of the Silent Planet, Ransom's victory is over his own fearfulness. This victory prepares him for his second adventure, related in Perelandra,

which brings him into conflict with a supernatural foe whose identification with Satan places Ransom into the category of the self-conscious Christian hero. When this occurs, the reader is not taken completely by surprise. Ransom's assumption of responsibility for the humble and oppressed, represented by his championship of the retarded boy, has prepared the way for his more exalted task as guide and protector of an unfallen world. In this context the name Ransom suggests a heroic role of peculiarly Christian significance: "For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Jesus Christ, who gave himself a ransom for all" (Timothy 2:5-6).

Clyde Kilby suggests that the wound received in defence of Perelandra is reminiscent of the wounds of Christ, still visible after the Resurrection.<sup>7</sup> A possible Scriptural association would relate Ransom's wounded heel with God's curse upon the serpent in Genesis 3:15: "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." Familiar depictions of this event show Mary treading the serpent underfoot. In Perelandra, a representative of redeemed mankind--heir of both Eve and Mary--fatally bruises the head of his foe, who in turn leaves upon Ransom's heel a wound that will not be completely cured.

In That Hideous Strength the wound of Ransom is emphasized, though in other respects he is shown as being in superb health, appearing much younger than his actual age. Simone Weil has commented,

The man who does not wear the armor of the lie cannot experience force without being touched by it to the very soul. Grace can prevent this touch from corrupting him, but it cannot spare him the wound.<sup>8</sup>

More enigmatic than the passage in Genesis cited above are the words of St. Paul in Romans 26:20: "And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly." These words force the reader to consider the paradox of a divinely ordained peace to be inaugurated through violent means, a concept Lewis treats in the Narnia series but appears to repudiate in Till We Have Faces.

Lewis not only requires a hero for the interplanetary novels: he requires a specifically Christian hero. In what way does this additional ingredient of Christianity alter the formula devised by Campbell? Does it introduce a more spiritual dimension to the hero's exploits? Does the struggle with a Satanic figure automatically mean that a spiritual struggle is taking place? The answer to these questions is not clear. For one thing, the struggle with Satan is resolved through physical rather than spiritual means. Nor is Ransom's struggle merely a struggle with Satan: it also involves in its preliminary stages what Wallace Fowlie has identified in "Les Chants de Maldoror" as "the epic struggle, the oldest struggle of mankind, between man himself and God."<sup>9</sup> Just as Christ asked that the cup of suffering might pass from him, if that were the Father's will, Ransom undergoes inner turmoil at the prospect of combat with Weston-Satan.

In a sense, God Himself is the adversary, a theme Lewis touched upon in the Narnia books ("he isn't a tame lion") and develops more explicitly in Till We Have Faces. Ransom is not ready to undertake his combat with Satan until he has surrendered his own will to the will of God. This loss of self becomes gain for the Christian hero, enabling him to triumph over the "ancient foe."

A mysterious struggle in a paradise that might be lost is the terrain of Ransom's action. His triumph is so dearly bought that its effect shatters him almost as much as defeat would have done. Later he receives a vision of consolation and joy which he could not have sustained immediately after the battle. The conflict and victory of Ransom illuminate a memorable change in consciousness in some ways reminiscent of the revelation experienced by George Fox after long and anguished searching: "Now was I come up in spirit through the flaming sword into the Paradise of God. All things were new, and all the creation gave another smell to me than before, beyond what words can utter."<sup>10</sup>

In this account by the founder of the Society of Friends, noted for its peace testimony, the image of the flaming sword is a startling one to encounter. The words "in spirit," however, may remind the reader that the flaming sword referred to exists in a dimension beyond that of concrete physical reality. It apparently also refers to an ordeal undergone or a threat suspended rather than to a weapon brandished by Fox himself.

Unlike George Fox, the fictional Elwin Ransom chooses (and believes himself to have been chosen for) a role of actual combat which proves to be a preliminary stage for his ecstatic experience of a new creation. No swordplay is involved; Ransom has tried to eliminate modern weaponry by casting into the sea his opponent's revolver (which, after all, he could have kept for himself, as he had once stolen his captors' knife from the ship-galley). This gesture of throwing a weapon into the sea repeats the action of Reepicheep in The Voyage of the Dawn Treader, but it occurs in a very different context. Ransom, unlike Reepicheep, will carry on a physical combat.

When battle is joined on Perelandra, Ransom's weapon is neither the flaming sword of ancient revelation nor any of the gadgetry of modern warfare, but an object as primeval as a rock. Ransom's hurling of the rock "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost" may link this weapon, with its suggestion of prehistoric mankind, to the image of a flaming sword. Reinforcing the association of the rock (and the cave where the struggle occurs) with atavistic violence is Ransom's earlier effort to understand the nature of the combat before him: "It stood to reason that a struggle with the Devil meant a spiritual struggle . . . the notion of physical combat was only fit for a savage" (Perelandra, p. 145). Lewis presents the equation of physical combat with savagery as the first of three temptations which Ransom, as a Christly figure, must overcome

before his ordeal. He must recognize, behind his facile wish that the combat were that "simple," the depth of his fear of any physical contact with this dreaded foe. Additional objections, that physical combat would "degrade the spiritual warfare to the condition of mere mythology" and that forcible removal of the foe as insurance of the Lady's obedience would be "irrelevant to the spiritual issue," fade in the light of Ransom's perception of his role as a "new task" (Perelandra, p. 145). Along with Ransom's perception of a new task comes a heightened conviction that "this can't go on" (Perelandra, p. 145). His inclination to analyze past situations for clues to the solution of present problems is discovered to be fruitless.

In vain did his mind hark back, time after time, to the Book of Genesis, asking, 'What would have happened?' But to this the Darkness gave him no answer. Patiently and inexorably it brought him back to the here and the now, and to the growing certainty of what was here and now demanded.

Thus Ransom's crucial decision was grounded on a direct apprehension of the divine will and on his own observations of the scene immediately before him. Traditional sources of insight, intellectual speculation, the heritage of the past, and Scripture itself, proved inadequate guides in a new situation.

Ransom's process of decision bears some resemblance to the radical vision of George Fox, who found traditional authorities unable to meet his spiritual need. Ransom's commitment to violence, however, is directly opposed to the conclusions of

Fox, and reflects a long-standing assumption of the established Christian churches that violence is not necessarily an evil. Ransom's final action of violence (hurling the rock), coupled with his religious utterance, poses in dramatic form the question of the relationship between violence and theology in Lewis' fiction.

The choice of a rock as Ransom's weapon in the context, of an appeal to the Trinity, may suggest that the rock on which the Church is founded is indeed, in Lewis' view, a readiness for physical warfare. The fact that the violent threat introduced by Weston is resolved through the application of violence by Ransom, acting as an agent of salvation, suggests that Lewis' "Mere Christianity" does contain a strongly militant aspect; further, that this militance is both figurative and literal.

According to Gunnar Urang, "The metaphor which illumines (Lewis') 'silent planet' myth is that of a universe at war. We are living in enemy-occupied territory."<sup>11</sup> He goes on to quote a statement by Lewis in "The Case for Christianity": "Christianity is the story of how the rightful king has landed, you might say landed in disguise, and is calling us all to take part in a great campaign of sabotage" (Mere Christianity, p. 215). This sentiment is echoed in the litany of the eldils at the end of Perelandra: "now the trumpet has sounded and the army is on the move. Blessed be He!" (Perelandra, p. 215). And earlier, when Ransom returns to earth at the conclusion of Out of the Silent Planet,

he does so with the command of the Oyarsa ringing in his ears: "Watch those two bent ones. Be courageous. Fight them" (Out of the Silent Planet, pp. 142-43). Warning that Ransom's enemies may yet do evil in and beyond his own world, the Oyarsa also predicts an end to the siege of Thulcandra (earth). Similarly, the King predicts before Ransom's journey from Perelandra that "the siege of your world shall be raised. . . . In those days Maleldil will go to war . . . all shall be cleansed, and even the memory of your Black Oyarsa blotted out" (Perelandra, p. ). Elsewhere in this tale, as Ransom recognizes the true essence of Malacandra and Perelandra, the premise of besiegement is mentioned:

When and from whom had the children of Adam  
learned that Ares was a man of war and that  
Aphrodite rose from the sea foam? Earth  
has been besieged, an enemy-occupied territory,  
since before history began. (Perelandra, p. 201)

Weston's journey to Perelandra, in the terms of this novel, thus represents an effort of forces of darkness to extend their siege to another planet. It could be maintained that Ransom's effort to reach the human being whose existence has been given over to a Satanic power marks him as a Christian hero. This effort indicates that Ransom is interested not only in combating the Un-man-Weston and in protecting the Lady (and her animals) from injury, but that he would also help save the "real" Weston if that were possible. His attempt to persuade Weston to pray before the sea overwhelms them is evidence of his concern, particularly striking in view of the exhausting struggle that had already been waged.

But after Weston's effort to drown him and his own effort to strangle his opponent, Ransom no longer distinguishes between the human Weston and the Satanic "Un-man":

He did not know whether in the last few hours the spirit which had spoken to him was really Weston's or whether he had been the victim of a ruse. Indeed, it made little difference. . . . The question whether Satan, or one whom Satan has digested, is acting on any given occasions, has in the long run no clear significance. (Perelandra, pp. 172-73)

With this obliteration of difference between Satan and his victim in mind,<sup>12</sup> is Ransom acting as a Christian hero? In the sense that he is faced by a superhuman (and subhuman) foe, Ransom's struggle may be defined as spiritual, but the fact that physical violence proved the decisive means of resolving the conflict would seem to remove the actions from the context of spiritual warfare.

Perhaps Lewis' space fiction is an exception to the pattern discerned by Leonard Lutwack as characteristic of heroic fiction:

Since Paradise Lost, the epic in Western literature has made the exploits of the hero more spiritual than physical; instead of the prowess of his arms the progress of his soul came to matter. (Heroic Fiction, p. 20)

Ransom's explicit repudiation of the notion that "a struggle with the Devil meant a spiritual struggle" (Perelandra, p. 143) could be quoted as evidence that his actions do not qualify for the category of spiritual warfare. In Perelandra, a struggle that begins as an ideological struggle is resolved through physical combat. In Till We Have Faces, Lewis explores a conflict initiated by violence but resolved through a process of spiritual enlightenment. Even if the category of spiritual struggle is denied to

Ransom's ordeal, however, it is important to remember that his ordeal took into account qualities of determination and imagination that made his combat possible.

Ransom's habit of contemplation entered into the decision that he finally reached. This trait is expressed not only in the piety that leads him to exhort Weston to pray in the face of approaching death, but also in his ability to rise above physical discomforts and dangers to consider a larger vista. One incident of this type is described in Out of the Silent Planet as the space ship prepares to land. Ransom, intent on making a break for freedom at the first opportunity, is struck by the contrast between "Deep Heaven" and the atmosphere of the world they are approaching. He speculates about the existence of a brightness in comparison with which the radiant heavens might seem as dim as the atmosphere of the planets. Later, after his tiring conversation with the ever-inquisitive seroni, Ransom prepared to rest:

But when at last he lay down to sleep it was not of human nakedness nor of his own ignorance that he was thinking. He thought only of the old forests of Malacandra and of what it might mean to grow up seeing so few miles away a land of colour that could never be reached, and had once been inhabited. (Out of the Silent Planet, p. 103)

Thus both space and time become objects of Ransom's contemplation in Out of the Silent Planet. In Perelandra this trait is also exhibited: as he follows Weston across the sea, Ransom becomes absorbed (despite his many bruises) by the panorama these oceans present.

It came into his head that he knew nothing at all about this world. Some day, no doubt, it would be peopled by the descendants of the King and Queen. But all its millions of years in the unpeoples past, all its uncounted miles of laughing water in the lonely present--did they exist solely for that? (Perelandra, p. 160)

This habit of speculation sets Ransom sharply apart from Weston, whose mental powers as a scientist are bent on sacrificing nature to man's purposes and whose intelligence serves only as a weapon to crush the arguments of an opponent. Ransom's inclination for reflection enables him to picture the stakes involved in his struggle, and influences him to act for a purpose larger than his own survival. Along with his grasp of ordinary reality Ransom has a grasp of unfamiliar possibilities and dangers. Those very capacities that, under stress, could conjure up non-existent monsters like the imagined Malacandrians could help him to recognize a true monster when a being full of malicious violence crossed his path.

The modern world, now sensitized to the danger of using violence to resolve conflict, is reminded by Lewis of the problems faced when the intellectual and imaginative aspects of humanity encounter evil. If these traits are unaided by physical force, Lewis suggests, they will not succeed in containing evil. By having Ransom engage in physical combat, Lewis made his own position clear about the vacuum which can develop when intellectual and moral qualities stand alone.

But this solution appears to depend on perception of the foe as in some way demonically possessed like the Wer-Wolf in Prince Caspian or Mr. Savage (a possible symbol for Hitler) who, thirsts to drink from enemy skulls in The Pilgrim's Regress. While such a depiction was evidently Lewis' intention in Peregrina, certain inconsistencies appear. These inconsistencies undercut Kilby's assertion that "It was Ransom against Weston--no, Ransom against Satan himself--and with all the future generations of this Lady and her husband at stake" (Christian World, p. 93). In connection with Weston's satanic possession, the following questions might be raised: why is Weston superhuman intellectually but not physically? If he is not superhuman physically, why is he described as tireless, in contrast to the mortal Ransom who must sleep at intervals? Why would Ransom expect any more success at physical combat than in debate? In trying to create a villain incorporating both human and superhuman traits, Lewis ends up with a monster who is credible on neither level, though this very lack of credibility may be a characteristic of the evil he means to portray.

Whatever inconsistencies may exist in the depiction of Weston-Satan, highly effective moments remain. For example, Weston's maddening repetition of Ransom's name conveys something of the malice of childhood enmities and of adult feuds; his dreadful parody of Christ's appeal from the cross introduces a dimension of terror and suffering beyond human understanding.

According to Gunnar Urang, "this embodiment of evil is dealt with in a manner well suited to mythic narrative; Ransom does not outargue him, he literally and physically outfights him" (Shadows of Heaven, p. 19). Urang identifies Weston as "an archetypal figure, a being possessed by something which is both superhuman and subhuman" (Shadows of Heaven, p. 18). Ransom, overcoming the temptation of seeing spiritual warfare as degraded to the condition of "mere mythology" by a choice to fight, opts for action within a mythological framework. This framework may set some of Lewis' writing apart from the current of modern thought. A readership unaccustomed to thinking in mythic terms and suspicious of stereotypes tending toward violent conflict will have trouble with Ransom's readiness to perceive his role in the mythological terms Lewis suggests. One aspect of myth is all too familiar to the modern world: the eagerness to identify an enemy with absolute evil. According to Joseph Campbell,

it is a basic idea of practically every way mythology that the enemy is a monster and that in killing him one is protecting the only truly valuable order of human life on earth, which is that, of course, of one's own people.<sup>13</sup>

The Christian hero who, like Ransom, is engaged in fighting the devil, is not in a good position to follow the Christian precept of loving the enemy. It is true that Ransom made repeated efforts to reach the human in his foe, but he concludes that Weston has become identified with a satanic force.

In his battle with evil, Ransom follows a revered literary tradition pitting a Christly figure in heroic combat against the power of Satan. For example, a note to the Anglo-Saxon poem "The Dream of the Rood" makes the following comment on the word gewinn, l. 65 (Christ having been described as weary after the great gewinn: battle, struggle or agony):

The word gewinn here refers most directly and obviously to Christ's agony on the cross, but the military connotations of the word are also appropriate. In his divine nature Christ has waged war against the devil and all the forces of evil.<sup>14</sup>

Thus the tradition depicting Christ as a warrior (Haeleð) does back long before Pound's "Ballad of the Goodly Fere." But a crucial difference appears between the Christ of "The Dream of the Rood" and the hero of Perelandra: in one case death was voluntarily suffered by the hero, in the other case death was inflicted by him.

Formerly at the end of the Catholic Mass a prayer was recited to St. Michael the Archangel. This prayer concluded, "may thou O Prince of the Heavenly Host, thrust into hell Satan and the other evil spirits who roam through the world seeking the ruin of souls." This is the fate of Weston in Perelandra. After Ransom strikes him with the rock, he hurls Weston's body into a fiery pit below the scene of their combat. Weston's fiery end presumably underscores his satanic identification. The fact that Ransom later raised a monument to Weston makes it clear

that he did not rejoice over his fallen enemy, but no reconciliation had been possible because of his demonic nature. As a result of the absolute evil threatening Perelandra through Weston, that planet's natural beauty seems like a stage setting for a morality play. The seas are perilous as Ransom pursues his foe across them; the lands will become forlorn if he is not successful in his quest.

And he is successful, within the terms which Lewis allows-- the terms of physical warfare waged for spiritual stakes. The gates of hell do not prevail against the rock which is the Church Militant, represented by Elwin Ransom. But the hurling of a rock into the face of the foe does not evoke the triumphant joy resulting from a stone that is rolled away from a tomb, or from the reconciliation of former enemies. It does not arouse the pity and terror of the Oyarsa's quiet, repeated question to the murderers of Hyoi: "Why have you killed my hnau?" (Out of the Silent Planet, p. 127). Rather, it resembles the victory of David, with his slingshot and stones, over the giant Goliath.

Lewis, a good storyteller, maintains suspense and suggests both the pettiness and power of evil; but he leaves out of his picture that possibility for transformation which is the heart of the Christian message. This transformation will begin to appear in That Hideous Strength and will reveal itself more fully in Lewis' later works.

## NOTES

1. C. S. Lewis, Out of the Silent Planet (New York: Macmillan, 1965). Hereafter referred to in the text as Out of the Silent Planet.

2. C. S. Lewis, Perelandra (New York: Macmillan, 1952). Hereafter referred to in the text as Perelandra.

3. Lewis, That Hideous Strength, (New York: Macmillan, 1946).

4. C. S. Lewis, "Religion and Rocketry," The World's Last Night and Other Essays (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1960), p. 89.

5. In the last volume of the trilogy, That Hideous Strength, Devine appears to have assumed some of Weston's characteristics.

6. Rollo May, Power and Innocence: A Search for the Sources of Violence (New York: Norton, 1972), p. 220. Hereafter referred to in the text as Power and Innocence.

7. Clyde Kilby, The Christian World of C. S. Lewis (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans, 1964), p. 93. Hereafter referred to in the text as The Christian World.

8. Simone Weil, The Iliad or The Poem of Force, tr. by Mary McCarthy (Wallingford, Pa.: Pendle Hill, 1956), p. 36. Hereafter referred to in the text as "The Iliad."

9. Wallace Fowlie, Climate of Violence; The French Literary Tradition from Baudelaire to the Present (New York: Macmillan, 1967), p. 23.

10. George Fox, The Journal of George Fox, a rev. ed. by John L. Nickalls (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1952), p. 27.

11. Gunnar Urang, Shadows of Heaven: Religion and Fantasy in the Writing of C. S. Lewis, Charles Williams, and J. R. R. Tolkien (Philadelphia: Pilgrim Press, 1971), p. 78. Hereafter referred to in the text as Shadows of Heaven.

12. An obliteration reminiscent of the end of The Screwtape Letters.
13. Campbell, The Hero With a Thousand Faces.
14. John C. Pope, ed., Seven Old English Poems (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1966), p. 67.

## CHAPTER IV

### ST. ANNE'S VS. BELBURY: A CORPORATE STRUGGLE

C. S. Lewis' trilogy is often spoken of as a space trilogy or as interplanetary fiction, but its terrestrial arena should not be overlooked. While the first two novels record stages of a cosmic struggle that takes place on other planets, the third volume, That Hideous Strength, is set on earth. Indeed, Perelandra, the second book in the series, contains significant reminders of the involvement of earth in the battle Ransom and Weston are waging on the planet Venus. These reminders make it clear that earth is visualized, even in the first two volumes, as something more than a taking-off point for Ransom's adventures elsewhere. As White maintains, Lewis' real interest was not in Mars and Venus but in the problems of earth.

In effect, Ransom traveled to the heavens in order to work out better his tasks on earth; in Campbell's terms, he returned from his quest with the power to bestow boons on his fellow man. The conflicts Ransom observes on the planet Mars are conflicts continued from an earthly setting; the menace exported to Mars, in the persons of Weston and Devine, reflects the moral maladjustment of society on earth. The barrage of invisible but terrifying influences met by Ransom's friend early in Perelandra, as he

attempts to reach Ransom's blacked-out cottage, demonstrates the power of the forces with which the scholar-hero must contend. In the midst of strife on Perelandra Ransom recalls the war that was raging on earth. References to this war serve to clarify the issue which Ransom resolves on Venus--through violence. The third volume of the trilogy carries forward Ransom's struggle with a difference: the individual hero now leads a group of likeminded people in the contest between good and evil. Violence erupts over a wider arena in the course of this strife. This chapter will explore various aspects of the corporate struggle that ensues. Lewis' framework encompasses a number of conflicts: present trends and past traditions, immanent and transcendent aspects of deity, marriage and the individual, totalitarian society and free society, and man and nature. By examining these issues and their interrelationships, Lewis achieves unusual richness and complexity in this novel.

It will be recalled that Out of the Silent Planet ends with an exhortation to Ransom to be vigilant and courageous in resisting the evil influence of Weston and Devine: not only on earth but in other worlds as well. In this manner Lewis foreshadows the forthcoming struggle on Perelandra. Both Out of the Silent Planet and Perelandra conclude with predictions of the great conflict that will occur when the "siege of Thulcandra," earth, is lifted. The third volume of the trilogy, which is set on earth, deals with one of the battles that precede this final encounter.

As Reilly points out, "The over all 'conceit' of the trilogy is of battle; the books present a crucial moment in the life of humanity, part of a scene from the cosmic play that Aquinas called a purposeful drama" (Romantic Religion, p. 129). The third volume carries forward the battle conceit in terms that encompass society as a whole and the opposing forces within it. These opposing forces group themselves into collective units, St. Anne's and Belbury. Charles Moorman believes that the image of the city is "the basis of the Logres-Britain, St. Anne's-Belbury opposition as it appears in That Hideous Strength."<sup>1</sup> Moorman's emphasis on the city imagery reinforces the view that this stage of the struggle is shared among individuals who have joined to form a recognizable collective entity.

Here in the dichotomy of Logres and Britain or, in its more modern terms, St. Anne's and Belbury, one sees clearly that the opposition of Earth and the rest of the cosmos which dominates Out of the Silent Planet and, to a lesser degree, Perelandra, shifts to an opposition of two sorts of earthly society which in their attributes and attitudes resemble very closely the Zion and Gomorrah of Charles Williams and, by extension, the two cities of St. Augustine. (Precincts of Felicity, p. 70)

Lewis has chosen an ambitious theme: though his other struggles took place on far-off planets which offered unexpected impressions to the imagination of the reader, an individual viewpoint held them in focus. The third volume has a more familiar setting, but its multiplicity of viewpoints and the collective nature of its clashing powers add to the complexity of Lewis' plotting.

The reader is forced to reconstruct in his imagination two alternative visions of society from the evidence Lewis provides in deliberately fragmented form.

The two earlier books present experiences from Ransom's viewpoint. Though Ransom appears as an important character in That Hideous Strength, we do not have direct access to his consciousness. The viewpoint of the novel shifts frequently from that of an omniscient narrator to that of Mark Studdock and his wife Jane. At the risk of creating considerable confusion, Lewis chose to include a variety of viewpoints in this work. For this reason the reader who is disposed to agree with Starr's praise of That Hideous Strength<sup>2</sup> may still have problems grasping the total picture. Perhaps in this work particularly, Lewis attempted to cover too wide a canvas of human life. But as Dostoevsky wrote:

Man is broad, even too broad. I'd have him narrower  
 . . . God and the Devil are fighting there and the  
 battlefield is the hearts of men.

These words from The Brothers Karamazoff remind us that Lewis' characters are not unique in their perception of superhuman powers locked in combat over the destiny of man. But Lewis, who would probably have been the first to admit he was no Dostoevsky, brings considerable breadth of understanding to this work. And he escapes the fatalism which could be fostered by a vision of forces demonic and divine struggling to shape the human future. Even in the corporate struggle described in That Hideous Strength, it is the individual choices that matter.

For this reason the lack of a face-to-face conflict between St. Anne's and Belbury does not strike the reader as a let-down in the momentum of the plot. Rather, the reader will sense that the almost impersonal dealing out of retribution at the story's end could not have occurred without the smaller and more personal involvement of various members of Ransom's community. The smaller worlds of these characters are shown to be related to larger issues which they perceive only dimly. The inner conflicts of Mark and Jane Studdock affect their marital situation; this marital conflict has implications for the future of mankind. Furthermore, Mark Studdock's career ambitions place him in opposition to Lewis' concept of a good society--and in opposition to nature itself. Thus Lewis works upward from smaller arenas to larger, less visible ones. Individual turmoil, marital conflict, academic disputes, pressures of society upon the individual, man versus nature--all these levels of strife are included in the spiritual struggle of "Britain" and "Logres," a struggle which has roots deep in the past.

The violence of the past serves to prefigure the violence of the present; violence towards the artifacts of the past becomes a symptom of modern demoralization. Both types of violence are associated with the well in Bragdon Wood, a site which has aroused controversy because of the effects of the Belbury group to purchase it from Mark's college. Centuries before, Lewis notes, "the fabulously learned and saintly Richard

Crowe had been killed by a musket-ball on the very steps of the well"; his last words were a reproof to the "rebels and regicides" who murdered him (That Hideous Strength, p. 22). In this vignette, Lewis is not merely inventing an historical anecdote to enhance the quaintness of Bracton College; he is invoking a tradition that throws light on Mark's later struggles to develop sufficient strength of character to defy Belbury. We see on the one hand the saintly scholar, who was both victim and judge of the violent men of his time and, on the other hand, modern academic fellow Mark Studdock, whose desire for power makes it difficult for him to understand the nature of the group which seeks his allegiance. Mark's eventual recognition of a moral dimension in life, and his willingness to die rather than to remain a tool of Belbury, reaffirm the values of his saintly predecessor at the college.

In a different way, Mark's wife feels the significance of the past. Richard Crowe's death can be regarded as a foreshadowing of the violent death of Mark's colleague Hingest at the hands of Belbury's secret police, an event which Jane Studdock "witnesses" in a dream:

It was rather horrible, but rather fine. There were three of them at him and he was fighting them all. I've read about that kind of thing in books but I never realized how one would feel about it. (That Hideous Strength, p. 77)

Ransom's physician, Grace Ironwood, informs Jane that her psychic ability is a legacy of the past; an ancestor of Jane's

had left an accurate account of a battle "which he says he completed on the same day on which it was fought. But he was not at it. He was in York at the time" (That Hideous Strength, p. 65). Jane's dream (which, like that of her ancestor, deals with violent action) represents a psychic endowment derived from the past. Jane perceives this gift as a threat: "Sleep had become her enemy" (That Hideous Strength, p. 112); "The bright, narrow little life which she had proposed to live was being irremediably broken into" (That Hideous Strength, p. 83). Stresses and strains in her marriage are not the only problems Jane must face; her mysterious gift creates inner conflict which is intensified when events precipitate her flight to the St. Anne's community headed by Ransom: "During this journey she was so divided against herself that one might say there were three, if not four, Janes in the compartment" (That Hideous Strength, p. 150).

Unlike his wife, who regards the past (her inherited psychic gift, traditional views of matrimony) as a threat to her present well-being, Mark Studdock begins to regard the present as a threat to the past. At first his perspective on such matters is neutral, as when he learns that the Belbury group "had apparently won some sort of victory which gave it the right to pull down the little Norman Church at the corner" (That Hideous Strength, p. 80). But Mark cannot remain an onlooker; his first assignment as a Belbury employee is to prepare public opinion

for the flooding of the historic village of Cure Hardy. He and a co-worker named Cosser "walked about that village for two hours and saw with their own eyes all the abuses and anachronisms they came to destroy" (That Hideous Strength, p. 87). Traditional attitudes and habits, not merely architectural monuments, are obviously the target of Belbury but Mark has reservations.

It did not quite escape him that the face of the backward labourer was rather more interesting than Cosser's and his voice a great deal more pleasing to the ear. (That Hideous Strength, p. 87)

When Mark attempts to express to his co-worker the regrets he feels about the doomed village's way of life, he meets with total incomprehension. Mark does not speak out strongly against Belbury's purposes--partly because he does not yet realize the extent of these purposes, and partly because he is attracted by Belbury's promise of a notable career. He is blind, but not completely blind, to the destructiveness latent in this group. And Mark is not present when this destructiveness is most openly manifested in the early part of the novel when machine-gun fire is heard outside the common room of his own college:

Glossop had a cut on the forehead, and on the floor lay the fragments of that famous east window on which Henrietta Maria had once cut her name with a diamond. (That Hideous Strength, p. 93)

Once again Lewis concocts a bit of fictitious history to highlight the conflicting forces in the story. The unruly workmen imported by Belbury to "develop" property purchased from the college constitute a threat to the order of the community. An

echo of the destruction that had threatened the college in Crowe's day shatters the academic calm. In a conversation near the end of the book, however, Lewis emphasizes the fact that the doctrines put into action by Belbury had all been expounded, in one form or another, at the college. While presenting the academic community as vulnerable to outbreaks of violence, he also insists on its responsibility for shaping the climate of opinion in which Belbury found acceptance.

As the story unfolds, Mark Studdock (rather surprisingly) acquires the courage to defend the past traditions which are threatened by Belbury. A symbolic act of violence which a Belbury superior commands Mark to perform provides a turning-point in this process. As with the incident of the shattered window, Lewis selects a melodramatic instance, but one which is pertinent in the context of the story. Mark's refusal to insult a crucifix stems not from religious scruples--he is too secular-minded a person--but from a disinclination to add further injury, even symbolically, to one who had been victimized by the Belbury of former times. The crucifix, a depiction of suffering revered by past ages, becomes the means of Mark's illumination concerning the nature of Belbury. At last he finds the courage to condemn evil as Richard Crowe had done. In this way, like Jane, he aligns himself with a revitalized past.

The foregoing summary might tempt one to conclude that Lewis tended to exalt the past at the expense of the present;

indeed, much of his writing could be cited in support of that conclusion. But That Hideous Strength makes it clear that the past is not necessarily to be equated with good. For some unexplained reason, the characters in the St. Anne's community take it for granted that a revived Merlin will probably gravitate toward Belbury. Dimble's fear of this outcome is vividly shown during the search for Merlin:

It was an age, not a man, that awaited them in the horrible little dingle. . . . And now all that age, horribly dislocated, wrenched out of its place in the time series and forced to come back and go through all its motions yet again with doubled monstrosity, was flowing towards them and would, in a few minutes, receive them into itself. (That Hideous Strength, pp. 232-33)

These fears surrounding the revival of Merlin suggest a very different view of the past than the reflections prompted by a realization that past achievements and values are endangered. The past as first represented in the figure of Merlin presents another face—perhaps a possibility of fusing occult power with the technological advances of Belbury. Jane Studdock's ability to "witness" actual events in her dreams could have presented a similar threat if she had chosen to ally herself with Belbury rather than with St. Anne's.

Another suggestion that the past contains a threatening element appears in the section of That Hideous Strength recounting the descent of the gods to St. Anne's. Describing Saturn, Lewis evokes a force that is likened to a "mountain of centuries":

It was also strong like a mountain; its age was no mere morass of time where imagination can sink in reverie, but a living, self-remembering duration which repelled lighter intelligences from its structure as granite flings back waves, itself unwithered and undecayed but able to wither any who approach it unadvised. (That Hideous Strength, p. 326)

This force seems to have affinities with the Merlin imagined by the St. Anne's company before his allegiance to Ransom was ensured. But Lewis leaves us a license to wonder: suppose Ransom had not been able to convince Merlin of his right to allegiance. Might he have joined forces with the foe? Perhaps such a choice would have brought the past, in its darkest form, into a present ill-equipped to cope with such a threat. The revival of Odin-worship in Nazi Germany might provide a parallel. Past and present can be inimical; Lewis shows us a world in which they are reconciled.

Because the past plays a prominent part in Lewis' writing, it is important to realize that he was not an opponent of modern scientific advances as such. Urang appears to blame Lewis for such a stereotype:

In That Hideous Strength . . . the contrast between Belbury and St. Anne's seems to put science, technology, and sociology all on the Devil's side, against the countryside, domesticity, 'Englishness,' and the classical and transcendental traditions. If the one pole is not presented as simply bad, it is at least presented as far more inclined to evil than the other. (Shadows of Heaven, p. 33)

Lewis defended himself against such charges in "A Reply to Professor Haldane," in which he points to officials rather than

scientists as being the villains of the story: "If anyone ought to feel himself libelled by this book it is not the scientists but the civil servant: and, next to the civil servant, certain philosophers." Lewis states further that the novel proposes not that:

'scientific planning will certainly lead to Hell'; but 'Under modern conditions any effective invitation to Hell will certainly appear in the guise of scientific planning'--as Hitler's regime in fact did.<sup>3</sup>

Obviously Lewis was sensitive to this type of criticism and did not relish the idea of being regarded as a foe of modern science and the social sciences.

Another criticism by Urang is less easily answered. This criticism is related to his treatment of divine immanence as distinct from divine transcendence. According to Urang, "Lewis tends, in short, very greatly to emphasize transcendence over immanence, eternity over time, objectivity over subjectivity, and the supernatural over the natural" (Shadows of Heaven, p. 29). Because Lewis' concept of God is important in That Hideous Strength, as well as in his other works, Urang's criticism deserves attention. Lewis himself expressed himself on this subject in Letters to Malcolm; his comments reveal that he viewed the immanence and transcendence of God in terms of continuity rather than dichotomy:

He is the ground of our being. He is always both within us and over against us. Our reality is so much from His reality as He, moment by moment, projects into us. The deeper the level within ourselves from which our prayer, or any other

act, wells up, the more it is His, but not at all the less ours. Rather, most ours when most His.<sup>4</sup>

Aside from such statements, how did Lewis present immanent and transcendent ideas of God in That Hideous Strength? The reader will detect an obvious fascination with the transcendent aspects of divinity; the gods' descent to St. Anne's is a striking example. In other instances, Ransom reminds his followers of the "eldilic" strength behind their foes, and emphasizes that he himself is waiting for orders from his own superiors; and Jane's moment of religious illumination, though localized in a certain spot in the St. Anne's garden, comes from a world of suffering and triumph that is beyond her ordinary range of sensibility. But Lewis does not concentrate exclusively on transcendent elements of deity, nor does he scorn the inner struggles through which his characters approach the divine in their lives. The encounter between Mark and Dimble signals one such struggle. Mark exaggerates Dimble's aversion to him:

In reality his presence was acting on Dimble as a summons to rigid self-control. Dimble was simply trying very hard not to hate, not to despise, above all not to enjoy hating and despising, and he had no idea of the fixed severity which this effort gave to his face. (That Hideous Strength, p. 220)

It is this conversation that prompts Dimble to ask himself later, "Is there a whole Belbury inside you too?" (That Hideous Strength, p. 224).

On Perelandra, Ransom's struggle with the foe was prefaced by a protracted inner struggle during which he felt a conviction of the presence of a divine force. For all the celestial traffic in That Hideous Strength, the action again turns on the choices of individuals who have been forced to look into their own hearts. Though Ransom's personality exerts unusual influence over his followers, his is not a blindly accepted authority which rules out the effort to follow one's inner voice. The vocal presence of McPhee serves as evidence that dissenting views are tolerated. Each person in the St. Anne's community has freedom to follow his own light, presupposing a certain basic compatibility of aim within the group. Individual allegiances matter. The eldila, supernatural presences visible only to Ransom, hover over the action of the book but refrain from direct intervention:

Doubtless, the great beings who now so often came to him had power sufficient to sweep Belbury from the face of England and England from the face of the globe; perhaps, to blot the globe itself out of existence. But no power of that kind would be used. (That Hideous Strength, p. 202)

The denouement of the story clearly reflects a transcendent intervention in worldly affairs. The destructive force unleashed by Merlin obviously reflects an impingement of outer forces upon the ordinary course of events. But the way for this spectacular overthrow of evil has been prepared by a number of smaller, less conspicuous actions that issued from a given character's emerging knowledge of the divine.

Mark's rebellion against Belbury, for example, is sparked by contemplation of the crucifix which he has been ordered to desecrate. His resistance to this act of symbolic violence issues from deep within. Mark finally refuses the order even though he does not believe in the divinity of Christ. The crucifix, portraying Christ at His most human and vulnerable, moves Mark to become more fully human himself by refusing to identify himself with the violence from which Christ suffered. This episode would seem to contradict Urang's contention that "In C.S. Lewis's Christology . . . the emphasis is almost exclusively on the deity of Christ, rather than on the humanity" (Shadows of Heaven, p. 33).

When one considers That Hideous Strength as a whole, it is clear that Lewis treats both the immanent and transcendent implications of deity. While the transcendent aspects make for more vivid and dramatic writing, the experiences of divine immanence may strike the reader as being more significant for the development of the characters.

It may be a lack of this inward dimension that diminishes the credibility of Jane's resolution of her marital difficulties. Whereas Mark emerges as more fully human from his confrontation with the image of Christ, Jane seems diminished by the theologically oriented view of marriage which she eventually adopts. This sense of diminution does not necessarily stem from the theological orientation itself; rather, it is more likely a consequence of

Lewis' failure to make Jane's shift of outlook seem emotionally (not just theologically) convincing.

Joan Lloyd describes Jane's dilemma in these terms:

Jane Studdock, the main female figure in the story, suffers from feelings that her sex has been treated unfairly. She believes that females are forced to surrender to males. Marriage is the primary propagator of this atrocity. No one will make Jane surrender. She stands as a soldier guarding her identity against all intrusions, sexual or otherwise. ("Transcendent Sexuality," p. 8)

Lewis' portrayal of Jane as a young woman who resists the oppressive influences surrounding her is <sup>+</sup>more believable than his portrayal of Jane as a convert (however reluctant) to a consciously Christian view of matrimony. It is <sup>+</sup>difficult to escape the impression that Lewis has produced a theological solution for an emotional dilemma. Jane's resolution of her marital conflict relates to her concept of marriage as an institution. Mark himself seems curiously peripheral to the whole issue except in the concluding sentences of the novel, where Jane notes his sloppiness with a kind of exasperated fondness.

Impressed by the words and personality of Ransom and by her religious experience in the garden, Jane reappraises her role as a wife. Mark as an individual remains curiously remote so that the reader is left wondering why Jane married him in the first place. (As the story develops, Mark begins to wonder the same thing.)

As for Mark, he is a more believable figure when he is shown in the process of struggling with his career decisions than when he is pictured as a partner in an unsatisfactory marriage. The resolution of his difficulties vis-a-vis Belbury rings true; his role in his marriage does not--whether it is depicted from his own viewpoint or that of Jane.

In treating the marital dilemma, Lewis focuses in particular on the Studdocks' refusal to have children. Jane's desire for independence is presented as a decisive factor

Some resentment against love itself, and therefore against Mark, for . . . invading her life, remained. . . . Though she did not formulate it, this fear of being invaded and entangled was the deepest ground of her determination not to have a child--or not for a long time yet. One had one's own life to live. (That Hideous Strength, pp. 72-73)

In this connection the reader may wonder what significance might be attached to the crime of Alcasan, the guillotined intellectual of Jane's first dream. Though Jane did not realize it, Alcasan was executed for having poisoned his wife, Jane's view of Mark is not so extreme as to elicit fears of murder, but she clearly regards him as a threat to her sense of identity at the same time as she is unhappy over his long absences from home. Fearing for the survival of her own identity, yet realizing she cannot count on Mark's presence for much of the time, Jane is unwilling to nurture a new existence.

The danger of the severed head, reason isolated from will and emotion, is emphasized in That Hideous Strength. The

technologists of Belbury have discovered a dreadful kind of "immortality" by maintaining Alcasan's head in a state of animation. The image of the severed head also appears in less startling ways. Mark, an ill-educated young man, is described as profiting more from the wisdom of the body than from the wisdom of the head. His ultimate superior at Belbury is often described simply as "the Head." In view of his total lack of leadership, this term is invested with an ironic quality. As an aspiring scholar, Jane finds no sense of personal involvement in her dissertation topic on John Donne's celebration of the body. Her stay in the relaxed yet disciplined environment of St. Anne's helps her to overcome an aversion to being touched, and her introduction to the spiritual dimension in life clarifies her marital problems.

For various characters, an effort of will rather than of intellect is required for solution to their problems. To the extent that this effort is forthcoming, the problems are resolved. Mark and Jane find emotion and will, rather than reason, coming to their aid in the crises they undergo. Their experience in this respect is similar to that of Ransom on Perelandra. Having exhausted the resources of reason, he is at last led to pit his own body against his foe in a violent confrontation. Urging him to this solution is a settling conviction that "This can't go on." Mark's rejection of Belbury has a similar visceral quality.

Lewis values the life of the mind but it is not the mind that ultimately wins out in his stories. MacPhee, for example, is depicted as excluded by his extreme rationality from both the spiritual and instinctive aspects of life. Skeptical about Ransom's methods of waging war, he is equally skeptical of the celebration ushered in by peace. Aside from his expression of martial spirit when the gods descend, MacPhee remains aloof from the battle. His insistent offers to accompany the search party for Merlin indicate his willingness to share the dangers of the quest, but genuine ideological commitment is absent, as Ransom senses. Personal devotion to Ransom, physical courage, moral rectitude and an austere sense of humor enter into MacPhee's character but he remains alienated from the deepest religious ideals animating Ransom. Therefore a boundary is set to his involvement: he is a noncombatant in the war and a non-participant in the revelry of love that follows.

Ransom, having waged his war successfully, blesses the subsequent season of fruitfulness but does not take part in it. More sympathetic to this phenomenon than is MacPhee, he is equally immune. But his leadership has made this flowering possible. In the viewpoint he attempts to communicate to the troubled Jane, there is neither a denial nor a worship of sex. His attitude is totally opposed to that of Filostrato, a character in the Belbury camp who would like to dispense with both sex and nature. To this end Filostrato works out a scheme for replacing organic

life with artificial trees and birds. His thinking extends to artificial men as well: "There will never be peace and order and discipline so long as there is sex. When man has thrown it away, then he will become finally governable" (That Hideous Strength, p. 173). This opposition of mind and body which obtains at Belbury receives its ultimate expression in the severed head of Alcasan.<sup>5</sup> This is the immortality to be offered by Belbury-- to a selected few. The fulness of life at St. Anne's forms a vital contrast with this goal.

Normal processes of birth and death are distorted in a world where the values of Belbury prevail. This underlying distortion is reflected in the contrived asymmetry of the room where Mark is held prisoner; the affront to aesthetic expectations merely echoes a more basic distortion of outlook. This distortion also precipitates Merlin's denunciation of Jane. His violently worded outburst is a response to the violence he thinks she has done to a relationship that is sacred as well as secular. Because of her actions, Merlin asserts, a hero intended to establish the safety of the kingdom will not be born; the time for his conception has passed. Joan Lloyd notes that Lewis "seems to have viewed sexuality as a metaphysical reality defined by God. Man must not distort God's created images of sexuality" ("Transcendent Sexuality," p. 10).

Merlin's denunciation makes it clear that this concept of sexuality involves a transcendence of time. The genetic resources

of the past generations and the welfare of future societies depend for their realization on decisions made in the present--by people like the Studdocks, whose perspective is limited to their own immediate situation, or like the planners of Belbury, whose imagination touches on the future of man only in terms of physical survival and domination. Mark and Jane's marital conflict, which is part of the larger issue of violence, is two-fold: in addition to the opposition between the two young people, there is a larger cleavage between sacred and secular interpretations of marriage. Until the larger conflict is resolved, Lewis suggests, the smaller one will fester.

For this reason it is Jane's new-found religious understanding that finally enables her to reappraise her marriage. Lewis, like many Christian writers, applies the imagery of marriage to the religious life. In The Four Loves he states that in marriage "the masculinity and femininity of the world, all that is assailant and responsive are momentarily focused."<sup>6</sup> Lewis' use of the word "assailant" suggests a violent basis for both the physical and spiritual aspects of human life. Jane's perception of marriage reflects this view and encompasses a similar understanding of the spiritual life:

How if this invasion of her own being in marriage from which she had recoiled, often in the very teeth of instinct, were not, as she had supposed, merely a relic of animal life or patriarchal barbarism, but rather the lowest, the first, and the easiest form of some shocking contact with reality which would have to be repeated--but in ever larger and more disturbing modes--on the highest levels of all? (That Hideous Strength, p. 315)

Ransom confirms her suspicion by pointing out,

The male you could have escaped, for it exists only on the biological level. But the masculine none of us can escape. What is above and beyond all things is so masculine that we are all feminine in relation to it. You had better agree with your adversary quickly.<sup>7</sup> (That Hideous Strength, p. 316)

Through Ransom's words Lewis outlines an adversary view of the relationship between the sexes and the relationship between God and man. In Till We Have Faces, written eleven years later, he treats this concept with greater subtlety and psychological insight, perhaps because his pre-Christian setting rules out overtly theological statements of the type that appear so abundantly in That Hideous Strength.

As Jane struggles to understand the attitudes of the St. Anne's community, she realizes with some irony that they are not "stained glass attitudes." The St. Anne's world-view was not "of some mist steaming upward: rather of strong, skillful hands thrust down to make, and mend, perhaps even to destroy" (That Hideous Strength, p. 318). She senses a capacity for violence as well as creativity in this world view. She also becomes aware of forces hostile to this "vivid, perilous world" of the spirit. Her moment of spiritual illumination in the garden is followed by a consciousness of "those who have not joy" battering at her peace of mind. This consciousness is expressed in terms of battle imagery: "But her defenses had been captured, and these counter-attacks were unsuccessful" (That Hideous Strength, p. 319).

Similarly, Mark's affirmation of human values against the claims of Belbury subjects him to a psychological assault by unseen forces but his new faith also holds firm.

Lewis makes it clear that the sense of peril experienced by his protagonists arises not only from the onslaughts of their enemies but also from the proximity of their own spiritual rulers. The atmosphere in which the gods descend to St. Anne's is not a calm and meditative one. Like the Narnia characters who realize that Aslan is "not a tame lion," the St. Anne's company must nerve itself to face the meeting with their spiritual superiors. Most of the community huddle downstairs while Ransom and Merlin receive their heavenly visitants in the upper part of the house.<sup>8</sup> They are overwhelmed by the presence of the gods: "Quick agitation seized them: a kind of boiling and bubbling in mind and heart which shook their bodies also" (That Hideous Strength, p. 321). Somewhat like the experience of Wesley, whose heart was "strangely warmed" by his new understanding of God, this description is more reminiscent of accounts of the early Friends who were said to "quake in the fear of the Lord." Latent in this description is a suggestion that violence accompanies transcendent apprehensions of the divine.

Starr's comment on the heavenly visitation gives an accurate impression of the aura which it lends to the story: "Mystery, beauty and danger beat upon the reader in pulsating suggestion: the air throbs with power" (King Arthur Today, p. 187). In the

visitation scene Lewis pictures one heavenly traveler, Charity, as "fiery, bright, sharp and ruthless, ready to kill, ready to die, out-speeding light . . . ." The effect of this vision upon its mortal witnesses is suggested in terms reminiscent of a battlefield: "They were blinded, scorched, deafened. They thought it would burn their bones" (That Hideous Strength, p. 323). Clearly Lewis' concept of charity contains tougher elements than kindness or vague humanitarian impulses.

When Merlin has received into himself "the powers" of these gods--the purpose of their visit--his appearance is so altered that "No one doubted that his final severance from the body was near" (That Hideous Strength, p. 327). Merlin has died to his old self in order to insure the ongoing life of Logres which overarches the St. Anne's community. His own magical powers have been superseded by a mysterious spiritual imperative. Merlin's bizarre mission and Jane's renunciation of ego both constitute a species of surrender. In order to understand the meaning of such surrender, it will be necessary to give some attention to the St. Anne's community, the opposing group at Belbury, and the stresses and strains associated with each. This examination will show more clearly the framework in which each group employs violence as a means to its ends.

If the outward violence of Belbury reflects its internal dissension, St. Anne's exhibits a different pattern. A striking feature of the St. Anne's community is its relative lack of

internal conflict. Because of the diverse temperaments and backgrounds of the individuals composing the group, this harmony is all the more noticeable. The reader may question, in fact, whether Lewis has rendered realistically the psychological climate of a communal venture; even the best-balanced religious group is subject to stresses and strains. But the good humor of the St. Anne's company seems almost unruffled. Ransom's arrangement that housework be alternated between teams of men and women--on grounds that men and women tend to bicker when they do such work together--is perhaps the only evidence of past friction. At one point Dimble commends his wife for fitting so smoothly into the St. Anne's schedule when she has been accustomed to running her own household.

Aside from MacPhee's occasional mutterings, which are prompted by philosophical disagreement with Ransom rather than by practical day-to-day operation of the community, harmony prevails. Jane's initial suspicion of St. Anne's in general, and Ransom in particular, soon fades. She accepts Ransom's leadership and gradually fits into the St. Anne's climate in which her former servant, like Jane, a refugee from the Belbury menace, assumes a manner of friendliness and equality unthinkable in their former association outside St. Anne's.

As leader of this group, Ransom, the man who set off for a walking tour in the English countryside and found himself on Mars instead, has now acquired an aura of spiritual superiority.

His followers listen docilely to his words (except for the intractable MacPhee, who can neither silence his reservations nor bring himself to leave the community). A legacy from a sister, which enables Ransom to support this community, carried with it an unexplained stipulation that he change his name to Fisher-King. The associations of this name with the Perceval legend are interesting but perhaps misleading: though his fortress is set on the edge of a wasteland and though he himself suffers from a mysterious wound, Ransom is able to overcome the forces opposing him. Possibly the questions asked by Merlin function as Perceval's unasked questions should have done in the original tale. Ransom's role as dux bellorum is made clear in the following exchange with Merlin:

'Who shall be Pendragon in the time when Saturn descends from his sphere? In what world did he learn war?'

'In the sphere of Venus I learned war. In this age Lurga shall descend. I am the Pendragon.' (That Hideous Strength, p. 274)

In a later passage Ransom declares,

'I have stood before Mars himself in the sphere of Mars and before Venus herself in the sphere of Venus. It is their strength, and the strength of some greater than they, which will destroy our enemies.' (That Hideous Strength, p. 290)

This dialogue underscores the warlike mission of Ransom, who personally is a gentle and retiring man. A man of action in the first two novels of the trilogy, Ransom has submerged his former personality into that of a religious leader who has attained higher wisdom through suffering. The individual quest of the

earlier stories has been succeeded by an "establishment" phase; Ransom is now responsible for the survival of his St. Anne's followers and also for the preservation of something much larger.

The struggle to gain courage on Mars and to overcome a demonic foe on Venus appear in this novel as preliminary stages of a war which culminates on earth. Onto the framework of interplanetary travel developed in the earlier books, Lewis has grafted material from the Arthurian legend: specifically, the concept of Ransom's role as that of Pendragon and the participation of Merlin in the new phase of the struggle between god and evil. Though the Arthurian parallels are not clear-cut, they add a dimension of depth to the story. Starr asserts that "The warfare between Light and Darkness which makes That Hideous Strength so exciting is centered on Arthur's struggle (removed though he is) to build a spiritual kingdom" (King Arthur Today, pp. 185-86). Like its Arthurian forerunners, That Hideous Strength contains instances of physical conflict. Of greater importance, however, is the spiritual nature of the issues being resolved. Lewis' insistence that the struggle is a spiritual one places this volume firmly with the Arthurian tradition. It is this spiritual content which lends credence to Moorman's assertion that

the two communities which the novel sets in opposition bear a close resemblance to the cities of God and Earth as they appear in St. Augustine . . . the remnant of Logres over which Mr. Fisher-King presides at St. Anne's is a true City . . . while the headquarters

of the N.I.C.E. at Belbury is a hodge-podge of individuals without organization or even loyalty to a central cause. (Precincts of Felicity, p. 76)

The cohesiveness of the St. Anne's community, however, is insufficient to meet the challenge of Belbury. For this purpose it is necessary that a chosen being, Merlin, be infused with the gifts of the gods. As he contemplates his own role, Merlin uses violent imagery: "If the Powers must tear me in pieces to break our enemies, God's will be done" (That Hideous Strength, p. 292). But even as Christ prayed for the cup to pass from him and even as Ransom hoped to be spared the ordeal of physical combat with the Un-man, Merlin casts about for other solutions. On being told that the king of England has no power in this conflict he asks Ransom, "Then is he not weak enough to be overthrown?" Patiently Ransom explains that he has no wish to overthrow the king. Merlin's questioning then uncovers the fact that "The Faith itself is torn in pieces" (That Hideous Strength, p. 292). Secular leadership is impotent in the face of spiritual peril; religious leadership is fragmented. So Merlin must receive at great cost to himself the extraordinary powers that can meet "that hideous strength."

As he and Ransom prepare for this testing Merlin recollects the battle of Mt. Badon, with "eagles crowding together in the pale sky. And Ransom, it may be, remembered his long struggle in the caves of Perelandra" (That Hideous Strength, pp. 324-25). The sense of desperate ordeal infusing this book suggests that it

was written after a time of tremendous stress during which people in Cornwall, for example, sometimes reported seeing King Arthur or his knights returning to defend England from her foes. Such sightings, comparable perhaps to the phenomenon of the angels of Mons in World War I, attest the depth of human exhaustion and resistance in wartime. Steeped in the past as he was, C. S. Lewis touched upon a spring of inarticulate emotion that wells up when there is need for deliverance: when the writer becomes an agonized consciousness willing that the carved images of saints and heroes of the past be restored to life to defend the helpless.

Lewis obviously had strong convictions about protection of the weak. These convictions colored his presentation of leadership and perhaps prompted him to turn to Arthurian models in the culmination of his trilogy. Had Lewis not chosen to follow the Arthurian precedent and to develop Ransom's character into that of religious leader-cum-military strategist, it could be argued that Dimble would have been the logical leader. As an older version of the Ransom of Out of the Silent Planet, Dimble would have constituted a more recognizable 20th-century leader than a Ransom metamorphosed into a Fisher-King. Dimble's angry words to Mark Studdock carry more impact than do Ransom's statements about his mission as Pendragon. Though Dimble's character is not fully developed, it reveals a non-platitudinous moral quality that would spell excellent leadership in any community, religious or otherwise. But Lewis is obviously convinced that the nature

of the coming conflict requires something beyond intellect and moral uprightness for its effective resolution.

Ransom, whose consciously ceremonious cast of mind sets him apart from his followers, attracts to himself the moral gravity of Dimble, the intuitive gifts of Dimble's wife, the questioning spirit of MacPhee, the gracious contributions of the Dennistons, the self-effacing service of Grace Ironwood and the practical good humor of Ivy Maggs (plus, of course, the inarticulate needs of Jane Studdock). But Ransom possesses some quality above and beyond the gifts of the people around him, a quality justifying, in Lewis' view, his assumption of religious leadership. This authority has been conferred not by Holy Orders but by a peculiar combination of individual testing (the struggle on Perelandra) and ancient tradition (the mantle of the Pendragon). Even the skeptic MacPhee, who suspends judgment on such issues, acknowledges the moral leadership of Ransom.

Ransom's role, which determines the pattern of "government" at St. Anne's, combines the roles of priest and king. Thus the group is neither congregational nor clerical in its decision-making procedures. St. Anne's is a hierarchical world yet an oddly democratic one at the same time: it is marked by an emphasis on personal qualities and by a respect for individual differences within a broad area of agreement. The St. Anne's pattern of life, however, has a questionable future in the modern world if Lewis' ending is to be read literally: once the battle

is over, Ransom leaves his community to ascend to an idyllic life in Perelandra. The reader is left to speculate what effect his departure will have upon his followers.

In his conduct of the war, Ransom stresses that he is acting, or deliberately refraining from action, under orders from a higher authority. Unlike Tirian of Narnia, he restrains himself from impulsive action; he informs Jane, "I am not allowed to use desperate remedies until desperate diseases are really apparent. Otherwise we become just like our enemies" (That Hideous Strength, p. 145). The awakening of Merlin constitutes a situation which, in Ransom's view, could call for desperate remedies:

When the new power from Belbury joins up with the old power under Bragdon Wood, Logres--indeed man--will be almost surrounded. For us everything turns on preventing that junction. That is the point at which we must be ready both to kill and die. (That Hideous Strength, pp. 199-200)

Jane's psychic gift has been of value to St. Anne's because her dreams have helped to identify the site of Merlin's return to life. When Dimble and his party are sent out to meet Merlin, Ransom (whose wound prevents his accompanying the group) hands Dimble a revolver and charges him to keep his mind in a state of prayer. Though the outcome of the St. Anne's-Belbury struggle is resolved through the violence applied by Merlin, it is clear that Ransom does not shrink from violence: his insistence that Dimble take a revolver, and his authority over Merlin himself, are evidence of Ransom's militant stance. Merlin is the instrument of Belbury's defeat; Ransom is Merlin's source of authority; in

the long run, however, Belbury is responsible for its own downfall just as Weston is responsible for committing himself to a satanic force. Ransom notes,

Their own strength has betrayed them. They have gone to the gods who would not have come to them, and pulled down Deep Heaven on their heads. Therefore, they will die. (That Hideous Strength, p. 294)

This commentary calls to mind Simone Weil's assertion that the violent entrap themselves through their own excess.<sup>9</sup> The reader senses the working out of a vengeance as impersonal as the forces of nature which Merlin invokes.

Sharp differences emerge between the opposing groups. While Ransom is the obviously identifiable leader of St. Anne's, his foe in That Hideous Strength is not a clear cut figure like the Un-man of Perelandra. This may be an indication that the evil depicted in this book is less monolithic than evil is often supposed to be; or it may simply imply that no one leader at Belbury can command the group's loyalty. The lack of clear-cut leadership results in a special kind of tyranny, as Mark discovers.

Lewis contrasts the recruiting methods of the two groups. Belbury's appeals to greed and fear throw into relief the individual liberty guarded at St. Anne's. Even when Ransom consciously exerts his influence there is an absence of coercion. The effect of Belbury on Mark is to sharpen his ambition even as it heightens his sense of insecurity; St. Anne's, on the other

hand, fuses individuals into a genuine team whose members trust one another even when there is not total understanding of the situation they are facing.

At last Mark is forced to recognize the nature of the group he is dealing with:

Ought not his very first interview with the Deputy Director to have warned him . . . that here was the world of plot within plot, crossing and doublecrossing, of lies and graft and stabbing in the back, of murder and a contemptuous guffaw for the fool who lost the game? (That Hideous Strength, p. 245)

Only when he has been arrested by Belbury's secret police does Mark arrive at this awareness. Yet there had been ample opportunity for him to observe the workings of the group. Mark's lack of sensibility is ascribed by Lewis to the fact that his education had exposed him neither to Christian ideals nor to the nobility of great pagan thought.<sup>10</sup>

After the plan to pin Hingest's murder on him becomes apparent, Mark does make an effort to extricate himself from Belbury. As he walks away from the grounds he encounters a sort of astral projection of the Deputy Director:

A tall, stooped, shuffling, creaking figure, humming a tune, barred his way. Mark had never fought. Ancestral impulses lodged in his body--the body which was in so many ways wiser than his mind--directed the blow which he aimed at the head of his senile obstructor. But there was no impact. The shape had suddenly vanished. (That Hideous Strength, p. 213)

Like Ransom on Perelandra, Mark's physical resistance has given an answer to his dilemma and has exposed the unreality of an

opponent's power. His liberation is short-lived because he has not yet freed himself from his desire for what Belbury represents. Even when Dimble informs Mark of Jane's ordeal at the hands of the Belbury policy Mark resists condemning the organization. Though the conversation with Dimble helps to clarify his thinking, Mark hesitates and demands more time to consider Dimble's suggestion that he join the St. Anne's group. Immediately after the interview with Dimble, Mark is arrested by Belbury secret agents. Only after a period of imprisonment and brainwashing does he see the issue more clearly. Mark's use of violence when he struck the "astral projection" of the Deputy Director freed him from virtual imprisonment at Belbury; when he is imprisoned there in fact, an even fuller freedom is found when he refuses to perform a symbolic act of violence toward a crucifix. His earlier act of violence marked the first stage in his liberation; his second act, a refusal of violence, signals a fuller awakening.

The indoctrination which Mark undergoes reveals the violent purposes of the Belbury conspiracy. Mark is told that Belbury scientists have established contact with mysterious beings called "macrobes" and that the first step in an individual's communication with these forces is the suppression of subjective emotion. When Mark asks whether the aims of the macrobes are compatible with such human aims as the elimination of war and poverty, his captor, Frost, ascribes the question itself to subjective feelings. Frost goes on to point out the "advantages" of modern war: "The effect of modern war is to eliminate retrogressive types, while sparing the technocracy and increasing

its hold upon public affairs" (That Hideous Strength, p. 258). Mark asks whether the last two wars were not then to be considered disasters. Frost replies, "On the contrary, they were simply the beginning of the programme--the first two of the sixteen major wars which are scheduled to take place in this century" (That Hideous Strength, p. 259).<sup>11</sup>

The torture of Jane, the careful engineering of riots to manipulate public opinion, the callousness about war--all these point up the hypocrisy of the Deputy Director's assertion that "We have always deprecated anything like violence." Of course, the Deputy Director modifies this view by adding that

if more drastic expedients have to be used then they must be used thoroughly. Moderate pain, such as any ordinary degree of endurance can resist, is always a mistake. It is no true kindness to the prisoner. (That Hideous Strength, p. 161.

This judgment echoes an earlier comment by Lord Feverstone (Devine, who like Ransom has acquired a new identity in this volume) to the effect that, in the long run, total war is the most humane course of action. Straik too is candid when he tells Mark, "Do not imagine that I indulge in any dreams of carrying out our programme without violence" (That Hideous Strength, p. 78). Straik foresees the destruction of society with savage joy. It is noteworthy that his apocalyptic words to Mark appear in juxtaposition with the description of Jane's dream about the murder of Hingest.

Like Straik, "Fairy" Hardcastle acknowledges the place of violence in the operations of Belbury; indeed, she goes one step further by admitting to the pleasure she derives from interrogation of prisoners. Lewis states elsewhere that Miss Hardcastle is "the common factor in all revolutions; and, as she says, you won't get anyone to do her job well unless they get some sort of kick out of it" ("Reply to Professor Haldane," p. 82).

At last Mark's eyes are opened to the nature of Belbury:

But at least it was now his side against theirs. And he could talk of 'his side' now. Already he was with Jane and all she symbolized. Indeed, it was he who was in the front line: Jane was almost a non-combatant. (That Hideous Strength, p. 268)

Despite his new clarity of conscience, however, Mark becomes fascinated with the idea of the macrobes. When he recognizes his frantic curiosity about them as a new kind of attack on his psychological defenses, he cries out for help and obtains a sense of respite.

One ray of light for Mark, during his incarceration, has been his duty of standing guard over a fellow-prisoner, a tramp whom Belbury officials have mistaken for the resurrected Merlin. Lewis extracts considerable humor from this mistaken identity. Caught in a situation he does not comprehend, the tramp takes refuge in silence, further mystifying Belbury leaders. Mark and this man develop a solidarity which constitutes a kind of embryonic St. Anne's within Belbury. Like his impression of the workingman at the village of Cure Hardy, his acquaintance with

this inarticulate vagabond convinces Mark that man at his most primitive level is nobler than the intelligentsia of the Belbury group. This recognition reinforces his sense that life is good in itself.

But getting out of the clutches of Belbury is no simple matter. Straik had once told Mark, "No one goes out of the N.I.C.E. Those who try to turn back will perish in the wilderness" (That Hideous Strength, p. 80). Lewis reveals that it is not just a matter of Belbury's willingness to destroy its adversaries; it is also a question of harboring Belbury's values within oneself. Mark is forced in effect to ask himself Dimple's question: Is there a whole Belbury inside you too? Only when he is willing to perish in the wilderness rather than cooperate with Belbury is Mark's liberation of self complete.

Lewis shows how the newcomer to both Belbury and St. Anne's has difficulty at first in fathoming organizational purposes. This confusion--protracted in Mark's case by refusal of higher-ups to answer his questions--accounts in some degree for the length of time required in this awakening. Because Mark's temperament is one that requires the approval of others, his sense of confidence (at first encouraged by Belbury's overtures) is shattered by the ambiguity of his position. It becomes clear that his academic future as well as his economic success depend upon this group's judgments. The violent imagery Mark uses when he learns that he may be "shoved" out of his Bracton fellowship on Feverstone's

recommendation (as actually occurs) reveals the adversary nature of the academic life Mark has led. The Belbury organization represents an intensification of the competition fostered by the "Progressive element" of Bracton College. Lewis thus makes it clear that it is not only the doctrines espoused by college lecturers that can promote a Belbury climate; the tactics adopted in academic decision-making can also partake of the Belbury world.

Jane has suffered confusion in her early days at St. Anne's but was drawn to the group even when she suspected it was merely a peculiar coterie. Once in its midst, she discovers that her welfare is the object of loving concern on the part of individuals whose personalities and outlook are quite different from her own, people whom she may not even particularly like. Looking deeper, Jane finds in St. Anne's a spirit of unity that does not depend on purely personal congeniality, though it serves to foster such congeniality. The unity at St. Anne's cuts across social divisions. Though not egalitarian in rhetoric, St. Anne's is hospitable both to the socially privileged (Jane) and to the less privileged (her servant Ivy). Belbury, despite a vocabulary of masses and collective units, is characterized by an elite group whose members struggle for power; St. Anne's, though more hierarchical in its leadership, insists upon the worth and uniqueness of each individual. It is inclusive rather than exclusive, a far cry from the atmosphere which Mark meets at Belbury.

Despite failure to develop some characters adequately, Lewis succeeds in creating a convincing picture of the ethos of two opposing groups. Even those characters which are sketchily presented contribute something to the over-all picture of the groups they serve. The destructiveness of Straik, an embittered fanatic, shows what might happen to a MacPhee who is not checked by ethical scruples and supported by a sympathetic environment. The vividly drawn crudeness and stridency of Fairy Hardcastle represent possible corruptions of a career orientation that appears more constructively in the dedication of Grace Ironwood.

Belbury and St. Anne's claim the allegiance of the various individuals who become dependent on them for meaning and purpose; they also draw upon the resources of higher powers. The composite character of each group is effectively portrayed, even though St. Anne's smacks of a utopian ideal and the villainy of Belbury has been set in extreme terms.

A striking contrast between Belbury and St. Anne's concerns the treatment of animals. At Belbury, animals are subjects for scientific experiments; at St. Anne's, they constitute an accepted part of the community. It is probable that Lewis, an outspoken opponent of vivisection, had in mind a connection between Weston's cruelty to the beasts on Perelandra and the experiments carried on at Belbury. Treatment of animals is a clue to character in That Hideous Strength: Feverstone's perfect willingness to run over a hen, and Mark's failure to object, offer an insight into each man during their trip to Belbury.

Some of the animal life at St. Anne's is sentimentalized: the pet mice, the spoiled bear. But Lewis makes his point: "Humans want crumbs removed; mice are anxious to remove them. It ought never to have been a cause for war" (That Hideous Strength, p. 149). "Mrs. Studdock, if the Director wanted to have a tiger about the house it would be safe. That's the way he is with animals" (That Hideous Strength, p. 164). The flaw in this Peaceable Kingdom is pointed out by the vigilant McPhee, who wonders aloud why a bear is kept in the house while pigs are kept in the sty and killed for bacon (That Hideous Strength, p. 262). Without glossing over such inconsistencies, Lewis insists on kindness to animals as an important feature of the good society.

Since That Hideous Strength is described in the subtitle as a modern fairy-tale for grown-ups, it is not surprising to find that it includes the old fairy-tale motif of "the animal as helper." When the town of Edgestow draws closer to its end, people leave for a variety of reasons, without knowing the precise nature of the danger that threatens. In some cases, pets "warn" their masters and mistresses to leave. This could appear quaint unless one happens to remember instances of humans being warned by animals of impending violent events such as earthquakes.

Animals serve not only to warn the innocent but also to punish the guilty. For this purpose the bear at St. Anne's

escapes and is taken to Belbury. In the scene of carnage at the Belbury banquet a number of animals terrorize the guests: a tiger, a gorilla, a wolf, a snake. Nature as a dsimonic force is suggested as:

monstrous, improbable, the hugh shape of the elephant thrust its way into the room: its eyes enigmatic, its ears standing stiffly out like the devil's wings on each side of its head . . . continuously trampling like a girl treading grapes, heavily and soon wetly tramping in a pash of blood and bones, of flesh, wine, fruit, and sodden tablecloth. (That Hideous Strength, p. 349)

The novel concompasses a vision of the power of the natural world, along with awareness that animals are capable of near-human devotion and that men sometimes behave like beasts. In Narnia Lucy asked,

Wouldn't it be dreadful if someday, in our own world, at home, men started going wild inside, like the animals here, and still looked like men, so that you'd never know which were which? (Prince Caspian, p. 101)<sup>12</sup>

One aspect of such a reverssl, suggests Lewis, would be the loss of humanity's gift of language. Like Orwell, Lewis draws a fascinating picture of the violence done to language by a totalitarian state. This violence begins in small ways: Feverstone's rudeness to old Canon Jewel, or Mark's violent rhetoric when he declares he will "break" the person responsible for Jane's ordeal. But the banquet scene presents a full development of Belbury's loss of the power to communicate. By the end of the speeches, a situation resembling the Tower of Babel has resulted,

with each step in the escalation of nonsense carefully chronicled by Lewis. The earlier clues (e.g., the Deputy Director's meaningless circumlocutions, Mark's willingness to place his gift for writing at the disposal of the propaganda machine of a totalitarian power) are developed to their final result, as the banquet scene moves from semantic confusion to physical destruction. Violence done to language is both a symptom of, and a reason for, the descent of man into barbarism--as the "silent planet" metaphor would lead us to expect.

Accompanying the descent into barbarism Lewis shows a number of factors besides the destruction of linguistic meaning: pollution of rivers, less safety in the streets, muffling of the press, town-gown antagonisms, higher prices, heavier traffic, noise riots, an influx of strangers in the wake of industrial expansion. To such a world, nature appears as both refuge and judge. Mark is struck by the freshness of the landscape when he leaves Belbury, yet nature also functions as an avenging force. Comments by Ransom and Filostrato sum up the differing views of their groups on the subject of nature. According to Filostrato,

All that talk about the power of Man over Nature--  
Man in the abstract--is only for the canaglia.  
You know as well as I do that Man's power over  
Nature means the power of some men over other men  
with Nature as the instrument. (That Hideous  
Strength, p. 178)

In contrast is the attitude of Ransom. When Merlin offers to  
"set a sword in every blade of grass to wound them . . . the

very clods of earth shall be venom to their feet," Ransom rejects this proposal: "It is in this age utterly unlawful" (That Hideous Strength, p. 288). In his exchange with Merlin, Ransom urges that 1) Nature is powerless to overcome the force represented by Belbury, and 2) granted such power, it would be wrong to use it. Yet it is nature, under Merlin's direction (and also as a result of Belbury's own engineering projects) which rises against the evil forces. All four elements are involved in the vengeance against Belbury.<sup>13</sup> Water floods the area in which the group has concentrated its strength. Feverstone dies in an earthslide. Frost perishes by his own hand, through the medium of fire. And these things have occurred because the gods descended from the air to instill Merlin with their powers. Violence has been set in motion both by the forces of evil represented by Belbury and the forces of good represented by Merlin.

Lewis' emphasis on nature in the denouement of the story gives this novel considerable ecological interest. His view of ecological problems is grounded in a religious world-view. Merlin, whom Richard Crowe had long ago called the devil's son, is an agent of the gods, sent to punish the guilty and to set free the captives, animal and human. A period of fruitfulness is ushered in; both humans and animals participate in the renewal of life that follows the overthrow of evil. As Moorman points out, Lewis, like Tolkien, celebrates an agrarian society.

"The City" truly flowers when man is restored to harmony with nature. The animals in the story, like Merlin himself, have a mysterious vitality that touches human life yet remains independent of it. It is this force, perhaps, which Jane must obey when Ransom counsels her to be "obedient" to Mark. Lewis certainly does not represent obedience as a virtue in itself. His depiction of Hardcastle browbeating Mark makes that point clear:

The great thing is to do what you're told. If you turn out to be any good you'll soon understand what's going on. But you've got to begin by doing the work. You don't seem to realize what we are. We're an army. (That Hideous Strength, pp. 98-99)

St. Anne's too is an army in a sense, but it does not exact blind obedience. Ransom's patient counseling of the rebellious Jane is evidence that her questions are taken seriously. Lewis emphasizes the importance of obeying the correct voice. The consequences of not doing so are shown in the calamity that befalls Edgestow.

In both Perelandra and That Hideous Strength, violent confrontations are followed by scenes of peace and joy. Neither, however, includes the reconciliation of foes, unless Mark and Jane's reconciliation be regarded in this light. In each case evil is defeated and Ransom departs for a different world. At the end of Perelandra he departs for earth to provide leadership in a holy war; in the conclusion of That Hideous Strength, he returns from earth to Perelandra to seek healing for his

wound. Like his precursor Arthur retiring to Avalon, Ransom will find rest; the Fisher-King representing St. Anne's is the *antithesis* of the Promethean emblem of Belbury, a muscular nude man grasping a thunderbolt. Lewis rejects the concept that man seizes power from the heavens; the force employed by Merlin under the influence of a heavenly power constitutes an act of obedience rather than a Promethean act of revolt. Belbury, with its violent rebellion, is checked by the violence set in motion by Merlin to restore the established order. In this order, as perceived by Lewis, a sense of the past checks the pride of the present; nature is revered rather than exploited; violence is a last resort rather than an instrument of day-to-day policy; language mirrors truth; and married reflects something essential about the unit of God and man. By such values the hideous strength of a modern Babel is rebuked and human life is renewed.

The trilogy thus culminates in its resolution of earth's pressing problems as they find expression at Edgestow. Ransom, a solitary observer at the beginning of his adventures, is drawn into a network of violent events which require him to assume a leadership role. His voyage to Malacandra prepares him for the combat on Perelandra, a combat which pits him against a foe single in purpose though dual in nature. In That Hideous Strength Ransom carries forward on earth the battle he waged on another planet. His leadership of a varied but likeminded group allows him both to influence the lives of young followers and to rebuke the violence of the Belbury rebels.

## NOTES

1. Charles Moorman, The Precincts of Felicity: The Augustinian City of the Oxford Christians (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1966), p. 67. Hereafter referred to in the text as Precincts of Felicity.
2. Nathan Comfort Starr, King Arthur Today: The Arthurian Legend in English and American Literature, 1901-1953 (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1954). Hereafter referred to in the text as King Arthur Today.
3. C. S. Lewis, "A Reply to Professor Haldane," Of Other Worlds; Essays and Stories, ed. by Walter Hooper (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1966), p. 82. Hereafter referred to in the text as "Reply to Professor Haldane."
4. C. S. Lewis, Letters to Malcolm; Chiefly on Prayer (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1964), pp. 68-69.
5. "The Forms of Things Unknown," Of Other Worlds; Essays and Stories, ed. by Walter Hooper (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1966), p. 125.
6. C. S. Lewis, The Four Loves (London: Collins, 1963), p. 95.
7. C. S. Lewis, "Priestesses in the Church?" God in the Dock; Essays on Theology and Ethics, ed. by Walter Hooper (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans, 1970), pp. 234-39.
8. Like the apostles awaiting Pentecost in an upper room.
9. Their own destruction seems impossible to them. For they do not see that the force in their possession is only a limited quantity ("The Iliad," p. 14).
10. A topic Lewis explores in The Abolition of Man (New York: Macmillan, 1947).
11. As Urang points out, "There are, after all, affinities between N.I.C.E. in That Hideous Strength and what we have come to call the 'Military-industrial complex.'" Shadows of Heaven, pp. 182-83.

12. Peter Gay, Weimar Culture; The Outsider as Insider (New York: Harper, 1968), p. 107.

13. "Herein lies the last secret of war, a secret revealed by the Iliad in its similes, which liken the warriors wither to fire, flood, wind, wild beasts, or God knows what blind cause of disaster, or else to frightened animals, trees, water, sand, to anything in nature that is set in motion by the violence of external forces." "The Iliad," p. 26.

## CHAPTER V

### ORUAL: THE SELF AS FOE

In Till We Have Faces,<sup>1</sup> Lewis speaks with a different voice than the one we hear in his other fictional works. He brings to a retelling of the Eros/Psyche legend one of those qualities included in his definition of myth: "It is not only grave but also awe-inspiring: it has a numinous quality, that is, an awareness of divine and spiritual things."<sup>2</sup> The pagan setting of the work allows Lewis to develop Christian concepts of divine and human love in a context that is free of overt theologizing, yet Starr believes that Till We Have Faces "is the most concentrated and the most powerful expression of Lewis' religious belief in any of his novels."<sup>3</sup> The violent emotional conflicts in this novel are expressed and resolved with greater maturity than Lewis had brought to his consideration of Jane Studdock's dilemma.

In the character of Orual, Lewis succeeds brilliantly in capturing the outlook of an individual rejected by society and ready to resort to violent means to preserve what measure of happiness a hostile universe has afforded. Not content with this level of insight, he probes deeper to reveal the intensity of the hatred that is intermingled with Orual's love for her one ally. The characterization of Orual reveals in a moving way the social and inner pressures that drove her to assert her needs through

violence. This portrayal reinforces Jung's declaration that the danger to mankind arises from man himself, "from the psyches of the individual and the mass."<sup>3</sup> Lewis himself has described the theme of the work as encompassing, among other things, "dark idolatry and pale enlightenment at war with one another and with vision" (Till We Have Faces, Preface). Orual is made to perceive her dilemma about her sister's sacrifice in this way:

If the things believed in Glome were true, then what Bardia said stood; if the Fox's philosophy were true, what the Fox said stood. But I could not find out whether the doctrines of Glome or the wisdom of Greece were right. I was the child of Glome and the pupil of the Fox; I saw that for years my life had been lived in two halves, never fitted together. (Till We Have Faces), p. 160)

The people of Glome, along with priest and king, are convinced of the necessity for human sacrifice to restore stability and plenty to the land. Orual's Greek tutor, a prisoner of war called the Fox, regards this belief as superstition. One might question, however, whether the Fox as a spokesman for enlightenment differs sharply from the people of Glome (or the Merlin of That Hideous Strength) when violence is in question. His belief in man ("All men are of divine blood, for there is the god in every man") does not lead him to conclude that war, as such, is evil. Rather, the Fox incites Orual's father, the king, to wage war on neighboring countries to safeguard Psyche. While the Fox's counsel in this direction is a desperate last resort, he (like the child character Lucy in Voyage of the Dawn Treader) shows a startling facility for encompassing in his imagination the slaughter of large numbers of

people. In his own fashion the Fox exceeds King Trom's attitude that "It's only sense that one should die for many. It happens in every battle" (Till We Have Faces, p. 69). The intellectual and humanitarian Fox is quite ready to sacrifice many for the sake of one cherished being, Psyche.<sup>5</sup> The wisdom of Greece and the religion of Glome alike fall back on violence as the ultimate solution to human problems, but in this instance the potentially destructive effects of the Fox's policy appear greater than those of the status quo headed by King Trom, a man who obviously takes a certain level of violence for granted.

The two world-views have in common a basically pessimistic assumption: something predatory, whether god, demon or human outlaw, has torn Psyche from those who love her. Psyche herself believes that "the gods will have mortal blood" (Till We Have Faces, p. 83), but she escapes the negativism which others attach to this concept. She is not, however, able to communicate her understanding to Orual. In her suffering, Orual hallucinates during her illness following Psyche's departure:

it was she who hated me; it was on her  
that I wanted to be revenged . . . always  
wrong, hatred, mockery, and my determination  
to be avenged. (Till We Have Faces, p. 89)

Orual's desire for retribution springs from something deeper than sibling rivalry or a weak self-concept determined by her own physical ugliness: it is the result of a life-long confrontation with two mutually exclusive spiritual orientations, one stressing the claims of authority, instinct and tradition, the other insisting on

the primacy of individual moral responsibility in the light of conscience and reason. Orual's fragmented self is a victim of these two opposing forces, which both fail her at the crucial point of the loss of a loved one. Her sister's fate, in circumstances sanctioned by the weight of religious tradition and ineffectively opposed by the dissenting voice of the Fox's ethical philosophy, estranges Orual from each of the competing elements that constitute her world-picture, and precipitates her long travail for understanding: as the 17th-century Fox put it, "for Truth's sake." But it is not merely a disinterested striving for truth that propels Orual forward: self-seeking motives of a less worthy sort are often paramount in her mind.

In The Screwtape Letters, Lewis describes the nature of the emotion that characterizes many of Orual's reactions:

the passion to dominate, almost to digest, one's fellows; to make his whole intellectual and emotional life merely an extension of one's own--to hate one's hatreds and resent one's grievances and indulge one's egoism through him as well as through oneself. (Screwtape Letters, p. xi)

Orual's vicarious life through her beautiful sister rests upon such a foundation. As her father has rejected and criticized her for her plainness, only coming to value her later for her mental keenness, Orual in turn excludes her sister Redival from her inner circle once their lovely half-sister Psyche is born. From that point on, Orual's emotional life flows in a single track. The interruption of her happiness, through an apparent action of the

gods, deprives Orual of her only claim to happiness. Further embitterment occurs when Orual, finding Psyche alive, realizes that her sister wishes to remain in the invisible palace of her mysterious god. Despite her own momentary glimpse of the palace, Orual refuses to believe in the god or at least leave Psyche free to enjoy her happiness.

Her efforts to persuade Psyche to return reveal the extent to which the beloved sister herself is perceived as the enemy and how violence results in estrangement:

If anyone could have seen us at this moment I believe he would have thought we were two enemies met for a battle to the death. (Till We Have Faces, p. 127)

We fell apart, both breathing hard, now more like enemies than ever. (Till We Have Faces, pp. 127-28)

We left marks on one another's skin. There was a thick, tangled sort of wrestling. (Till We Have Faces, p. 136)

Jacob departs with a blessing after he has wrestled with the angel, but it will be many years before Orual will experience the blessing to be gained from her struggle. Hostility continues to be a strong element in her affections, as Orual realizes in examining her love for the soldier Bardia, later her trusted general. She recalls how she had subtly encouraged others to mock Bardia's love for his wife: "Did I hate him, then? Indeed, I believe so. A love can grow to be nine-tenths hatred and still call itself love" (Till We Have Faces, p. 266). In sharp contrast to Orual's grasping love is that of Ansit, Bardia's wife, who is incredulous at Orual's suggestion that she ought to have informed Orual of

the toll Bardia's work was exacting: "Make him so mine that he was no longer his?" (Till We Have Faces, p. 274). She goes on to accuse Orual of having devoured, like the gods, the lives of those who served her.

Orual is estranged not only from other humans but from the earth itself. As a result of her unsuccessful effort to persuade "cruel Psyche" to return to her former dependence, Orual sees the earth as a foe:

It is a strange, yet somehow a quiet and steady thing, to look around on earth and grass and the sky and say in one's heart to each, 'You are all my enemies now. None of you will ever do me good again. I see now only executioners.' (Till We Have Faces, p. 184)

Orual's state of mind recalls Merlin's threat in That Hideous Strength, "the very clods of earth shall be venom to their feet" (That Hideous Strength, p. 340). In this mood, Orual is haunted by an obsession that the sound of chains swinging in a palace well is readily the sound of Psyche's lamentation. She has thick walls built around the well to shut out the sound:

For awhile after that an ugly fancy used to come to me in my dreams, or between sleeping and waking, that I had walled up, gagged with stone, not a well but Psyche (or Orual) herself. (Till We Have Faces, p. 235)<sup>6</sup>

In Neumann's terms, Orual has lost the power of affirmative action; she dwells in a wasteland where she is "walled" in work and achievement that often benefit others but bring her no sense of satisfaction (Amor and Psyche, p. 59). Involved though she is in

running her kingdom, Orual senses the threat of her social role to her truest existence. She wavers between determination ("I am the Queen; O'll kill Orual too") (Till We Have Faces, p. 60) and fear ("Orual dies if she ceases to love Psyche") (Till We Have Faces, p. 234). As years pass, the Queen becomes more dominant in her nature and Orual's existence is stifled under the weight of this public role.

The split in her consciousness is expressed in imagery of the seasons when Orual states, "Though it was spring without, in me a winter which, I thought, must be everlasting, locked up all my powers" (Till We Have Faces, p. 295). This imagery is reminiscent of the land of Narnia frozen in perpetual winter by the spell of the White Witch; but in Till We Have Faces, the heroine represents both the icy realm and the will that has imposed the enchantment. The wicked Witch is not perceived as an external threat but as an internalizing of the predatory goddess Ungit. Three events in particular unite to break Orual's spell: a journey from home, a vision of her late father and observance of temple ceremonies during a seasonal festival celebrating (significantly) the overthrow of winter by spring.

The journey to enighboring lands not only gives Orual a new perspective from travel itself; it also results in a meeting with a foreign priest whose new temple is based, as it happens, on the sufferings and triumph of Psyche. Orual's rage at what she considers errors in the priest's sotyry leads her to form a resolution to write a "complaint against the gods." The effort of

recollecting long-past events has the consequence of "letting Orual wake and speak, digging her almost out of a grave, out of the walled well" (Till We Have Faces, p. 257). So begins the effort to communicate with the gods, referred to later in the novel in these cryptic terms: "Until that word can be dug out of us, how can they hear the babble that we think we mean?" (Till We Have Faces, p. 294).

Lewis makes it clear that a process of digging is required. Orual's vision of the three chambers expresses this concept dramatically. In this episode the old king serves as a guide in Orual's steps toward enlightenment. Though he retains the formidable personality that Orual remembers from her younger days, the King subordinates his harshness to a loving purpose as he exhorts Orual, "throw yourself down" and compels her to take part in an excavation. This work takes Orual from the familiar Pillar Room of the palace to a mud chamber beneath it and finally to a stone chamber yet further down. Like Ransom, she must journey downward to an axis mundi walled with rock, but the foe she meets there is herself. In life the old king had forced Orual to look in the Pillar Room mirror, on the day she proposed herself as a substitute sacrifice for her sister, and to recognize her physical flaws. Now, after death, he holds up a spiritual mirror which reveals Orual's identity with the goddess Ungit she has so long condemned. The old king's own past shortcomings--he had once killed a slave boy in a moment of

temper--do not diminish his value as a guide. His energy of will, so devastating in Orual's childhood, is turned to a constructive purpose as it motivates her to know herself and, in the shock of recognition, to seek to change herself. The importance of labor in this process is emphasized as the king provides his daughter with workmen's tools to carry out the excavation. These tools, rather than weapons of warfare like those given to the children in Narnia, will furnish the key to identity.

Orual's violent efforts to discover and reconstruct herself may cause the reader to wonder: surely she is not someone who needs to be reminded of the importance of work? If anything, she has buried herself in the work of government for years. But, Lewis suggests, the work of digging into the self is a different kind of labor from the busy-ness of ordinary obligations. It is a spiritual labor, violent but invisible whose results may be less predictable than the results of other work. Neumann has noted of Apuleius' tale of Psyche that "the very crux of the Psyche myth (is) the activity of Psyche, who creates her own redemption."<sup>7</sup> In Lewis' version, Psyche undergoes trials, but Orual carries most of the burden. She thus makes some reparation (though unconsciously) to the sister she has wronged, and succeeds in transforming her own character. Orual strives to throw off the qualities of the goddess Ungit, who represents, in Carnell's judgment, "things-as-they-are, the world in travail for redemption."<sup>8</sup>

Lewis suggests how a lonely and laborious existence, lived without a sense of definite accomplishment and leavened only by a relentless irony, can still partake of beauty. At the end of the volume, Orual's inward beauty appears in outward form, as she is reconciled with her sister in a shared enjoyment of the beatific vision. In its concept of vicarious suffering, Till We Have Faces unites a church militant (Orual's long travail, initiated by violence), a church suffering (Psyche's labors after her separation from her loved ones) and a church triumphant (the union of the two sisters in the palace of the god of love).

Because it has engendered this process of discovery, Orual's jealousy of Psyche functions as a "felix culpa." Neumann notes that, "as in the Biblical episode, the heeding of the serpent leads to expulsion from paradise and to a higher consciousness" (Armor and Psyche, pp. 72-73). Though Neumann's words refer to the Psyche of the Apuleius legend, they can be applied to the Orual of Lewis' version, who is identified with the disobedience of the earlier story. According to Neumann, the Psyche of Apuleius acquires an identity of her own through disobedience. Lewis, however, interprets human identity in terms of obedience to the divine will. He demonstrates how a violent severing of the wills of God and man can be healed through the loving (though painful) initiative of God and through the development of humility in the human heart. In this way, Lewis suggests, the restoration of human and divine is accomplished; differences between

individuals are overcome; character is transformed. The face of each one of us can emerge only when a violent crushing of the ego has taken place. Lucy's lesson about the nature of beauty, expressed in more childlike terms, bears a similar message. But Till We Have Faces dramatizes this concept in terms that both utilize and transcend violence.

Orual's quest begins in response to a violent happening: the threat to her sister. At various points in her search for self, she resorts to violence as an instrument of policy, and discovers in some instances that violence opens doors that would otherwise have remained shut. Her physical attack on Bardia at the time of Psyche's imprisonment does not harm him, but it moves him to disobey the king's command and allow Orual a final meeting with her sister. Later in the story this episode results in Bardia's offer to teach her swordsmanship. When the king is dead (significantly, he breathes his last while Orual is ransacking his armory for a better hauberk) Orual consolidates her own rule through combat to the death with an invading prince. Though she insists on her right to take part in this confrontation, Orual approaches the ordeal in a sober spirit that presents an anti-heroic view of war:

It was the strangest thing in the world to look upon him, a man like any other man, and think that one of us would presently kill the other. Kill; it seemed like a word I had never spoken before. (Till We Have Faces, p. 226)

When the combat has culminated in victory for Orual, she has the odd sensation of having lost something. This combat presents a realistic, understated view of war unlike the zest for battle in the Narnia tales, though the single combat in Prince Caspian was undertaken "for to prevent the effusion of blood" (Prince Caspian, p. 148).

Orual resorts to both physical and psychological violence in her effort to regain Psyche's exclusive allegiance. Her self-imposed wound and suicide threat work upon Psyche's love in a way that her threat to kill Psyche does not. Psyche condemns Orual for turning her love into a weapon. Similarly, Bardia has been puzzled by her request for a dagger. On their earlier trip to the hills to look for Psyche's remains, he had insisted that Orual take a sword in case dangers are met. But her insistence of taking a dagger to her second meeting with Psyche arouses his suspicion: "A dagger, Lady, And for what?" "To use as a dagger. Come, Bardia, you know I mean no ill" (Till We Have Faces, p. 165). The fact that Bardia "looked strangely at me," and his challenging of this request, indicate that Bardia has reservations about her choice of weapon for this journey. A soldier, he obviously senses a violent intention which is misdirected.

But Orual carries through her scheme, with its attendant effects: exile for Psyche, inward bitterness of her own, and above all the strange words of the god: "You also shall be Psyche." This promise is carried out only when Orual has left

behind the violence with which she initiated her quest for self. Within the boundaries of the story, it seems doubtful that an individual of Orual's temperament would have embarked on the road of spiritual development without the catalyst of violence (the threatened sacrifice) and the use of violent tactics herself (the self-mutilation). Gossett has commented on Flannery O'Connor's work that

Because human definitions of God's ways are too limited to be wholly accurate, they must often be corrected by violence which disturbs the creature so that he may be open to the creator. (Violence in Recent Southern Fiction, p. 94)

Orual responds violently to what she perceives as the violent action of the god. Ironically, however, the blood required is exacted by Orual herself, who sheds her own blood and resolves to kill her sister if other measures fail.

But the nature of Orual's struggle mandates inner rather than outward strife. It is true that Orual takes an active part in three defensive wars, thus entering as comrade a male domain she cannot enter in any other capacity. Unlike Bardia, however, she does not find in warfare a genuine forgetting of personal burdens. Her real defeats and victories emerge on another plane.

Orual exploits the loyalty of Bardia and the love of the Fox, but she suppresses her inclination for violent revenge when Bardia's widow faces her with this truth. By refusing to permit her rage the kind of expression her father had indulged, Orual

transcends this part of her personality. In a document marked by criticism of the gods, she departs from her usual tenor to bless them for having made her unable to carry out her violent impulses. Her hanging of Batta, a violent action, is ordered not in a moment of rage but as a means of protecting the other slaves from Batta's petty tyrannies. An indication that this judgment sits heavily upon her, however, may be found in references identifying Batta with the Ungit aspect Orual tries to suppress in herself. The real task is to root out those qualities in herself which imperil those around her (Bardia, the Fox) as Batta had oppressed others at her own level of influence.

As a result of Psyche's fate in years past, Orual grows in understanding. Starr has identified the Christian strands in Psyche's role:

Psyche goes to her Mount . . . and is fastened to a tree, and comes to a new life . . . in the end she is the instrument of redemption and salvation. She has Christ's compassion for suffering and sinful people, especially at the end for Orual's years of torment. (C. S. Lewis's, Till We Have Faces, p. 19)

Psyche's compassion is reflected in her injunction before her sacrifice that Orual be kind to their sister Redival, despite Redival's probable implication in the decision to offer Psyche to the gods. Only years afterward, when a visitor mentions the fact that Redival was unhappy during her early years, does Orual review this entire subject from a new perspective. In her conversations with Orual, who cannot or will not see the divine

milieu that surrounds them, Psyche is like one of the "sons of God" described by Thomas Kelly: "mourning to see his fellows raking together the sticks and the straws while over their heads is held the crown of life."<sup>9</sup> The dwarfs of Narnia's last battle are deaf to this appeal; Orual, unwilling to hear it at first, is finally able to attend to the offer of the gods' hospitality.

It is a long, bitter process. Orual's momentary glimpse of Love's palace served only to harden her heart. After many years she discerns, in a temple ceremony in Glome, something that had been invisible to her before. Lewis describes the scene "when the Priest is shut up in the house of Ungit from sunset, and on the following noon fights his way out and is said to be born." Like the Incas who tethered the sun to a hitching post in a Cuzco temple to insure its remaining to initiate the summer, the people of Glome inaugurate their new year by an effort to control, or at least to ritualize, the passing of the seasons. Suddenly Orual perceives something besides the superstition she had always previously scorned in this sham fight with wooden swords, with wine instead of blood poured over the fighters:

Today it struck me in a new way. It was the joy of the people that amazed me . . . looking as if all the world was well because a man dressed up as a bird had walked out of a door after striking a few blows with a wooden sword. (Till We Have Faces, p. 284)

In this ritual, a world of violent and baffling events is translated into a world of peace and joy.

In connection with this ritual, the verse of the Apuleius tale acquires meaning:

"Hope for no bridegroom born of mortal seed,  
 But fierce and wild and of the dragon breed.  
 He swoops all-conquering, borne on airy wing,  
 With fire and sword he makes his harvesting." (Amor  
 and Psyche, p. 7)

Juxtaposition of the destructive fire and sword with the creative connotation of harvesting reveals a struggle of the spirit which turns instruments of warfare into the tools of reapers in celestial fields. Like George Fox, "come up in spirit through the flaming sword," Orual becomes a new creature. Her vision of paradise, achieved at the end of the book, follows a long struggle, but a struggle that was not waged with outward weapons. In Orual's battle the pen was mightier than the sword. Undertaking the task of writing as if seizing upon a weapon, she pierced her own heart with the unfolding of failure which her book revealed. This wound, more penetrating than the self-imposed dagger wound of her youth, opened her understanding to the nature of the deity whom she faced: not the Ungit of grasping love but the more baffling and beautiful god of the mountain.

The transformation he works upon her is not of the sort she had envisaged. Upon declaring that "there is no creature (toad, scorpion, or serpent) so noxious to man as the gods" (Till We Have Faces, p. 259), Orual half-expects to be transformed into a bird, beast or tree, if she is not struck down by some physical or mental affliction. A different transformation takes place as Orual is drawn to a type of love unlike what she had imagined.

Her earlier outlook on the gods might be summed up in these words from King Lear: "As flies to wanton boys are we to the gods;/ They kill us for their sport." A later insight into the nature of the gods is suggested by Orual's encounter with the sacred rams:

They butted and trampled me because their gladness led them on; the Divine Nature wounds and perhaps destroys us merely by being what it is. We call it the wrath of the gods; as if the great cataract in Phars was angry with every fly it sweeps down in its green thunder. (Till We Have Faces, p. 295)

Orual's long struggle against the gods and against those she loves ends in unity. She has accepted the challenge which Bardia, the loyal soldier, had refused: "If the King and the gods fall out, you great ones must settle it between you. I'll not fight against powers and spirits" (Till We Have Faces, p. 61). Bardia has prepared Orual for combat on physical battlefields. Something else must guide her in the swordsmanship of the spirit. Her guides are the Greek tutor who forms her moral sense; her father, through whom she is connected with the tradition and vitality of Glome; and Psyche, who points the way to a synthesis between these two worlds.

Who is Psyche? As Neumann points out, Psyche arouses the desire of a god rather than of men. She has no mortal suitors. Unlike Helen of Troy, who "aroused desire and fomented war" (Amor and Psyche, pp. 88-89), Psyche calls mankind to a spiritual struggle. Violence occurs in the process of this struggle, but it is not a combat that can be resolved through violent means.

In the world which Orual discovers at the end of her life, violence exists in a sublimated form. A non-violent temple ceremony both celebrates and negates the combat of winter and spring, death and life. The lion Aslan slew the White Witch of Narnia on a field of battle; the priest of Glome ushers in the new year through a mock battle. In this way the terror of the universe is both acknowledged and transcended. Starr quotes Lewis' statement that "God is the only comfort: He is also the supreme terror," and goes on the note that "Very often this terror comes to those who are overwhelmed by the violence and evil which God has allowed to exist in the world" (C. S. Lewis's Till We Have Faces, p. 14). Orual undergoes an existential crisis not experienced by any other Lewis fictional character with the possible exceptions of Menelaus ("After Ten Years") and Jane and Mark Studdock (Till We Have Faces). The struggle of Ransom on Perelandra is concerned with life and death stakes but it lacks the tension which Orual bears and which forces her to readjust her concept of the divine. Overwhelmed by the loss of her beloved sister and then by her own role in this loss, Orual is first aware of the terrifying aspects of the divine. Only later is she able to discern the comfort and joy which radiate from the divine. She makes the difficult transition from an Old Testament to a New Testament emphasis; from a recognition that the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom to a realization that perfect love casteth out fear. But she learns this not by succumbing to her fear but by battling out the issues as she sees them. Her

obedience contains emotional as well as intellectual factors, but it is not a blind obedience.

Describing the road of trials traveled by the Sumerian goddess Inanna to the realm ruled by her "enemy and sister goddess" Ereshkigal, Joseph Campbell traces the journey of the hero or heroine who travels such a road and who

discovers and assimilates his opposite (his own unsuspected self) either by swallowing it or by being swallowed. One by one the resistances are broken. He must put aside his pride, his virtue, beauty, and life, and bow or submit to the absolutely intolerable. Then he finds that he and his opposite are not of differing species, but one flesh. (Hero with a Thousand Faces, p. 108)

This transformation is wrought not by clinging but by giving up.

Psyche realized early the need to surrender to the god; Orual learned this late in life. Newmann finds Psyche's submission to her fate

in profound accord with the mystery of the feminine faced with this situation of death. She does not respond with struggle, protest, defiance, resistance, as a masculine ego must have done in a similar situation, but, quite the contrary, with acceptance of her fate. (Amor and Psyche, p. 69)

Thus Newmann attributes Psyche's acceptance of her fate to her feminine nature. In Lewis' novel, the defiant Orual is described in masculine terms. When she expresses anger at people who throw stones at Psyche, her sister reproves her: "You look just like our father when you say those things" (Till We Have Faces, p. 48). When Orual is later unable to persuade Psyche to return

to Glome, "fury, my father's own fury" (Till We Have Faces, p. 127) descends upon her, as it does during her conversation with Ansit. In addition, Orual's lack of a husband and her successful rule in spite of this fact, extending to personal participation in warfare, set her apart from the usual feminine sphere.

Qualities of defiance and participation in combat are ordinary masculine features in Lewis' novels. Menelaus and Rabadash try to capture or regain by force a beautiful woman whose identification with them will enhance their self-esteem. Both Menelaus and Orual resort to violence in the effort to retain control over a woman regarded as the personification of beauty. In this respect Orual plays a masculine role. Despite the message in the Narnia tales that "Battles are ugly when women fight," Orual takes part in battle; her outlook might serve to modify the statement to read, "Battles are ugly," but she does treasure the friendship and cooperation that can exist in the male world of combat. Her saving of Bardia's life in one battle was of great moment to her. With the exception of two witches who foment battle and who are identified with evil, the more typical female role in Narnia is one of limited involvement in combat or, as in Lucy's daydream, one of provocation of others to violent competition.

Neumann's identification of Psyche's submission to the gods with a peculiarly feminine trait would seem to echo Lewis' view that all mankind is feminine in relation to the divine. Both Orual's defiance of the gods and her active participation in

combat during her reign appear in Lewis' treatment as masculine traits; as Orual surrenders to the will of the god she acquires the beauty she had formerly lacked, a lack which had shut her out of normal feminine pursuits (while stimulating her to explore other possibilities not usually open to women).

Unlike Apuleius, whose tale is interpreted by Neumann as a commentary on erotic love, Lewis chooses to explore the spiritual dimension of the Psyche/Eros story. The outward beauty which Orual at last attains is an emblem of her hard-won spiritual beauty. Her long quest, culminating in submission to the divine will, causes Orual's transformation. Only when the selfishness of her human love (not the love itself) had been sacrificed, could Orual grasp the possibility of divine love. The violence attending this process in its earlier stages is left behind, in both its physical and psychological manifestations, when the palace of the God is in view.

## NOTES

1. Lewis, Till We Have Faces.
2. Lewis' views on myth are treated at length in the fifth chapter of An Experiment in Criticism (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1961).
3. Nathan Comfort Starr, C. S. Lewis's Till We Have Faces: Introduction and Commentary (New York: Seabury Press, 1968), p. 21. Hereafter referred to in text as C. S. Lewis's Till We Have Faces.
4. C. G. Jung, Memories, Dreams, Reflections (New York: Random House, 1961), p. 132.
5. George Watson, "Were the Intellectuals Duped?" Encounter, XCI (Dec. 1973), 30.
6. Joseph Campbell notes of the hero who refuses the call to adventure, "One is harassed, both night and day, by the divine being that is the image of the living self within the locked labyrinth of one's disoriented psyche," Hero With a Thousand Faces, p. 60.
7. Erich Neumann, Amor and Psyche: The Psychic Development of the Feminine, tr. by Ralph Manheim (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1956), p. 59. Hereafter referred to in the text as Amor and Psyche.
8. Corbin Scott Carnell, Bright Shadow of Reality: C. S. Lewis and the Feeling Intellect (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans, 1974), p. 113.
9. Thomas Kelly, A Testament of Devotion (New York: Harper, 1941), pp. 100-101.

## CHAPTER VI

### HELEN: THE SOURCE OF STRIFE

"After Ten Years,"<sup>1</sup> an unfinished novel probably begun in 1959 (Of Other Worlds, p. 146) is also set in the ancient world. But its resemblance to Till We Have Faces depends on its theme rather than its setting. Each of these works is concerned with the healing of divisions; each explores the consciousness of an embittered individual. Describing the aftermath of the Trojan War as perceived by Menelaus, Lewis reveals his desire for revenge as he anticipates his reunion with Helen; his consternation on seeing the extent to which she has aged; and his dilemma about what is to be done with her, as part of the army seek her death while the rest continue to revere her as a being with divine blood. His perception of the issues for which the war was fought undergoes a change which, in turn, begins to effect a change in his own character. As Menelaus is on the verge of meeting an apparition of the glamorous younger Helen in Egypt, the fragment breaks off as abruptly as the end of Orual's account in Till We Have Faces.

Oxford don and Christian apologist C. S. Lewis must have possessed a strong capacity for hatred: at any rate, an authentic note of rage is sounded "After Ten Years," as in Till We Have

Faces. In each work, the response of the protagonist to the loss of a loved one is a fierce desire for revenge. Readers of A Grief Observed, Lewis' moving account of his suffering after his wife's death, may find themselves startled by the reactions of his fictional characters who are faced with similar situations. Their thirst for retribution, or at least vindication, is forcefully rendered. One should recall, however, that Menelaus and Orual, the protagonists of these novels, are coping with a type of loss that is unlike the loss occasioned by death. When the Psyche of Till We Have Faces is found alive and joyful, after having been chosen as a sacrifice to the god of the mountain, her sister Orual feels a conviction of betrayal similar to that of Menelaus in "After Ten Years."

Divine intervention is regarded as being responsible at least in some measure for the losses that have occurred, but a sense of human betrayal is also present in the minds of those characters who perceive themselves as rejected or abandoned. The actual objects of their ill-will differ: though he demands, "Why do the gods never interfere on the side of the man who was wronged?" (Of Other Worlds, p. 142). Menelaus directs most of his resentment against his unfaithful wife. Orual, deprived of a beloved sister, regards the beloved Psyche as an enemy but looks upon the gods as her true adversaries: "That there should be gods at all, there's our misery and bitter wrong. There's no room for you and us in the same world. You're a tree in whose shadow we can't thrive"

(Till We Have Faces, pp. 302-3). It would be difficult to judge which protagonist labors under a keener sense of wrong but, in varying degrees, Orual and Menelaus include divine as well as human forces in their vision of a hostile universe. And they are united in their will that someone or something should compensate them for the losses they have suffered.

In each of these works, dissimilar in scope and subject matter, Lewis recreates convincingly the outlook of a character who considers himself, not without evidence, as a victim of capricious and unjust forces, human and divine. This recreation in itself reflects Lewis' achievement as a writer of fiction, but Lewis also succeeds in suggesting the potential for regeneration that is latent in the most embittered mind.

Two ingredients in the process of Menelaus' regeneration are the endurance of humiliation and a growing awareness of the complexity of the situation in which he is placed. For Menelaus, who is depicted as a soldier and a man of action, these two factors are far from welcome, but he resembles Orual in his ability to learn (however reluctantly) from his experiences. Though his overbearing brother remarks, "You'll never make a general" (Of Other Worlds, p. 140), and though at one point he says to himself that he has never been clever, Menelaus is not a stupid man. Once having grasped the possibility that "I've been a puppet in a war about corn-ships" (Of Other Worlds, p. 145), he demonstrates his ability to cope with a reality quite different from the one he had hoped for and imagined.<sup>2</sup>

The reader can discern his growth in a number of episodes. The man who destroyed the vase in the captured Trojan palace recognized ruefully that Helen's legend of beauty (and, by implication, his ~~own~~ image of heroism) has been as easily shattered. The man who considered torturing Helen for revenge decides he will kill her if necessary to "save" her from sacrifice on a Greek altar. The man who tried unsuccessfully to kill a wasp with his scabbard ("Can't I kill even you? Perhaps you're sacred too") (Of Other Worlds, p. 138) resists Agamemnon's cynical urgings that Helen be forced to "Pay" for the anguish of the war that he acknowledges was actually fought for commercial reasons. The man who daydreamed about handing Helen over to the other prisoners for vengeance later protects her from the amorous intentions of an Egyptian, and even admits in public that she is his wife.

A transformation, though not complete, is clearly in process. While the end of this fragment may leave in doubt whether the dowdy prisoner of Troy or the glamorous apparition in Egypt is the "real" Helen, there seems little doubt about the identity of the real Menelaus. Confusion, humiliation and a confrontation with the multi-faceted nature of reality have clarified his vision and sharpened his instinct for mercy. Simone Weil has said that "the sense of human misery is a precondition of justice and love" (The Iliad, p. 34). Some grain of compassion was obviously present in Menelaus the vigorous warrior who paused to put an end to the Trojan boys suffering; the Menelaus who saves

his estranged wife from Greek revenge and Egyptian designs has evolved to a stage of more imaginative insight.

The magnitude of this transformation should be emphasized. Agamemnon argued with a certain shrewdness when he urged that Helen be sacrificed to appease the non-Spartan factions of the Greek army.<sup>2</sup> While acknowledging the essentially commercial motives for the war, Agamemnon knew quite well that the common soldiers did not view the long struggle in this light. In this connection the following words of Simone Weil are of interest:

The idea that an unlimited effort should bring in only a limited profit or no profit at all is terribly painful. . . . For the Greeks, Troy and Helen are in reality mere sources of blood and tears; to master them is to master frightful memories. If the existence of an enemy has made a soul destroy in itself the thing nature put there, then the only remedy the soul can imagine is the destruction of the enemy. (The Iliad, p. 23)

Menelaus rises above the death-oriented wishes of the typical soldier and his leaders. It can be argued that he also rises above his own conception of the gods, whom he regards as responsible for his predicament. It is a source of bitterness to Menelaus that not only the Trojans, but the gods as well, held some ironical knowledge of the hollowness of the legend that had promised to justify his own existence:

They had known all along. It had diverted them through him to stir up Agamemnon and through Agamemnon to stir up all Greece, and set two nations by the ears for ten winters, all for a woman whom no one would buy in any market except as a housekeeper or a nurse. The wind of divine derision blew in his face. (Of Other Worlds, p. 135).

Though Menelaus recognizes Helen as the pretext rather than the underlying cause of the Trojan War, he finds that the alteration in her appearance has created a new kind of inner strife for him. This sense of being wronged goes beyond the sense of grievance of an outraged husband; Helen, the personification of beauty, had been essential to his own self-esteem. He regains Helen but cannot regain her past beauty; this fact jolts his concept of his own heroism, which has depended upon the legend of Helen's beauty.

Menelaus' recognition of his own misplaced hopes is reminiscent of the words of George Seferis about mankind in general:

" . . . fated to hear  
The steps of messengers, who come to tell him  
That so much suffering, so much life  
Fell into the abyss  
For the sake of an empty garment, for a Helen."<sup>3</sup>

The Helen of physical beauty had precipitated the Trojan War, but the Helen whose beauty has faded sets off a different kind of conflict in Menelaus' mind, as he feels the extent to which her beauty has served as an emblem of his standing in the world. His dilemma is similar to that of Orual insofar as both characters derive their own sense of worth and purpose from their domination of a being whose superiority is visible to all onlookers.

Though Menelaus does not present a complaint against the gods as Orual does, he resents their intrusion. Apparently he shares the view of Simone Weil that the gods are responsible for the misfortunes of humanity in the *Illiad*:

Within the limits fixed by fate, the gods determine with sovereign authority victory and defeat. It is always they who provoke those fits of madness, those treacheries, which are forever blocking peace; war is their true business; their only motives, caprice and malice. ("The Iliad," p. 32)

If this assessment accurately describes the mental climate which Lewis recreated as a setting for Menelaus' dilemma, it fails to account for the "quality of mercy" exhibited by Menelaus himself. In the context of the story, we cannot perceive a divine pattern for the type of humanity towards which he is being drawn. For this reason, it may be appropriate to judge "After Ten Years" as some critics have judged Till We Have Faces, in terms of a work combining a setting of pagan antiquity with the sensibilities and assumptions of a Christian world view.

If this is the case, how does the presence of a Christian world view affect the treatment of violence in this inevitably violent tale? As Simone Weil has noted, "one can see such distant times only in fancy's light" ("The Iliad," p. 33), but one might speculate that Menelaus' ability to draw strength from a position of weakness is a peculiarly Christian virtue to encounter in a Homeric world.

Menelaus, whose role as a soldier involves considerable violence, deliberately refrains from violent actions towards Helen, the agent of his humiliation. He limits his derogatory comments about her to the ears of a trusted companion. His discovery of Helen's decline in beauty not only sets off a train

of thought about how this fact will reflect upon him; it leaves him torn between pity and a feeling that it serves her right. Unlike Orual's father in Till We Have Faces, he refrains from the verbal violence of ridiculing or reproaching a despised woman for her plainness.

A Homeric warrior, Menelaus finds a certain satisfaction in fighting. In this, he is not unlike the pattern of Homeric life suggested by Steiner: "Homer knows and proclaims that there is that in man which loves war, which is less afraid of the terrors of combat than of the long boredom of the hearth."<sup>4</sup> In fact, "Homer, declares Rexroth, 'portrays heroic valor as fundamentally destructive, not just of social order but of humane community.'<sup>5</sup> Like Orual, Menelaus departs from the values of such a society inasmuch as he curbs his instinct for revenge.

Clearly Menelaus could not control the initial divine decisions that led to Helen's elopement with Paris and/or to the aggressive expansion of a trade empire; indeed, he would hardly have been aware of the latter factor at all if a more knowledgeable individual had not brought to his attention the hidden economic and political elements. What is subject to Menelaus' control, aside from his leadership in combat (a role which he carries out much in the spirit of Bardia in Till We Have Faces) is his response to the challenge posed by his recovery of Helen: is love without legend possible or desirable? Why was Helen's beauty so important to Menelaus? When love has turned to hatred, to what extent can this process be reversed? The man who stumbled out of the

Trojan Horse did not expect to confront such questions as these, but he did not shrink from the struggle to answer them.

With Menelaus, as with Orual, Lewis creates a character who suggests the philosophical and psychological implications of the struggle between good and evil. Born in violent engagement, their understanding develops on a plane of the spirit. Menelaus himself was, in a sense, born from the stifling interior of the Trojan Horse to an awareness of the enmity he carried within himself. Ransom, emerging from a claustrophobic conveyance into his destined scene of battle, had found himself in a climate of violence and danger not unlike that symbolized by the Trojan Horse, but he was not required to undergo the transformation in outlook initiated by Menelaus' meeting with Helen. Realizing that his romantic and heroic world view was no longer an accurate guide to reality, Menelaus found the courage to discard his earlier attitudes and develop in a new direction: Ransom, on the other hand, had been confirmed in existing attitudes by his struggle. As a result of his experiences on other planets, Ransom's self-concept changed from that of a sedentary, non-assertive scholar to that of a soldier in a holy war. Menelaus, a Homeric warrior, was forced to reappraise his own and his society's preference for violent solutions because of a transformation in his perception of reality. Warfare, and his own uncritical participation in warfare, could no longer provide him with a satisfying grasp of his society or with a sense of personal worth. For Ransom, the

intellectual, thought becomes the catalyst for violent action; for Menelaus, the warrior, violent action is the prelude to reflection and inner change.

It is interesting to speculate that Lewis might have been drawn to the Trojan War myth for the same reasons that Ellman detects behind Joyce's choice of the Odyssey for his mythical framework:

Joyce's version of the epic story is a pacifist version. He developed an aspect of the Greek epic which Homer had emphasized less exclusively, namely, that Ulysses was the only good mind among the Greek warriors . . . Joyce makes his modern Ulysses a man who is not primarily a fighter, but whose mind is unvanquishable. The victories of Bloom are won in the spirit, not the body.<sup>6</sup>

Lewis' breaking off the story at the point when he is about to be confronted with the "real" and beautiful Helen in Egypt leaves many questions in the reader's mind. One wishes that Margaret Grennan's comment were ven truer than it is: "The reader arrives at a feeling for the form and color that the writer's thought not only took but might have taken in a contemplated but unrealized book" ("The Lewis Trilogy," p. 338). The problem that Lewis leaves with the reader is that of appearance and reality: which Helen is real? and why does it matter? are the two Helens inimical? Till We Have Faces shows the union of Orual and Psyche: individuality is retained but unhappy separation is overcome, while Orual attains the beauty she never had. It is not clear whether Lewis intended a similar pattern or an

opposite idea to prevail in "After Ten Years." The Trojan War has already taken place, so this problem will represent a different battle for Menelaus, for Helen, perhaps for them both.

If the Helen of Egypt is real, then the situation described by Seferis would be a true assessment of the situation:

"And at Troy?  
 Nothing, at Troy a phantom,  
 So the gods willed it.  
 And Paris lay with a shadow as though it were solid flesh:  
 And we were slaughtered for Helen ten long years." (Poems,  
 p. 115)

But if the woman Menelaus found in Troy is his true wife, the apparition revealed to him by the priests will represent a sort of Egyptian bondage, a temptation to return to his old idolatry in intensified form. The violence which Lewis suggests in this tale is, as in Till We Have Faces, the violence of a divided reality. Man must either repeat this division endlessly in himself or find some way of healing it.

NOTES

1. C. S. Lewis, "After Ten Years," Of Other Worlds; Essays and Stories, ed. by Walter Hooper (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1966). Hereafter referred to in the text as "After Ten Years."

2. The pro-Helen views of Eteoneus and the anti-Helen views of Agamemnon may remind the reader of those morality plays in which an angel and a demon externalized inner turmoil.

3. George Seferis, Poems, tr. by Rex Warner (Boston: Little, Brown, 1960), p. 116. Hereafter referred to in the text as Poems.

4. George Steiner, Language and Silence; Essays on Language, Literature, and the Inhuman (New York: Atheneum, 1967), p. 180.

5. Kenneth Rexroth, "The Iliad," Saturday Review, XLVIII (March 27, 1965), 168.

6. Richard Ellmann, "Ulysses, the Divine Nobody," Twelve Original Essays on Great English Novels, ed. by Charles Shapiro, (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1960), p. 243. Ellmann quotes a letter from Joyce concerning Ulysses' reluctance to go to Troy because of awareness of the commercial motives behind the war. But Thomas Merton states, "Whatever some Joyce critics may think of his intentions, Joyce has not portrayed in Bloom an authentic pacifist." (Thomas Merton on Peace, [New York: McCall, 1971], pp. 71-72.)

## CONCLUSION

Rollo May echoes the questions posed by Lewis in Till We Have Faces and "After Ten Years": "What does violence do for the individual? What purposes does he achieve through aggression and violence?" (Power and Innocence, p. 39). In the wide span covered by his fiction, Lewis has exhibited violence in a number of different settings. These situations have run the gamut from those radiating a simpleminded zest for battle to those condemning the use of violence.

On its simplest level, violence is seen as a proof of valor, as when Peter slays the wolf, Edmund hurls himself into the fray with special energy following his treason and redemption, and Shasta nerves himself to face a battle he hasn't the slightest wish to "attend." After the battles, each of these characters wins recognition for his actions, or, in the case of Shasta, for his mere presence.

Violence can be a means of teaching the recalcitrant. Aravis, feeling the pain of the lion's claws on her back, knows that the servant must have suffered when she was whipped as a result of Aravis' actions. The Lapsed Bear, a minor but surely a colorful character, is reformed after the spectacular boxing match with Corin. Similar therapeutic violence is administered by Edmund, who slaps the boy Shasta in the belief that he is

the naughty Prince Corin, and by Caspian, who strikes an insolent guard in a provincial outpost of his empire. Gossett has noted of Flanner O'Connor that "By the violence in her fiction, Miss O'Connor scorns the 'life-adjustment' philosophy of the twentieth century" (Violence in Recent Southern Fiction, p. 96). Eustace's lessons from Reepicheep are a far cry from O'Connor's tormented world but they reflect a similar outlook.

At times violence is politically therapeutic, as when Caspian's literal unseating of an apathetic governor opens the way for more progressive government, or when consolidation of their rule is achieved by the child rulers of Narnia in their search and destroy mission. Orual's single combat, in addition to repelling an aggressor and arranging a match for her sister, Redival, had the effect of consolidating her still precarious rule.

Violence can function as a means of liberation for characters who are caught in a situation that threatens to be paralyzing. Mark leaves Belbury, at least physically, when he strikes out against an astral projection of the Deputy Director. Hurling the rock at the Un-man, Ransom dispatches his enemy and simultaneously rids himself of an old phobia. Presumably, the reprisals of Eustace and Jill will be not only a "learning experience" for their victims but a liberating experience for themselves. Rilian gains his independence from the witch by killing her.

Depending upon the attitudes of its victims, an act of violence can serve as a warning to those of its own time or even of times to come. Jane Studdock feels awe because of the

courage displayed in a losing battle by Hingest, a victim of Belbury. "Witnessing" this event in a dream brings it home to Jane as a news report or book could not have done. Richard Crowe's denunciation of the "rebels and regicides" who mortally wounded him echoes down in his College's history to anyone who listens carefully.

As the many battles of Narnia demonstrate, violence can be a means of preserving society from attackers. In one case the invasion of a neighboring country, Archenland, provides the occasion for military assistance from Narnia. At times Lewis includes comments on strategy in battle, as when Peter shows concern over the choice of a safe campsite and Caspian's cause is endangered by a loyal but stupid giant who mistakes his battle orders.

If active warfare is one means of protecting society, the passive suffering of violence appears as a means of redemption of the individual as well as society as a whole. While Psyche did not suffer the death for which she was presumably destined, she was willing to undergo this fate. Aslan actually underwent a painful death and was resurrected. As a result of these sacrifices, individuals were in some sense redeemed. The disloyal Edmund was restored to his family and was transformed into a powerful champion and leader of society. Orual, painfully working out her salvation in the years following Psyche's disappearance, in the meantime provided Glome with good government.

In the imaginary worlds created by C. S. Lewis, you win by losing, but you also win by winning. For this reason it appears

that his interpretation of Christianity features the best of both worlds. The red lion on Peter's shield can be regarded as an emblem of sacrificial suffering or as a symbol designed to strike terror into foes. The fact that the lion appears as part of military insignia however would suggest the latter interpretation. "The Lion!" is a battlecry in Prince Caspian. The Christian soldier is ready to die, and to kill.

Examples of Lewis' fiction can be located along the total spectrum of three possible Christian stances toward warfare identified by Russell, pacifism, support of just war, and crusade. Though his reluctance for combat sets him apart from the typical crusader, Ransom's encounter with the Un-man in Perelandra has the spirit of a crusade. The wars of Narnia, undertaken for defense from outside aggression or for liberation from unjust rule, would strike most readers as examples of just warfare, in keeping with the defensive purpose of the shield on which the lion appears. The action of the later works may be interpreted as pointing towards the non-violent resolution of conflict. Thus the chronological sequence of the novels reveals a progression from the preoccupation with actual combat characteristic of the space trilogy and the Narnia series to an internalizing of conflict of Till We Have Faces and "After Ten Years."

Instances of violence carry differing emotional impact in the stories; e.g., the kidnaping of Ransom in Out of the Silent Planet creates suspense and introduces the hero to his adventures;

the ritual that accompanies the sacrifice of Psyche, the "Perfect Offering," shocks Orual into a life-long quest for understanding. To the intellectual and moral concerns of his earlier writing Lewis adds an emotional depth that endows his later works with greater power.

Lewis holds out hope for the salvation of the individual: a salvation achieved through non-violent means, though violence may have initiated the search for wholeness (as when Mark strikes the apparition, Orual stabs herself, Menelaus takes part in the capture and looting of Troy). According to Lewis, salvation is possible, but it is painful; more painful even than the removal of Eustace's dragon hide. As Lewis stated in Reflections on the Psalms, it is "not easy to kill the savage, the greedy, frightened creature now cringing, now blustering, in one's soul--the creature to whom God may well say, 'thou thoughtest I am even such a one as thyself.'"<sup>1</sup> It is perhaps easier to kill outward enemies.

Even within the children's stories, however, the attitudes towards killing of enemies are not uniform. In The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe, when Peter slays the wolf threatening his sister, there is no psychological probing of this event. Peter has to overcome his fear and repugnance, and he must act very quickly. After the foe is slain he experiences no burden of conscience. Eustace meets a human foe in much the same spirit when he and Tirian fight the Calormene guard. Tirian, however, felt keen remorse over his slaying of a Calormene earlier in

The Last Battle. It should be noted that the circumstances rather than the act itself weigh on his spirit: Tirian had acted in a moment of rage without giving warning; furthermore, he had struck down an unarmed foe.

A noteworthy feature of the Narnia tales is the humane treatment of Caspian's defeated enemies and the non-punitive spirit towards even the scoundrel Rabadash. These examples would serve to refute Russell's judgment that "orthodox Christian theology is highly intolerant and, in effect, it sanctions severe violence toward any 'out-groups' if defined as criminal, heretical or pagan" (Christianity and Militarism, p. 61). So far as Lewis' fiction reflects an orthodox Christian viewpoint, this element is alien to it.

Different perspectives on violence emerge when Merlin lands in the middle of the St. Anne's community. Dimble is troubled by Merlin's "appalling bloodthirstiness" as evidence in the magician's proposal that Jane be beheaded (an occurrence of the "severed head" idea in a context other than that of Belbury). Ransom defends his guest by pointing out, "we had no right to expect that his penal code would be that of the Nineteenth Century" (That Hideous Strength, p. 280). Merlin declares that he has never before been charged with being fierce and cruel, claiming that he never sought the death of any but felons and heathen Saxons.

Once the reader has gotten past the Lewis who is spokesman for militant Christendom, the Lewis who may have been more at home in Merlin's world than in ours, he can perceive a dynamic

and spiritually progressive attitude at work. As Orual carries on her task (in Bronson Alcott's phrase, "a task life-long, given from within" ), violence is left behind. Was her eagerness that her manuscript be carried into Greece an indication of her wish to spread this insight to the world of the Fox, a world in its own way as congenial to blood-sacrifice as was the more primitive world of Glome?

The earlier Greek world of "After Ten Years" is certainly a violent one. Menlaus' disillusionment, precipitated by the shock of Helen's loss of beauty, forces him to recognize the true reasons for which the war was fought: the political reasons, and his own reasons. Agamemnon's conviction that the war was essentially fought over trade advantages gives a clear perspective on the political background, but Menelaus must apply this reasoning to his own motives and begin to understand the "commercial" motives behind his own love for Helen when he realizes he no longer "owns" a prized possession. (Incidentally, an unusual perspective on possession and ownership is revealed in the title of one of Lewis' children's books, The Horse and His Boy.) Both political and the personal aims in "After Ten Years" are linked to motives of greed and self-aggrandizement. Menelaus is shocked into a consideration of the causes and effects of war.

Archaeological writer Victor Von Hagen maintains that "Since man is war, it is useless to discuss causes."<sup>2</sup> This view would suggest that the roots of war can be torn up only with the ceasing

of human life itself. A similar view is expressed by James W. Douglass: "Evil is in fact my self, as it is every man's self, a life-divisive self."<sup>3</sup> The concept of evil as an internal problem marks the crucial difference between the violence of Perelandra and the violence of Till We Have Faces. It also shows promise of being the central issue of "After Ten Years." According to Rollo May, "The roots of violence lie deep in the archetypal and unconscious symbols and myths of the society" (Power and Innocence, p. 39). While May (and Lewis) appear to believe that individual change must be preliminary to social change, it is important to recognize how a society's myths and archetypal symbols nourish or hamper the spiritual development of the individual.

Orual found the violence of Glome's religion a stumbling block. She was skeptical of its animal sacrifices and deeply shaken by its insistence that her own sister become a sort of sacrificial animal. At last, following years of constructive work and the sudden, painful realization of the sacrificial demands she herself had made on others, Orual is able to perceive the religion of Glome in a new light. The temple ceremony of sham combat both expresses and negates the violence of the world by removing the struggle to a spiritual arena. It is not a true battle with wounds and blood; it resembles rather a dance confirming the harmony of man and the gods. Art has replaced bloodshed.

A somewhat similar paradox baffled Jane Studdock when she saw the results of the swarfs' destructiveness in the wedding chamber. Not the dwarfs of Narnia's last battle, slaying their own leaders and allies, these dwarfs accompany an earthly manifestation of Venus. Their destructive actions, strewing belongings chaotically around a room Jane had tidied for a friend and her husband, represented a vital rather than a nihilistic spirit. The observer, and ultimately the reader, is challenged to distinguish between appearance (a disordered room; a sham battle in a temple) and reality (a spontaneous or formalized expression of joy). Both of these scenes are appropriate to the subject matter of "myth" as defined by Robert Graves: "archaic magic-makings that promoted the fertility or stability of a sacred queendom, or kingdom."<sup>4</sup> Lewis' controversy with Speir over the interpretation of Sir Gawain and the Green Knight indicates that he valued anthropology or ritual insofar as they contributed to an understanding of literature, rather than the reverse. Still, at the end of That Hideous Strength and Till We Have Faces, ritual has become the touchstone for reality. The violence of the "real" world is transcended through ritual. A non-violent celebration takes the place of violent action directed against humans. In this substitution, the true wisdom of Glome's religion comes to light. Even the sacrifice of Psyche had been non-violent, though priests and people (indeed, Psyche herself) had not so understood it. The point is that all of Glome, including

the enlightened Fox, has fallen into the error of Weston and Devine: it has misunderstood the nature of the sacrifice that is required. "The sacrifice of God is a troubled spirit: a broken and contrite heart, O God, shalt thou not despise" (Ps. 51:17). This is the sacrifice which Orual must offer in her quest for salvation.

During her journey, Orual felt critical of the priest who recounted but could not explain the tale of Psyche: "He knew nothing. The story and the worship were all one in his mind" (Till We Have Faces, p. 256). At the end of her life, however, she herself begins to see the story and the worship as one. The worship, demanding a human sacrifice that is in actuality a non-violent sacrifice, frames the story with the formula recited by the foreign priest:

Talapal torments Istra and sets her all manner of hard labours, things that seem impossible. But when Istra has done them all, then at last Talapal releases her, and she is reunited to Ialim and becomes a goddess. (Till We Have Faces, p. 253)

And the foreign priest, for all his seeming naivete, was realistic about human motives: "They wanted to destroy her because they had seen her palace." Eustace's declaration, "I'll smash the rotten thing," and Jane's awareness of "those who had not joy" assailing her new happiness, are recalled in this context. If the root of the Trojan War was greed, another root of violence, Lewis suggests, is envy. Orual must be purified of her will to destroy before she can face the divine nature and realize that

of the divine within herself. The reader might also say that Lewis has had to move beyond a preoccupation with outward strife and violence to an exploration of internal struggle in order to reach his audience most powerfully.

In Narnia, as well as in the real world, "the deed of gift was many deeds of war." But the true Narnia is a land beyond the claims of violence. Even while the battle rages a glimpse of this truer land is caught, when the giant breaks down the palace wall at Aslan's command "and when the dust had cleared it was odd, standing in that dry, grim, stony yard, to see through the cap all the grass and waving trees and sparkling streams of the forest, and the blue hills beyond that and beyond them the sky" (Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe, p. 169).

The Christian world of C. S. Lewis, as reflected in his novels, is and is not a peaceable kingdom. The lamb appears briefly at the end of The Voyage of the Dawn Treader, to be metamorphosed into the lion, Aslan. This lion, whose name may be derived from the Persian arslan (lion), retains associations of power and even terror. Though his manner to the children is often reassuring and comradely, Jill, a character in The Silver Chair, fears to approach him at first; various characters in the Narnia series emphasize that Aslan is "not a tame lion."

Yet in his most far-reaching action in the stories this lion assumes the role of sacrificial lamb, allowing himself to be put to death so that a human character may be spared the

penalty for treachery. Links between Christian theology and violence are most obvious in the episodes dealing with Aslan's sacrifice in The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe, and with the sacrifice of Psyche in Till We Have Faces. In each of these cases, a sinful character is transformed as a result of the sacrifice. The traitor Edmund repents; the grieving Orual is challenged to recognize the selfishness of her love for others. But the White Witch of Narnia and the Un-man of Perelandra are not redeemed; presumably, they represent an absolute evil which is beyond redemption. Even this point, however, is open to question. White has warned against viewing Weston simply as the personification of evil, recalling that "the Oyarsa of Malacandra noted Weston's loyalty to humanity and declared him more 'bent' than 'broken'" (Image of Man, p. 79). Only when the scientist deliberately calls upon evil powers is he possessed by them. So perhaps the reader should be wary even of those passages in which Lewis appears to present a foe completely evil in nature. One passage in The Screwtape Letters seems to suggest that Satan himself is not past redemption. According to Screwtape, "Members of His faction have freely admitted that if ever we came to understand what He means by Love, the war would be over and we should re-enter Heaven" (Screwtape Letters, p. 87).

In Lewis' fiction, the foe is not always transformed. Edmund's repentance and the recognition of the good motives underlying the Calormene Emeth's actions are exceptions rather than the rule in

the early fiction. Often the reader encounters a stereotyped description of foes, as when the White Witch calls upon her supporters. These include "the Ghouls, and the Boggles, the Ogres and the Minotaurs . . . the Cruels, the Hags, the Spectres, and the People of the Toadstools" (Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe, p. 132). It is significant, however, that the fiction Lewis wrote in his later years emphasizes the non-demonic nature of enemies and the dynamic possibilities that are latent in the clash of opposing forces. Orual perceives the prince whom she slays as another human being like herself; it seems incredible that one of them will kill the other, despite the fact that her own choice has brought her to this combat. As the opponent of the divine power that bereft her of Psyche, and as a subconscious opponent of Psyche herself, Orual experiences a transformation in outlook. The impress of Christian theology is unmistakable.

Other links between violence and Christian theology may be detected. For example, Orual's descent to subterranean caverns marks an important stage in her conquest of self. In The Silver Chair, the children's quest leads them deep into a cave which becomes the arena of violent conflict. Ransom's struggle in Perelandra involves a visit to an "underworld" of caves. In each of these instances, a descent into the earth involves recognition and conquest of evil; this experience is followed by an ascent. It is difficult to read these passages without recalling the pattern of Christ's descent into hell and His ascent into heaven.

A third area in which theological implications of violence appears is that of "eschatology," or the last things. In the apocalyptic vision of C. S. Lewis, violence plays an inevitable part but a world beyond violence is also foreseen. When nature erupts in That Hideous Strength and in The Last Battle, it does so in response to a supernatural imperative. But the upheaval at the end of That Hideous Strength does not mark a final ending of the world; it signals the overthrow of one enemy camp in a struggle expected to continue for a long period until the end of all things occurs. Ransom states: "Britain has lost a battle, but she will rise again." Mother Dimble response: "So that, meanwhile, is England. Just this swaying to and fro between Logres and Britain?" (That Hideous Strength, p. 443). Decisive though the victory over Belbury has been, the characters in this novel anticipate a continuation of the struggle between good and evil, attended by a continuing chain of violence. When the end of the Narnian world occurs, spectacular violence erupts on the natural plane, echoing but overwhelming the violence of human characters. A sense of inevitability surrounds this ending: if Tirian had made no mistakes in judgment, if the dwarfs had not defected from their allegiance, one suspects that the Narnian world would still have come to an appointed violent end.

After this end comes the ending of violence. But Reepicheep casts away his sword before this end was in sight. By individual choice, he journeys to Aslan's country. It is a joyful but solitary

mission: the rest of society does not share in this quest as it had shared in his earlier martial adventures. However, the rest of society is affected by his journey which breaks the spell of violence holding the Narnian exiles in its grip. After the end of Narnia, the children are reunited with Reepicheep in Aslan's country. Orual, on the other hand, is reunited with Psyche before her death occurs. Lewis appears to foresee a world that will be violent until its end, but in which individual reconciliation is possible. And individual reconciliation is related to the welfare of the larger society. Moorman notes of Mark and Jane Studdock that "it is their personal struggles which become the real struggle of the last novel. But these struggles have no meaning except as they are interpreted against the background of the mythical structure which gives reality and force to their deliberations."<sup>5</sup>

In her reconciliation with Mark, Jane Studdock learned something that Orual came to perceive, an insight of great import to our larger society. Lewis' account of his own conversion provides a key to this understanding: "the intellect and the conscience, as well as the orgy and the ritual must be our guide" (Surprised by Joy, p.235). Jane, aware of the claims of the intellect but uncertain about other aspects of life, gained a new perspective on the physical world through her spiritual awakening. Menelaus, immersed in the sensations and fleeting impressions of a dangerous, warlike existence, groped toward

a more rational perspective as he found his old assumptions challenged. Orual, caught between the demands of two philosophical worlds, found through humility a means of reconciling them. When the passions of Glome are balanced by the reason and ethical sense of Greece, and both are viewed in the light of the divine will, then, Lewis suggests, the palace of the god will become visible to human eyes. It is one way of approaching the Peaceable Kingdom.

NOTES

1. C. S. Lewis, Reflections on the Psalms (New York: Macmillan, 1951), p. 98.
2. Victor Wolfgang Von Hagen, Realm of the Incas, rev. ed. (New York: New American Library, 1961), p. 197.
3. James W. Douglass, Resistance and Contemplation: The Way of Liberation (Garden City: Doubleday, 1972), p. 186.
4. Robert Graves, The Greek Myths, Vol. I (Baltimore: Penguin, 1955), p. 10.
5. Charles Moorman, "The Myths of C. S. Lewis," College English, XVIII (May, 1957), 405.

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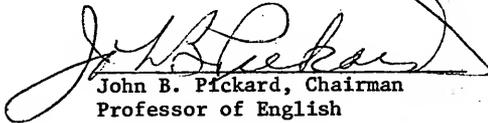
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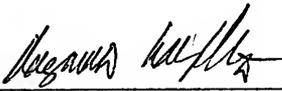
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