A Hierarchy of Love: Myth in C.S. Lewis's *Perelandra*

A Thesis Submitted to
The Faculty of the School of Communication
In Candidacy for the Degree of
Master of Arts in English

by
Joseph Robert Walls
May 2012

Liberty University
School of Communication
Master of Arts in English

_____

Thesis Chair Date
Dr. Branson Woodard, D.A.

_____

First Reader Date
Dr. Carl Curtis, Ph.D.

_____

Second Reader Date
Dr. Mary Elizabeth Davis, Ph.D.

For Alyson

Your continual encouragement, support,
and empathy are invaluable to me.

Contents

Introduction.....5

Chapter 1: Understanding Symbol, Myth, and Allegory in *Perelandra*.....11

Chapter 2: Myth and Sacramentalism Through Character 32

Chapter 3: On Depictions of Evil.....59

Chapter 4: Mythical Interaction with Landscape.....74

A Conclusion Transposed.....91

Works Cited 94

Introduction:

Of all the novels and stories C.S. Lewis wrote, *The Chronicles of Narnia* is perhaps most widely cherished by readers. Twelve years before its publication, however, Lewis began a science fiction trilogy that may not be as widely read, but is arguably even more worthy of study because of its literary and theological complexities. The trilogy began as an agreement between Lewis and his friend J.R.R. Tolkien; both men mourned the current state of popular fiction, and as writers steeped in the great literary traditions of the past, they wished to contribute to a change in fiction's literary quality. According to David C. Downing's *Planets in Peril,* they agreed that Tolkien would write a story about time travel, and Lewis would write a story about space travel (35). The *Ransom Trilogy*, then, holds what Lewis hoped would be a corrective or antidote for modern fiction.

This antidote, whatever it might be, seemed important enough to Lewis—a scholar devoted to Medieval literature, mythology, and his religion—to cause him to dabble in science fiction, a popular but little-respected genre. *Perelandra* (the second novel in the *Ransom Trilogy*) was Lewis's longstanding favorite of his own works, according to George Sayer's biographical book *Jack: A Life of C.S. Lewis*. Later, after Lewis had written *Till We Have Faces* (1956), he was unsure which he liked better (229). It is no coincidence that myth is the primary overlapping element of these two books: they are both "myths retold."[1] For Lewis, the mythical element in *Perelandra* set it apart from his other fictional works. I would argue that Lewis's rich and far-reaching understanding of the complexity of myth—in both literary and theological

[1] *Till We Have Faces* is a retelling of the mythical courtship between Cupid and Psyche. *Perelandra,* in a sense, is a retelling of the Genesis account of the earthly paradise before mankind's fall, with some notable differences. By calling Genesis "myth," I do not intend to comment on the question of its factuality—that is not my purpose here. Instead, I use the word myth to mean story itself, which I will deal with in the following chapter to fuller extent.

contexts, its sense of "becoming" and its relation to the Incarnation of Christ—is the antidote Lewis sought to bring to popular fiction and possibly even to his own religion.

Scholarly criticism of Lewis's work has been sadly neglected—particularly criticism that seeks to apply Lewis's approach to literature to his own work. Studies of Lewis's work are by no means obligated to stay within the boundaries of Lewis's methods or theological beliefs; rather, I argue that an investigation of Lewis's approach literature and theology yields fruit in discovering and understanding the intricacies of *Perelandra*. Many readers—George Orwell, for example[2]—complain that if one removes all the supernatural elements from the *The Ransom Trilogy*, their plots are weak and their characters are flat. While this may be true, it seems unfair to separate and strip away the unique combination of elements that make *Perelandra* precisely itself, and then to complain of its poor quality as a story; rather, understanding the context of the story—religious or otherwise—is helpful in judging the story's literary value.[3] Indeed, according to Sayer, *Perelandra*'s religious themes also make it the favorite of many Christians: "One's appreciation of *Perelandra* depends upon how much of Christian doctrine the reader accepts. For many Christians, [*Perelandra*] is likely to be the most rewarding of his novels" (300). Perhaps Sayers's comment about "one's appreciation of *Perelandra*" depending on "how much Christian doctrine the reader accepts" may be broadened to include those who will, at the very least, seek to understand Lewis's Christianity while studying the book (much as Lewis argued for an imaginative grasp of *Paradise Lost* through an understanding of Milton's influences and theology for Christians and non-Christians alike). Lewis's approach to literature

---

[2] Orwell gave a review of *That Hideous Strength* for the *Manchester Evening News* (16 August 1945) in which he praised Lewis's imagination but frowned upon his use of the supernatural in the novel.

[3] Lewis himself makes this argument in *A Preface to Paradise Lost* (published in the same year as *Perelandra*) when he claims that Milton's work cannot be understood outside of his theology.

within its religious context and study of how this approach is actualized in *Perelandra* will not only aid studies of Lewis's own work, but could also contribute to studies in symbol, allegory, and mythical archetypes. Through *Perelandra,* I will expand on and illustrate his distinctions between allegory and symbolism, ordinary symbolism and "sacramentalism," and the master's metaphor and pupil's metaphor.[4]

There is still much room for investigation in Lewis's fiction. As Michael Ward's remarkable *Planet Narnia: The Seven Heavens in the Imagination of C.S. Lewis* (2008) has recently demonstrated, further analysis can still yield many "hidden" elements that contribute to scholarship of Lewis's work, medieval cultural studies, and the study of literature in general. *Planet Narnia* is an analysis of mythical symbolism, particularly in *The Chronicles of Narnia.* Ward's argument hangs on the idea that each of the seven Narnia books is constructed to reflect the symbolism of the seven spheres in the medieval view of the cosmos. In his search for the symbolism of Venus, Ward sometimes touches on *Perelandra* (which is more explicit about its relation to the goddess and the planet in its symbolism); he emphasizes the feminine nature of the symbolism, including its depictions of nurture, youth, and birth (or re-birth). Ward also briefly discusses Lewis's use of symbol vs. allegory, arguing that Lewis began his career in fiction as allegorist (*The Pilgrim's Regress* 1939) and ended it as a symbolist (*Till We Have Faces* 1956). According to Ward, while Lewis uses both devices, he could be more accurately described as a symbolist (31). Although *Planet Narnia* is one of the most successful scholarly works to analyze Lewis's fiction through his own approach to literature, the ambitious scope of Ward's work calls

[4] Although the principles behind these terms run through much of Lewis's work, he explicitly discusses sacramentalism in his essay "Transposition" (1949) and the Master and Pupil's metaphor in "Bluspels and Flalansferes: A Semantic Nightmare" (1939).

for more detailed analyses. His focus on *The Chronicles of Narnia* leaves the depths of *Perelandra* unsounded.

George Sayer's book *Jack: A Life of C.S. Lewis* (1988) puts *Perelandra* in the context of Lewis's life, explaining how Lewis's longstanding interests and contemporaneous work on *The Allegory of Love* influenced *Perelandra*. Sayer finds that Lewis was frustrated that the time he spent teaching, broadcasting, and managing other responsibilities often eclipsed what little time he had for the several books he was working on (203), suggesting that *Perelandra* was written quickly in a bustling atmosphere. But like most critics, Sayer argues that *Perelandra* is the most cohesive of the three novels in the trilogy. For example, he says Lewis's characterizations in *Perelandra* are most successful because, for most of the novel, the author is only dealing with three characters (299). Like that of most other biographies, the goal of *Jack: A Life of C.S. Lewis* is to use Lewis's work to shed light on his life and personality rather than an in-depth analysis of his work.

Many critical works dedicated to *The Ransom Trilogy* only touch the surface of *Perelandra,* serving as preliminary guides. David C. Downing's *Planets in Peril: A Critical Study of C.S. Lewis's Ransom Trilogy* and Martha C. Sammons's *A Guide Through C.S. Lewis' Space Trilogy* are similar in that they are both critical analyses of the trilogy, primarily approaching the works through Lewis's well-known interests: myth, Medieval and Renaissance literature (with an emphasis on Arthurian Romance and fairytales), and religion and theology. These helpful—if somewhat sweeping—guides to the trilogy provide information for understanding the works in their contexts. However, in the case of both books of criticism, religious, literary, and historical influences are dealt with in segmented chapters, providing little synthesis, and shedding little light on the cohesiveness of these elements in *Perelandra* (perhaps

inadvertently adding to the illusion that the novel is simply a hodgepodge of Lewis's favorite areas of study).

Although this analysis discusses the philosophical and theological contexts of *Perelandra,* it does not treat him as a philosopher or theologian. The keen intellect (and firm dedication to the study of great works of literature) that allows Lewis to contribute so much to his discipline also causes him to have a broad and uniquely cohesive scope of vision. Although Lewis's practical and applied contributions to religious thought have—through his work in literature—important implications for theology, philosophy, and apologetics, Lewis scholars should be careful to approach his work with a clear understanding that he is first and foremost a man of letters. He is not the progenitor of a new kind of criticism, but what he does bring to the discipline is a refreshingly holistic and expansive way to approach a text: he gives the reader questions with which to begin an inquiry.

In *A Preface to Paradise Lost,* Lewis says, "To enjoy our full humanity, we ought, so far as is possible, to actualize, all the modes of feeling and thinking though which man has passed" (64). Like Chesterton, he believes that to cut humankind off from its past is to "unjustly disinherit" it. *Perelandra* is an attempt to reclaim part of that inheritance. The novel is one of the few serious efforts to combine both scholarly and imaginative understanding of medieval religious thought in fiction set outside of a terrestrial setting. My analysis will rely heavily on the medieval hierarchical conception of the universe, its relation to classical metaphysics, and its emphasis on sacramental symbolism through myth and allegory, particularly as Lewis sees them. This study of symbol and allegory through Lewis's views on transposition and hierarchy is an attempt to grasp the metaphysical underpinnings of *Perelandra*, a story that seeks to depict for

both the intellect and the senses the truths behind the ancient traditions that are the inheritance of the entire Christian Church.

Chapter 1: Understanding Symbol, Myth, and Allegory in *Perelandra*

In *Perelandra*, the protagonist, Dr. Elwin Ransom, is sent by cosmic powers to the planet Venus. From the beginning of the novel onward—when Lewis, as a character, is braving "principalities and powers" during a simple evening walk through the English countryside—the both good and evil powers can be felt "peeking through" the familiar corporeal world. For Lewis's character, contact with these beings is terrifying—even unbearable (to the point of madness, he thinks). He sees a house and cannot help thinking that it is haunted; the implication is not that the house may be full of ghosts but the house itself is ghostly, "with the windows boarded up and one staring like the eye of a dead fish" (13). He even senses some foreign presence beginning to shine through his old friend Ransom and feels resentful that something is "breaking in" on his comfortable world. Throughout the story, this sense of a foreign presence grows—though in quite another way—eventually culminating in Ransom's transformation into the image of Christ (and in contrast, the complete but disjointed demonic possession of Dr. Weston's body). As characters in the novel develop through their interactions with each other, the vibrant Perelandrian landscape, and the dark forces of non-being, they seem to fall into place in a cosmic hierarchy that is based on the medieval hierarchical conception of the universe. Every level on this hierarchical ladder reflects the one above, each rung grander than the one before, and each ultimately imitating the Perfect Form in its own way. For Lewis, this is not a current reality but a picture of what mankind might become.

How Lewis understands the interaction between abstract meaning and concrete form is essential to the sense of "becoming" that is so strong in the novel: the hope of one day becoming a perfect but less grand imitation of Christ, not merely representing Christ as emblem but as a sacramental symbol in which his Real Presence resides. To understand Lewis's beliefs about

sacramental symbols, it is first necessary to understand how he views the relationship between the abstract and the concrete, or content and form. In Lewis's essay "Transposition" he discusses the apparently duel nature of human experience. "Transposition" was written in 1949, seven years after developing his ideas into fiction in *Perelandra,* and it is one of the most explicit of Lewis's didactic works concerning his views on the relationship between concrete form and abstract meaning. According to Lewis, difficultly with understanding meaning appears when meaning is so much grander than the concrete facts in which humankind tries to translate it. He says, "You have noticed that most dogs cannot understand pointing. You point to a bit of food on the floor; the dog, instead of looking at the floor, sniffs at your finger. A finger is a finger to him, and that is all. His world is all fact and no meaning" ("Transposition"114). For humankind, of course, fact and meaning are (sometimes) both apparent.[5]

Lewis explains, "Transposition occurs when the higher reproduces itself in the lower," and is a "mode by which a poorer medium can respond to a richer" (103). He gives an example from Pepys's Diary, in which Pepys goes to a play and hears beautiful music; the aesthetic experience enraptures him and makes him "really sick, just as I have formally been when in love with my wife" (96). The higher abstraction (the aesthetic experience) is grander than the concrete form that it takes (physical reactions), because aesthetic rapture, physical illness, and intense feelings of love all take the same form. Lewis compares this phenomenon to a composer transposing an orchestral piece into a sheet music for the piano or translating a language with many words into a language with relatively few: just as the notes on the piano have to serve as

[5] Lewis's point is that when a man embraces the idea that the material world is the only reality, he becomes less human. Part of what distinguishes humans from other animals is the capability to understand abstractions.

strings, woodwinds, and brass, some words in the lesser language will have to be designated multiple meanings to accommodate the grander.

Unfortunately, only those who have some guess of the higher realm can have any sort of perspective. Therefore, he acknowledges that some critics will be skeptical of his view, because like the dog, "his world is all fact and no meaning" (114). Lewis says that a two-dimensional shape cannot know a three dimensional one.[6] In this case, mere symbolism cannot help; he introduces what he calls "sacramentalism," which produces an inkling of the higher realm through its presence in the lower medium (as opposed to a merely symbolic or emblematic presence). He suggests that this lens may be helpful when viewing the doctrine of the Incarnation. St. Paul and the Gospels are clear about the fact that God's willingness to take on human flesh in the Incarnation of Christ (the meeting of content and form)[7] is precisely the reason that man can know God. To perfectly know him, we too must become more like him—but not precisely like him: "For though we shall be 'as the angels' and made 'like unto' our Master, I think this means 'with the likeness proper to men" (109). In other words, humankind's eventual likeness to heavenly beings will be still be a transposed likeness, with human beings falling into their proper place as humans. The distinction between these two types of likeness is significant, because it points out that although there is a transformation to be made, the true essence of humankind will remain intact (if not become "more human").

The complex theological basis for Lewis's "Transposition" requires some discussion of its religious and denominational context, which will be helpful in my discussion of Lewis's use

---

[6] This concept is illustrated by Edwin Abbott Abbott's satirical novel *Flatland*: *A Romance of Many Dimensions* in which two-dimensional shapes grapple with the concept of a third dimension. Lewis uses this story as an example in "Bluspels and Flalansferes" (254).

[7] As with all attempts to put this phenomenon into words, my description of the Incarnation does not capture the fullness of Christ.

of sacramental symbol, particularly in how it appears in *Perelandra.* In his Protestant background, Lewis would have been something of an oddity because of his system of symbolism's emphasis on the Incarnation. The Protestant view of symbol is more emblematic than sacramental: most Protestant denominations tend not to emphasize (and even avoid) the concept of Real Presence, thus making truly sacramental symbols obsolete. For many Protestants, what the Catholic Church calls the Sacraments (Baptism, the Eucharist, Marriage), are emblematic symbols or metaphors; thus the further Protestantism separates content and form, the further their churches move away from the doctrine of the Incarnation.[8] William A Dyrness's helpful and timely book *Poetic Theology* not only considers Lewis's view, but traces other Protestant views of symbolism from the Reformation onward; like Lewis, Dyrness notices the alarming implications of the extreme view many Protestant theologians have taken. In the book, Dyrness, a Presbyterian, professes that his goal is to heal the modern Protestant view of symbolism[9]—which, according to him is severely inadequate due to the separation of an object and its meaning—and to find the middle ground between the Catholic and Protestant views. He says, "Even though words and objects cannot contain the infinite (the Protestant Reformers were clear about this), they can perhaps point to it and even open up contact with it. In this way, symbols can not only sustain or enrich; they can disrupt and challenge" (20). In other words, symbols provoke spiritual longing but are not a doorway to the spiritual realm. Although Lewis

---

[8] Of course, different denominations—and even individual churches—vary in their views on the relationship between meaning and form. Indeed, the interaction of various Protestant views is complex and worthy of further research, but it is a study that will not necessarily contribute to my current argument.

[9] Dyrness uses "symbolism" loosely. By symbolic, he means anything thing that can be done ritualistically (even outside of a religious setting, whether it is skiing, fishing, or some other activity). According to him, the secular world recognizes that the aesthetic experience of such rituals is somehow transcendent, and many people use these activities to fill the void society has made by abandoning religion.

would agree that the Reformers are right in suggesting the "disruptive" element of symbols, the Reformers seem to overlook the most significant event in history: the Incarnation of Christ. Dyrness goes on to say, "In particular, the notion of the symbolic potential of words and things, I believe, rests on the reality of the Incarnation, God's taking on flesh in Christ—a connection that the Reformers, for various historical and cultural reasons, mostly did not make" (24). The connection, as Lewis points out, is too vital to miss.[10]

The error that Protestants are most likely to commit in this context is an over-emphasis on abstract meaning (the symbolized) and a neglect of form (the symbol). Not only is this error, when applied to theology, potentially devastating, it also deprives the human being who desires to know God of the richness of particular doctrines. St. Augustine, in *De Doctrina Christiana*, states explains that it is necessary to have a working knowledge of the thing that acts as a figurative sign before one can understand the signified. Augustine says, "Ignorance of things makes figurative expressions unclear when we are ignorant of the qualities of animals or stones or plants or other things mentioned in scripture for the sake of some analogy" (44). According to him, it is only through knowledge of the baser things that one can understand the purer.[11] Another implication of this particular error is that God would have humankind become something other than human (angels, perhaps) rather than like "our Master . . . with the likeness proper to men" ("Transposition" 109). The Protestant view—when it errs too far from the

---

[10] Because of the Roman Catholic Church's fervent insistence on the importance of the Incarnation, the Reformers, in their zeal to remove the Church further away from Catholicism, did not make this doctrine an important aspect of their reforms.

[11] Lewis acknowledges this as well—especially in his works about allegory; however, paradoxically the reverse is also true. Without an understanding of the existence of higher realms, man is like the dog sniffing the pointed finger ("Transposition" 114). Augustine agrees. "It is, then, a miserable kind of spiritual slavery to interpret signs as things, and to be incapable of raising the mind's eye above the physical creation so as to absorb the eternal light" (*De Doctrina Christiana* 72).

Incarnation—often turns out to be what Lewis's Jane Studdock thinks about spirituality; in *That Hideous Strength,* the third novel of the *Ransom Trilogy,* she reflects that her old understanding of the word "spirit" was "some neutral, or democratic, vacuum where differences disappeared, where sex and sense were not transcended but simply taken away" (312). Yet it eventually occurs to Jane, as Lewis also seems to believe, that "there might be differences and contrasts all the way up, richer, sharper, even fiercer, at every rung of the ascent" (312). Although Roman Catholics traditionally hold the doctrine of the Incarnation very dear, when they err from it, they are more likely to err in the opposite direction: embracing form and forgetting transcendent meaning,[12] forsaking the Heavenly Kingdom for an earthly one, and accepting the earthly power of Caesar over the help of God.[13]

This emphasis on the Incarnation allows Lewis to occupy what may be thought of (at first) as a middle ground between Protestant and Roman Catholic views. Raised in the Church of Ireland, and later, as a devoted member of the Church of England, he spent most of his life in "Low Church." Low Church, of course, is a more reformed kind of Anglican worship; therefore, under the influence of Calvin and other reformers, it places less emphasis on the liturgical practices and hierarchical structures of the church. Rather than the Eucharist-centered services,

---

[12] This is precisely the sin that Dostoyevsky's fictional Ivan Karamazov, among others, accuses the Roman Catholic Church of doing in *The Brothers Karamazov* (238).
In the fourth chapter, I will discuss how Lewis depicts both of these extremes in the characters of Dr. Weston in *Perelandra* (who embraces all spirit) and the apostate Straik in *That Hideous Strength* (who looks forward to an earthly kingdom, with mankind ruling as God).

[13] As when Constantine made Christianity the Empire's official religion. Historically, many devout Christians—who had not fled during times of persecution—retreated to the deserts of Egypt. In his book *Wisdom of the Desert,* Thomas Merton discusses the reasons why so many Christians left Rome after the rise of Christianity: "The fact that the Emperor was now Christian and that the 'world' was coming to know the Cross as a sign of temporal power only strengthened them in their resolve . . . They seem to have doubted that Christianity and politics could ever be mixed to such an extent as to produce a fully Christian society" (1-2).

the preaching of the gospel is central (laying emphasis on the written word as it is found in the Bible). Toward the end of his life, however, Lewis began to move from Low Church to High Church practices. According to his editor Walter Hooper, on his deathbed, Lewis called for a priest to make his confession and receive the sacraments (Introduction to *The Weight of Glory* 5). Also, it is certainly no surprise that the structure of the Medieval Church and teachings of the saints have an enormous influence on Lewis work. His belief in some form of purgatory, his occasional use of the terms "Mass" when referring to the Eucharist and "Blessed Virgin" when referring to the mother of Christ, and his depictions of salvation through sanctification and regeneration in *The Great Divorce* (among other works), have lead many to call his theology—and subsequently, his view of symbolism—Anglo-Catholic. The term can be misleading concerning Lewis's religious loyalties (which were clearly anchored in the Church of England); however, in context the term may, with some accuracy, describe his Anglican heritage with a special emphasis on the universality and orthodoxy of his position according to Christianity in its most ancient forms. This emphasis on universality and orthodoxy holds particularly true in his use and depiction of sacramental symbol in *Perelandra*.

His perspective, perhaps provided by his first-hand experience in both Low Church and High Church traditions, is apparent in his work, particularly in how he deals with the relationship between concrete form and abstract meaning. In *The Allegory of Love* he comments on the two respective errors (mentioned above) that Catholic Church and Protestant churches are prone to commit in their views on transposition:

> When Catholicism goes bad it becomes the world-old, world-wide *religio* of amulets and holy places and priestcraft: Protestantism, in its corresponding decay, becomes a vague mist of ethical platitudes. Catholicism is accused of being much

> too like all the other religions; Protestantism of being insufficiently like religion at all. Hence Plato, with his transcendent Forms, is the doctor of Protestants; Aristotle, with his immanent Forms, the doctor of Catholics. (323)

Some critics and biographers—Joseph Pearce and his book *C.S. Lewis and the Catholic Church*, for example—criticize Lewis's "middle ground stance" (particularly in *Mere Christianity*) as clever in its avoidance of the symbolism controversy. Of course, Lewis does not say that both of these views can be right at the same time; nor does he diminish the importance of the issue. Rather, he suggests in Mere Christianity (and, as I will show later, in *Perelandra*) that the answer may lie somewhere beyond humankind's current understanding:

> Christians have often disputed as to whether what leads the Christian home is good actions, or Faith in Christ. I have no right really to speak on such a difficult question, but it does seem to me like asking which blade in the pair of scissors is most necessary . . . In the attempt to express it, different Churches say different things. But you will find that even those who insist most strongly on the importance of good actions tell you need Faith; and even those who insist most strongly on Faith tell you to do good actions. At any rate, this is as far as I can go. (*Mere Christianity* 148-149)

For Lewis, it is better to believe two facts that (temporarily) seem contrary than ignore half of the evidence (*Mere Christianity* 149).[14] Indeed, many Biblical scholars have noted, as Lewis notes,

---

[14] Lewis made it clear that he rejected the idea that all differences in faith are the result of sin. In a letter to Don Giovanni Calabria about the "friendship" of the two branches of the faith, Lewis states that while Protestantism sees Tetzel and Pope Leo as "lost men," and Catholicism says the same for Henry VIII and Luther, he cannot attribute the piety of either Thomas More or William Tyndale to evil. He wisely claims that he cannot judge such great men (39). His words are not that of a man who avoids difficult and controversial questions, but those of a humble man who, after engaging the questions in the best way he can, leaves them in God's hands.

the contrast between the Epistle to the Romans and the Epistle of James—yet according to most Catholics and Protestants, both should be firmly fixed in the canon. In the same way, the doctrine of the Incarnation appears as both a paradox and a mystery—but not a mystery that shows itself to be fruitless. Indeed, rather than seeing this paradox as a wall or dead-end, Lewis finds it to be an exhaustible and unfathomable well.

Although Lewis sometimes seems to plead ignorance in this matter—the ignorance of a finite man—can we not detect, at least, which direction Lewis leans in his writings? Yes—his feet are firmly planted in the Anglican Church, but leaning toward the middle rather than the extreme end:

> You see, we are now trying to understand, and to separate into water-tight compartments, what exactly God does and what man does when God and man are working together. And of course, we begin by thinking it is like two men working together, so that you could say, "He did this bit and I did that." But this way of thinking breaks down. God is not like that. He is inside you as well as outside. (*Mere Christianity* 149)

It may be argued that the above sounds more like Aristotle's immanent forms rather than Plato's transcendent forms; however, it is clear that Lewis recognized that the failure in both Protestantism and Catholicism is in leaning too far in one direction or the other. In the middle is the doctrine of the Incarnation—the perfect union of form and content—whose truth is the birthright of both the Catholic and Protestant faiths. I argue that it was the startling but unifying

truth of the Incarnation that Lewis is trying to recover in *Perelandra*, and not Anglican sympathy for the Roman heritage of the Church.[15]

Unfortunately, Dyrness, in his valiant attempt to bring Protestantism to a "middle ground" viewpoint, misses Lewis's attempt. He notes that Lewis's discussion of natural beauty in "The Weight of Glory" seems far more Platonic than Aristotelian, since temporal forms cause a longing for a Perfect Form that is beyond our reach in the present world:

> We want something else which can hardly be put into words—to be united with the beauty we see, to pass into it . . . to become part of it . . . At present we are on the outside of the world, the wrong side of the door. We discern the freshness and purity of morning, but they do no make us fresh and pure. We cannot mingle with the splendors we see. But all the leaves of the New Testament are rustling with the rumor that it will not always be so. Some day, God willing, we shall get in. (43)

According to Dyrness, Lewis thinks that one cannot "take part" in beauty at all, and he passes over Lewis's work as largely unhelpful in his quest to revitalize the Christian aesthetic. In *Surprised by Joy*, again Lewis shows signs of holding a more Platonic view of forms:

> I do not think the resemblance between the Christ and the merely imaginative experience is accidental. I think that all things, in their way, reflect heavenly truth, the imagination not least. "Reflect" is the important word. This lower life of the imagination is not a beginning of, or a step toward, the higher life of the spirit, merely an image. (161)

---

[15] One of the books that highly influenced Lewis's spiritual and intellectual life was G.K. Chesterton's *Everlasting Man,* a look at the history of the human race through the lens of the Incarnation.

However, he adds in a footnote that a form does not have the innate power to allow entrance into spiritual life, but "God can cause it to be such a beginning" (161). Like the Reformers, he notices that the symbols can stir, but he understands that through the special presence of God, they can perhaps do much more. For Lewis, they are not simply Platonic nor are they simply Aristotelian.

Lewis, much like Milton, sees the possibility of Aristotelian forms but only from a Platonic perspective. Along with Genesis and *The Divine Comedy,* Milton's *Paradise Lost* is one of *Perelandra*'s most significant literary influences, and it is not unlikely that Milton's depictions of the relationship between spirit and form in the poem influenced Lewis's in *Perelandra.* Milton, although staunchly anti-Catholic, also attempts to harmonize Plato's transcendent forms and Aristotle's immanent forms. Micahel Lieb, in his essay "Milton and the Metaphysics of Form" describes Milton's metaphysics as Aristotelian but through a Platonic lens:

> On one hand, God in Paradise Lost creates the universe out of a "formless Mass," (II, 708) thereby fulfilling in true Platonic fashion "his great Idea" (VII, 557) . . . On the other hand, the form is induced into the matter, something like an Aristotelian process occurs . . . [A]s Milton states in Christian Doctrine, God "blended" the "breath of life" "so intimately with mater" that the production of form became "the proper effect of that power which had been communicated to matter by the Deity. (212)

Thus in both *Paradise Lost* and *Perelandra*, a direct and intimate act of God brings a fullness of meaning to form.[16] After he breathes his Spirit into Adam and Eve, God promises to elevate them further, but he will accomplish this through their love and obedience (Milton 5.497-505). Lewis's Lady, too, is created in Christ's image, but she must undergo a transformation through Maleldil's work of making her "older" (*Perelandra* 90), which is inexorably linked to her acts of love and obedience for Creator and her husband. Since humankind has experienced its great fall, God must (and does) repair the broken relationship between meaning and form.

As Protestants, both Milton and Lewis owe great deal to Aristotelian metaphysics of the medieval church. Dyrness's does not combine this facet of Lewis's view to his own understanding of Lewis's larger contribution to the discussion: earlier in his book, Dyrness confesses his gratitude to Lewis for his introducing him to the rich, "bright vision" of the Medieval Church, which, Lewis explains in *The Discarded Image,* teaches that a man's glory is to fall into his "kindly stede" in the Great Hierarchy—no matter how "humble" the position rather than to become something other then a human being. *Perelandra* calls this interaction with the God and his creation "the Great Dance": eternally taking part in one's glorifying, God-ordained role in the cosmic pattern. One's "kindly stede" is precisely what Lewis means by becoming like God 'with the likeness proper to men" ("Transposition 109), as opposed to the diabolical Serpent's promise that "ye shall be as gods" (Genesis 2:5) through usurpation. Unlike Plato, Lewis does not hold scorn for the copies of the Perfect Form simply because they are copies; however, he emphasizes that humankind is not quite a proper copy yet:

---

[16] The Biblical account of Adam and Eve states, "And the LORD God formed man *of* the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul" (Genesis 2:7 *Authorized Version*).

> [T]he reality of the Beatific Vision would or will outweigh, would infinitely outweigh, the reality of the negations. But can our present notion of it outweigh our present notion of them? That is a quite different question. And for most of us at most times the answer is no. How it may be for great saints and mystics I cannot tell. ("Transposition" 108)

Thus we come, once again, to Lewis's middle ground: he desires to remind the Protestants to remember the Incarnation, while seeming to say to the Catholics that their view of sacramental symbols cannot be fully actualized until Christ's return.

The "not yet" that Lewis so often emphasizes is what gives his view a different "flavor" than the standard Protestant or Catholic of these views. There seems to be a "pagan-ness" to it, which, most likely, is a result of his love for myth. It is because of this mythical sense of "becoming" that Lewis depicts his characters and setting as sacramental symbols in a way that savors of Catholicism, while he himself uses allegory and myth to depict them. In his essay, "Myth Became Fact," he explains that not only does humankind wait to become fulfilled in its union of spirit and flesh that was split at the Fall of Man (as Christ is the fulfillment), so mankind's interaction with every concrete thing in creation waits for its meaning—its abstraction—to be wedded:

> Human intellect is incurably abstract . . . Yet only realities we experience are concrete—this pain, this pleasure, this dog, this man. While we are loving the man, bearing the pain, enjoying the pleasure, we are not intellectually apprehending Pleasure, Pain, or Personality . . . This is our dilemma—either to taste and not to know or to know and not to taste—or, more strictly, the lack of

> one kind of knowledge because we are in an experience or lack another kind because we are outside of it. (66)

For Lewis, myth is a partial solution to this "tragic dilemma" that separates the two kinds of knowing, *savoir* or *connaire*. Myths are a combination of content and form that are almost universal in application because they allow one to grasp truth in a concrete way (shaky and fleeting though the grasp may be). Of course, one can spoil the power of myth by trying to intellectualize it—to discover a universal principle in it that can be applied to other circumstances—and this natural inclination of the human mind is one of the reasons the power of myth is so elusive.

In *Perelandra,* while Ransom lives in this planet of paradise, he feels as though he is "enacting a myth." By saying this, Lewis does not mean that Ransom is pretending to be Prometheus or Baldr or the biblical Adam. It would be a mistake to assume that Lewis simply means "tales of antiquity" or "mythology" in an anthropological sense; a myth as a particular kind of story in which there is an inherent worth. In *An Experiment in Criticism,* he describes myth as a story that "has a value itself—a value independent of its embodiment in any literary work" (41). Lewis goes on to say that myth 1) does not depend on the element of surprise in order to entertain the imagination, 2) does not necessarily cause us to imagine ourselves in the place of the characters, 3) is always fantastic, 4) is always grave despite "happy" or "sad" endings, 5) and "inspires awe" (43-44). Indeed, Ransom's experience in Perelandra, at first, seems to fit the criteria: "If a naked man and a wise dragon were indeed the sole inhabitants of this floating paradise, then this also was fitting . . . To be the figure that he was in this unearthly pattern appeared sufficient" (*Perelandra* 42). Ransom feels as though he is "enacting" something that has been done before—without any sense of a personal "déjà vu"—because his

life on that planet strongly resembles something that has already taken place (and will continue to take place in different forms) in a great hierarchical pattern. But although a thing may resemble (and even innately contain) its true form, it is not a perfect likeness—the likeness proper to it—to the Perfect Form because the relationship between form and content is still unconsummated. Myth, according to Lewis, is one of the best hints we have at what the Incarnation really means (and what it will, in the end, accomplish); thus the Incarnation fulfills, trumps, yet remains myth, just as humankind will retain the true essence of humanness: "Now as myth transcends thought, Incarnation transcends myth. The heart of Christianity is a myth which is also a fact. The old myth of the Dying God, *without ceasing to be myth,* comes down from heaven of legend and imagination to the earth of history" ("Myth Became Fact" 66). Christ's Incarnation is the beginning of the true healing process.

Perelandra, through its characters and setting, is a literary expression of a mythical foreshadowing of Christ's Incarnation, and how sacramental symbols are a reflection on it. Both myth and sacramentalism provide evidence for humankind's great hope, when Christ will "make all things new" (Revelation 21:5) and the body is no longer in opposition to the soul (Romans 7). In other words, the "new" creation will be a "whole" creation. Myth itself provides a hint at what this process might entail, and the sacraments confirm it: death must come before resurrection. Old forms must pass away in order to be remade, but this time as an incarnation of the newly reordered form and—as Dyrness would have it—its "surplus of meaning" (64). This fundamental teaching of the Church, which ordered medieval society, provides *Perelandra*'s strong themes of continual submission and consuming love.

Perelandra demonstrates myth (elusive and shy of careful analysis by nature) and sacramentalism (mystical and, as Lewis would have it, beyond understanding in this present

world) through allegory, which for Lewis is a transposed system of symbolism. In *Planet Narnia,* Ward suggests that Lewis seems to favor allegory in the beginning of his career (ie. *The Pilgrim's Regress*) but moves to myth and symbolism toward the end (*Till We Have Faces),* with the *Ransom Trilogy* somewhere in the middle (31). Lewis never maintains purely one or the other in any of his works, for he acknowledges that strict allegory without some use of symbol would be "a disease of literature" ("Edmund Spenser, 1552-99" 137). The *Perelandra*'s similarity to the biblical account of Adam and Eve suggests a mythical quality, full of rich archetypal symbols. Yet as a medievalist, Lewis was very familiar with—and fond of—allegorical literature. Understanding Lewis's view of allegory is the first step to discovering whether he intends *Perelandra* to be understood allegorically or not and allegory's relationship to the novel's mythical and symbolic elements.

In "Myth Became Fact," Lewis explains the difference between what a reader does while reading an allegory in contrast to what he experiences while reading myth: in myth, "[y]ou are not looking for an abstract 'meaning' at all. If that was what you were doing, the myth would be for you no true myth but a mere allegory" (66). This implies two important elements of Lewis's view of allegory: 1) the words "mere allegory" suggest that myth trumps allegory in some way, and 2) allegory is intended for analysis—or at least more so than myth. As form and content are made one in the Incarnation and faintly separated in the best myths and in symbolism, they are separated further in allegory:

> The allegorist leaves the given—his own passions—to talk of that which is confessedly less real, which is a fiction. The symbolist leaves the given to find that which is more real. To put the difference in another way, for the symbolist it is we who are the allegory. We are the "frigid personifications"; the heavens

> above us are the "shadowy abstractions"; the world which we mistake for reality is the flat outline of that which elsewhere veritably is all the round of its unimaginable dimensions. (*The Allegory of Love* 45)

This is not to suggest that the abstract truth related by allegory should ever be far removed from the form of the story.[17] In *Studies in Medieval and Renaissance Literature,* he insists, "We shall understand [allegory] best (though this may seem paradoxical) by not trying too hard to understand it . . . Allegory is not a puzzle" (137). While allegory, like myth and symbolic literature, is meant to be grasped with the imagination, allegory does not hint at an incarnation of concrete meaning in and of itself; it merely enriches the abstract meaning through a concrete medium. For example, Lewis can say that love is a wave-tossed ocean because the metaphorical relationship between love and the ocean can, through allegory, help one understand the concept of love better. In the deep and infinite symbolism provided by the ocean, however—an archetype that rooted to the very soul of humankind—one cannot separate the relationship between meaning and its form.[18]

Perelandra, by Lewis's own definition, is allegorical:[19] the world of the novel is a less-real world, illustrating the abstract concepts that the author wished to convey—concepts he believed he could not say better through an essay or lecture. For example, in *Perelandra,* Lewis

---

[17] In *A Preface to Paradise Lost,* Lewis clearly believes that no literature should ever be read this way, as evidenced by his rejection of what he calls, "The Doctrine of the Unchanging Human Heart," which holds that stories should be stripped of their particulars to discover universals.

[18] Not all books are allegories, but nearly all fictional books contain symbolism, because literature is itself an attempt to recreate the world with a healed breach between meaning and form.

[19] In a prefatory note to *Perelandra* Lewis denies that his characters are allegorical in that they are fictitious and do not parallel living persons. I assert that while they are not meant to be read as personifications or depictions of living persons, the fictitious characters do interact allegorically with Perelandra's landscape.

creates the singing beast, a myth-like animal to personify *eros* (adoring, submissive love).[20] While in the Gospels, the Mother of Christ, for example, may share the same meaning or abstraction, she is a real embodiment of *eros* rather than an artificial personification. In Roman and Greek myths, Venus and Aphrodite, on the other hand, only suggest this concept in their personalities (and only on occasion) through the baser, more "earthly" sort of *eros*. In the novel, Lewis creates the Oyarsa Perelandra from the mythical Venus and uses her to illustrate *eros*. She is a complex invention: not only is she based on a myth, but she is also an allegorical personification with all the symbolism of erotic love and sexuality.[21] Indeed, good allegory seems to owe an enormous debt to myth and symbol, for without being firmly grounded in them, it would be stale and dead, having no possible way of striking a chord in the imagination. So the very fact that mythical and allegorical elements in *Perelandra* are sometimes difficult to distinguish is appropriate, and perhaps even to the story's credit. Lewis explains that "[w]hen allegory is at its best, it approaches myth, which must be grasped with the imagination not with the intellect" (13). Perhaps this is why the best allegories are meant to illuminate an abstract truth, saying what cannot be fully explained any other way.

The building block of the allegory, of course, is the metaphor. In his essay "Bluspels and Flalansferes," Lewis suggests that oftentimes, when experts think they are speaking literally, they are only speaking with more abstract metaphors. He divides metaphor into two categories: master's metaphor and pupil's metaphor. The first is the concrete image of an abstraction chosen by the author (the master) who, being more experienced in that particular truth, chooses the

---

[20] In Perelandra, the singing beast's beautiful song is made for others—not for itself. When Ransom seeks it out and watches it sing, the beast becomes bashful and scampers away. The female singing beast nurses the orphaned young of other species until they are capable of thriving on their own.

[21] Outside of *Perelandra*, this blending of devices in the character of Perelandra can also be seen in Jane's sighting of Venus in *That Hideous Strength* (301-302).

concrete image, laden with meaning, to communicate the truth to a pupil (254). The teacher freely chooses it from a variety of possible metaphors and is not confined to it because he lives within it—the truth, for him, is a reality. The pupil's metaphor is one that the student uses—and must use—to grasp the abstract truth the teacher is trying to convey to him. He is confined to it because he cannot think outside of it. For Lewis, this use of metaphor is an allegory for symbolism itself, because in symbolism "it is we who are the allegory" (*The Allegory of Love* 45). The corporeal world, in a sense, is the pupil's metaphor of humankind by which it learns heavenly things. Yet it is God's master's metaphor as he is not confined to it. This suggests that Lewis lays great emphasis on the things that—when we finally understand the meaning of their reality—one will be free to "cast off."

Lewis, as member of the Anglican Church and a faithful student of its doctrines, certainly regards the resurrection of the body as Christianity's dearest hope. By his emphasis on the things we will cast off, he is not suggesting that the resurrection will be other than something physical; rather, it is something incomprehensibly more real. When Ransom returns to his home and friends, he does not—and presumably cannot—speak much about what he "saw" there. He describes his voyage to Perelandra to be "trans-sensuous" rather than "non-sensuous" (*Perelandra* 32). His experience there is not beyond the physical in the way that abstractions are beyond touch, smell, sight, feeling, or taste, but a fulfillment of the senses in which those faculties are overwhelmed by something greater. In *Miracles*, Lewis discusses the story of Christ's resurrection and describes the Lord's body as "withdrawing . . . into some different mode of existence" (149). Indeed, there is something peculiar about how, in the garden on the Sunday morning after his crucifixion, Christ says to Mary: "Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father" (John 20:17). Even though he is not literally floating up into the sky,

there is something about the very quality of his form that is making a great change. It is become a form that transcends time and space, as evidenced by his sudden disappearances, reappearances, and defiance of (what is commonly called) "the laws of nature" thereafter. Lewis takes this story—this indefinable miracle written in vague human language—as a picture of what is to come:

> It is not the picture of an escape from any and every kind of Nature into some unconditioned and utterly transcendent life. It is the picture of a new human nature and a new Nature in general, being brought into existence . . . The old field of space, time, matter, and the senses is to be weeded, dug, and sown for a new crop. We may be tired of that old field: God is not. (149)

And yet, he once again pleads ignorance of what the new form (ordered and remolded by its unification with meaning) will be like. For example, after Malacandra and Perelandra take on a human-like shape in their interaction with Ransom, they personify the archetypes of masculinity and femininity through their allegorical maleness and femaleness. In their raw, light-like forms, Ransom cannot see or comprehend these pure archetypes, just as human beings cannot know what pure masculinity or pure femininity is. Other than their maleness, what exactly about the images of the "golden lion, the bearded bull" (*That Hideous Strength* 112) is symbolic of masculinity? Exactly which elements are dross to be burned away from the thing's real form is difficult discover, and perhaps humankind is not meant to pinpoint it but—as Lewis says about myth, symbol, and allegory—to grapple with in the imagination. This is precisely what Lewis does in his mythical novel, *Perelandra*: he hopes, contemplates, imagines, and strains at what that incarnate change will be. For this reason, *Perelandra* does not deserve light, fun-loving enjoyment only, but serious reading and scholarship.

In *Perelandra*, Lewis draws on universal, orthodox Christian views of symbol (particularly those of the Medieval Church) to depict the mythical promise of the Incarnation: that the broken relationship between abstract meaning and concrete form will be healed. Although Lewis's use of symbol in *Perelandra* envelops doctrinal elements that both Anglicans and Catholics have in common, labeling Lewis "Anglo-Catholic" is misleading because the term could be so easily misunderstood as an Anglican's sympathetic view of institutional Roman ecclesiasticism or a desire to recover other traditions of an exclusively Roman heritage. In this sense, Lewis did not occupy a "middle ground." While there is no evidence to support such a claim, Lewis is "Anglo-Catholic" in his attempt to recover the universal truth of the Incarnation of Christ and hope in the transforming beauty of sacramental symbols.

Chapter 2: Myth and Sacramentalism Through Character

The characters in *Perelandra* have peculiar relationship to one another that may be difficult for modern readers to grasp; by "character," I am here referring to the rational creatures of Perelandra who interact with others. There are only seven characters in the novel: Ransom, Lewis, Humphrey,[22] Malacandra, Tinidril, Weston, Tor, and Perelandra; there is a dreamy aura of ceremony about their interactions and dialogue, not only in their contemplative nature but also in their sense of ritual. Ransom[23] the notices the change in his own personality after living on Perelandra for only a few days: "If a naked man and a wise dragon were indeed the sole inhabitants of this floating paradise, then this also was fitting . . . To be the figure that he was in this unearthly pattern appeared sufficient" (*Perelandra* 42). Ransom feels as though he is enacting a myth because Christ—in a much greater sense—has already fulfilled role which Ransom himself must also fill. In this chapter, I will discuss how the characters of *Perelandra* assume their objective mythical roles in a cosmic hierarchy, thus allowing their "meaning" to reshape their forms into transposed sacramental images of Christ.

The development of *Perelandra*'s characters is not simply that of static characters becoming round characters;[24] rather, the characters begin to discover their objective mythical roles or archetypes in a cosmic hierarchy. For example, the newly arrived Ransom asks Tinidril who the King is, and she replies, "He is himself, he is the King . . . How can one answer such a

---

[22] Humphrey has only a small part in the beginning of the book. Since he is a doctor, Ransom and Lewis ask him to attend to Ransom's medical needs on his return to Earth.

[23] Although Ransom is not the perfect representation of this process (since, as one of three "fallen" characters in the novel, he is in the minority), he is representative for my purposes in the chapter.

[24] From the moment the narrator professes to take Ransom's word for the account of his life on Perelandra, the narrative mode is mostly third person limited and the depth of psychological detail the narrator reveals remains fairly consistent throughout the novel. The characters are not developing internally but fulfilling external and objective roles beyond their own personalities.

question?" (57). Similarly, he says that she "must have had a mother," but Tinidril is still befuddled by his mistake: "I have a mother? . . . What do you mean? I am the mother" (57). Tor is not an individual who functions as a king—he simply is himself, which is the embodiment of transposed masculine kingliness. Tinidril does not function as a mother; she is "mother" and "queen" due to her perfect femininity. As un-fallen creatures, Tor and Tinidril are much nearer than Ransom to grasping fully and living this concept, whose understanding is clouded by the lies he unwittingly adopted in his fallen planet.

But Ransom develops a mythical quality as well; what seems like his original flatness is really an "everyman" quality. He is just common enough to be relatable to all Christians. At first, he reacts to problems and surprises in much the same way that many others would; he is prone to the shocks, failures, and victories to which all human nature would be liable under his peculiar circumstances: for example, he panics when getting caught by waves (32), becomes offended when a stranger laughs at him (48), and feels lonely after spending a few days alone (47). The increasing difficulty of his plight brings him to a decision: the decision to die in a final struggle with the Un-man. This new commitment to obedience expresses a love for God (and thus all the living things around him) that is beyond the reach of human understanding. When Ransom decides to sacrifice himself for Perelandra, "he bowed his head and groaned and repined against his fate—to be still a man and yet to be forced up into the metaphysical world, to enact what philosophy only thinks" (126). He "develops" as a character by finding his mythical role. As an author, Lewis takes on a tremendous goal: to describe characters that have moved from a comparatively drab and narrow realm to one that is so vast and golden that it cannot be fully expressed by human words. The limited power of language in this retelling is a problem to which even Ransom admits (30). The end result of this goal seems to be that his characters

become more detailed—more like themselves—and yet more universal. As Lewis seems to realize that all attempts to express this transformation must fall short, so all pre-Christian myths about the Incarnation fall short of Christ, the factual myth.

Using the medieval hierarchical relationships between characters—creatures of flesh—Lewis is able to depict his theory of transposition concretely. The world he creates in *Perelandra* and the world he describes in "Transposition" both assume a view of the universe where the Power that orders the hierarchy of corporeal things is the same power that orders the spiritual world as well. In *The Discarded Image: An Introduction To Medieval and Renaissance Literature* (1964), he describes the medieval conception of the universe that he calls the Medieval Model. According to Lewis, a longing to contribute to this Model was at the heart of all medieval scholarship:

> At his most characteristic, medieval man was not a dreamer or a wanderer. He was an organizer, a codifier, a builder of systems. He wanted a "place for everything and everything in the right place." Distinction, definition, tabulation were his delight . . . There was nothing which medieval people liked better, or did better, than sorting out and tidying up. (10)

The Model was extended to the concrete (men, animals, plants, and minerals), the spiritual (angels and other "intelligences"), and the abstract (for example, areas of study such as Theology or Law). In *Perelandra,* this Model is no mere system of classification but a way to express how all of creation demonstrates the love of God. As in the Medieval Model, *Perelandra* lays emphasis on likenesses in terms of their relation to one another: "We see how everything links up with everything else; at once, not in flat equality, but in a hierarchical ladder" (*The Discarded Image* 12). The objectivity we find is not isolated and internal objectivity; instead objectivity and

meaning are innately tied to one thing's relationship to another, so that everything except God points outside of itself and beyond itself, demonstrating humility and adoration of the superior. The difficulty modern readers have in comprehending the Model is their limited view of authority. As Downing points out, "Lewis suggests that hierarchal social order entails more complex relationships than usually understood in our era, when the only political models we are familiar with are democratic, autocratic, or totalitarian" (72). The kind of rule one being has over another depends on one's position in the hierarchy and transposition: a father rules with authority that is less than and different from that of a king, and a king rules with authority that is less than and different from that of God.

Lewis's interest in the Medieval Model was not one of an anthropologist investigating a fascinating belief of a more primitive people group, far removed from his own in time; Lewis's interest is literary and artistic. He makes it clear that he does not necessarily believe in the Model in the same way the medieval scholars did. As Downing explains, "Lewis, the medieval scholar, would revel in such a glad, elegant, and orderly picture of the cosmos. Lewis the twentieth-century Christian would admit that such a picture was not scientifically true, but he affirmed that its theological implications were essentially accurate" (74). For Lewis, the model is a beautiful work of the medieval imagination; he says that it "is a supreme medieval work of art, but that it is in a sense the central work, that in which most particular works were embedded, to which they constantly referred, from which they drew a great deal of their strength" (*The Discarded Image* 12). In *Perelandra,* as in many medieval works, knowing a thing's meaning is dependent upon knowing its proper place in the cosmic hierarchy:

> In speaking of the perfected Model as a work to be set beside the *Summa* and the *Comedy*, I mean that it is capable of giving a similar satisfaction to the mind, and

> for some of the same reasons. Like them it is vast in scale, but limited and intelligible. Its sublimity is not the sort that depends on anything vague or obscure. It is . . . a classical rather than Gothic sublimity. Its contents, however rich and various, are in harmony. (12)

The "satisfaction" and repose it gives to the mind are due to the sense it produces: that the universe is divinely ordered and forms are consistent with what God intends them to mean. For Lewis, the beauty of this view of the universe does not rest in its factuality—there is too much pain and suffering in the world today, and one feels the separation from meaning too keenly. The Model is beautiful because it anticipates a world where this may be true. *Perelandra,* like the Model, is a mythical representation of a healed universe.

In *Perelandra*, the mythical sense of becoming a sacramental symbol (as described in the previous chapter) culminates when the characters take part in the "Great Dance," Lewis's own transposed version of the Beatific Vision.[25] It is something like Lewis's description of *The Divine Comedy*'s literary quality in a letter to Arthur Greeves (1930):

> [*The Divine Comedy* has] a sort of mixture of intense, even crabbed, complexity in language and thought with (what seems impossible) at the very same time a feeling of spacious gliding movement, like a slow dance, or like flying . . . I should describe it as a feeling more important than any poetry I have ever read . . . Its blend of complexity and beauty is very like Catholic theology—wheel within wheel, but wheels of glory, and the One radiated through the Many. (*Letters of C.S. Lewis to Arthur Greeves* 325-326)

---

[25] I say "transposed" here because the Ransom's vision in *Perelandra* is still only a mythical foreshadowing of the vision of God Himself, the true Beatific Vision.

Although Dante's Catholic theology is not necessarily Lewis's Anglican theology, Lewis imagines his model of the universe, a beautiful work of art, as the mythical model of the eternally healed universe.

Many scholars have also noted the similarities between Milton's retelling of the Eden Myth in *Paradise Lost* and Lewis's retelling of it in *Perelandra,* particularly their robust hierarchical framework (which, as Lewis argues, is fundamentally medieval). Milton is certainly a great influence, particularly when it comes to Lewis's characters; *A Preface to Paradise Lost* is written in the same year as *Perelandra,* and many of the arguments Lewis makes in his *Preface* are put in the form of a concrete story in the novel. For the most part, Lewis certainly holds Milton's work in high esteem, but he also acknowledges Milton's literary and theological failings. The thematic elements of *Paradise Lost* that Lewis praises, he mythically "retells" in *Perelandra;* those in which he expresses disappointment are, for Lewis, changed to better suit orthodoxy and the imagination.

Along with Milton's themes, he adopts Dante's "wheels-in-wheels" model. In "Shelley, Dryden, and Mr. Eliot," Lewis describes Milton's work as "the untrammelled, reckless speed through pellucid spaces which makes us imagine while we are reading him that we have somehow left our bodies behind," while Dante's is "a poetry as bright and piercing and aerial as [Shelley], yet as weighty, as pregnant and as lapidary as [Milton]" (204). Lewis concentrates on the mythical connectedness and intricate symmetry of the hierarchy by developing more detailed and complicated depictions of its lower transposed levels while keeping the emphasis on Deep Heaven. For him, the organized system that is depicted throughout *The Divine Comedy* can only

be fully realized in Paradise,[26] and *Perelandra* gives him the un-fallen setting in which to recreate it. Thus many of the themes of *Perelandra* are a correction to Milton's themes, but the intricacies of the hierarchical model are adopted from Dante.

The hierarchy of creatures in the last chapter of *Perelandra* is more like a ritual dance than the stale portrait of a chain of command. Downing notes, "Lewis often referred to the medieval metaphor of the dance, both as an image of their social order and their concept of the cosmic order . . . [H]ierarchy itself is more like a dance than a pyramid" (72). The term "Great Dance" I introduced in the beginning of the chapter is significant because it moves away from the idea that hierarchy consists in two-dimensional flatness (up, down, and side-to-side), to imagery that is three-dimensional and full of life and movement. It is like the complex movements of the heavenly spheres, but with this significant departure from the medieval view of the heavens: it is Maleldil, not we, who are in the center. Martha Sammons's *A Guide Through C.S. Lewis's Space Trilogy* notes that the difference between Lewis's model of the universe and both the modern and medieval models is one that heightens the theological implications of the medieval conception:

> Lewis turns our own universe inside-out by explaining how even the Ptolemaic model with the earth at the center should really be turned around. The spatial order is quite the opposite of the spiritual. The physical cosmos, in other words, "mirrors" or reverses spiritual reality; so what is truly the rim seems to us the hub In actuality, the bent and silent earth is at the edge of all life. (43)

With God at the center of a sphere-like universe, it is not the rungs of a hierarchical ladder that keep all creatures in their proper places, but the "influence" of his mighty love. The perfect order

[26] The importance of the *Comedy* will become even more apparent in my fourth chapter's discussion of setting in *Perelandra.*

of the created universe that *Perelandra* presents is roughly circular or spherical in nature, but as a completed whole it is not something that can be fully grasped by the imagination because it represents a paradox: the union of Platonic and Aristotelian metaphysics. Indeed, before Ransom begins to experience it, his human attempt to understand it is both insufficient and troublesome: "Is the enemy easily answered when He says that all is without plan or meaning? As soon as we think we see one it melts away into nothing or becomes the rim, till we doubt if any shape or plan or pattern was ever more than a trick of our own eyes" (183). The answer comes: everything is "at the centre" with God:

> They who add years to years in lumpish aggregation, or miles to miles and galaxies to galaxies, shall not come near His greatness. The days of the fields of Arbol will fade and the days of Deep Heaven itself are numbered. Not thus is he great. He dwells (all of him dwells) within the seed of the smallest flower and is not cramped: Deep Heaven is inside Him who is inside the seed and does not distend Him. Blessed be He! (184)

By his omnipotence and omnipresence, which transcend time and space, every single created thing is the sole object of his *agape* love. Yet throughout this dizzying and kaleidoscopic passage in the novel is a constant insistence that Maleldil is inside everything, thus everything is inside Maleldil.

There are life and movement in the hierarchical pattern—the "Great Dance"—that is both powered and steered by reciprocating love in their relationships. Lewis describes how this concept, left over from the theological, philosophical, and literary traditions of the Middle Ages, permeates Milton's thought, producing a similar hierarchical structure in *Paradise Lost:* "Every being is a conductor of superior love or *agape* to the being below it, and of inferior love of *eros*

to the being above. Such is the leveling inequality between the intelligence that guides a sphere and the sphere which is guided" (*Preface to Paradise Lost* 75). In *Perelandra*, a character's mythical role and place in the hierarchy largely depend on his or her masculinity or femininity. According to Michael Ward, gender is a central theme in *Perelandra*: "Having developed, as it were in the background, images of masculinity and femininity, respectively, in the first two books, Lewis foregrounds the theme . . . at the end of Perelandra when he tries 'a hundred times' to put into words the difference between the ousiarchs of Mars and Venus" (49). Malacandra and Perelandra embody these respective archetypes in their purer forms (second only to God), and the human characters—Tor, Tinidril, and Ransom—embody them in their grosser corporeal forms.

Lewis is careful to make the distinction between the mythical roles of masculinity and femininity and cultural traditions based on sex, even divulging fictional conversations when Ransom teaches Lewis why most earthly tongues make inanimate objects feminine or masculine:

> What is masculine about a mountain or feminine about certain trees? Ransom has cured me of believing that this is a purely morphological phenomenon, depending on the form of the word. Still less is gender an imaginative extension of sex. Our ancestors did not make mountains masculine because they projected male characteristics into them. The real process is the reverse. Gender is a reality, a more fundamental reality than sex. Sex is, in fact, merely the adaptation to organic life of a fundamental polarity which divides all created beings. (172)

After a century of psychoanalytic criticism as well as decades of feminist criticism, it may be difficult for modern readers to grasp that Lewis is not beginning with human maleness and femaleness, using it as a lens to view the world. When in *A Preface to Paradise Lost,* Lewis

states, "whether male is, or is not, the superior sex, the masculine is certainly the superior gender" (113), he is not saying that God loves the masculine more than the feminine, but rather that this polarity is a matter of perspective depending on one's place in the hierarchy and the kind of love that is between two beings. Ward, in his attempt to describe the hierarchy in *Perelandra,* is particularly sensitive to the difference between masculine and feminine roles:

> Above [Tinidril], however, is the planetary Mother, the Oyarsa of Venus, the Intelligence which guides Perelandra. Her enfolding, womb-like identity is readable in her eyes . . . And who is the Mother of the Oyarsa? . . . Maleldil could have been depicted as a "She," as an even greater kind of Venus; Spenser had something similar . . . But Lewis chooses not to take that step. Perelandra apparently has no mother any more than Malacandra had. Maleldil and "His Father and the Third One" are conceived in masculine terms. (171)

Most likely, Lewis does not highlight God's supposed feminine attributes (mythical feminine characteristics that find their source in him) because being the superior figure in the hierarchy is innately masculine. As Lewis points out, that is why, for Milton, all angels are both sexless and masculine in humankind's eyes (113). Since everything in the hierarchy (except for God) has both superiors and inferiors, everything loves with *agape* and *eros* in its own way, and everything has both masculine and feminine qualities.[27]

Indeed, gender as myth is necessary to an understanding of the sense of "becoming" in *Perelandra.* Since God loves humankind with *agape* and humankind reciprocates with *eros,* to God everything is feminine. In *The Four Loves,* Lewis explains both *eros* and *agape* in more detail. Although men and women both feel *eros* toward one another, in its relationship to *agape,*

---

[27] As I have previously indicated, this model that medieval scholars saw as reality only pertains to a perfect universe for Lewis. In the present world, sin has corrupted the model

eros is the feminine of the two loves. Since God is the authority of all creation, he loves humankind with *agape*, and humankind response to him with *eros.* God loves us because he is the source of love; humankind adores and desires God, not because love begins in us, but because God is himself. According to Lewis, "[W]e are all, corporately and individually, feminine to him" ("Priestesses in the Church?" 238). Sex and sexual imagery, then, can be a transposed expression of the mythical relationship between theses loves. In its carnal form, Lewis calls this branch of *eros* "Venus." Of course, some forms of sexuality are not in the sphere of Venus, because they do not represent the relationship between these two loves: Lewis says, "Sexual desire, without Eros, wants [sexual activity], the thing *itself*. Eros wants the Beloved" (94). The relationship between *eros* and *agape* is the fruit of love's "Great Dance" in *Perelandra.* The fact that the relationship between *agape* and *eros* is mythical, as Lewis explains, is why sex is at once noble and comical: "First, theologically, because this is the body's share in marriage which, by God's choice, is the mystical image of the union between God and Man. Secondly, as what I will venture to call sub-Christian, or Pagan or natural sacrament, our human participation in, and exposition of, the natural forces of life and fertility—the marriage of Sky-Father and Earth-Mother" (*The Four Loves* 98). The imitative quality of sex (in a platonic sense) is what makes it funny—like the fool in a medieval play imitating the real drama in a transposed way. And yet, the fact that it is an imitation of something holy makes it noble.

The difficulty in taking on one's mythical role in the hierarchy, of course, is humankind's propensity towards sin, the suicide of the soul, which subverts mankind's *agape* and *eros* in their pure forms and distorts them into selfish desires. That is why it is crucial to understand that in *Perelandra,* one's pleasure is a consequence of obedience to authority and dedication to one's mythical role in the hierarchy. Although love of "the thing *itself*" (pleasure in the act of sex

alone)[28] is hardly touched upon in *Perelandra,*[29] the sin is depicted on higher levels of the hierarchy of transposition.[30] When sin enters the hierarchy, the focus is turned inward at "the thing *itself"*—namely one's own pleasure for pleasure's sake (not for the sake of another)—instead of an outward gaze at the Beloved. The usurpation of power and neglect of subordinates is due to an inappropriate love of self, which leads to a breakdown of the hierarchy. In *Miracles*, Lewis says, "To be high or central means to abdicate continually: to be low means to be raised: all masters are servants: God washes the feet of men" (128). Refusal to love with *agape* or *eros* properly ultimately means a loss of self, and this is the split between abstract meaning and form: created beings are separated from their mythical roles.

Although Ransom is, in a general sense, a masculine figure in the novel, he sometimes plays the feminine role in that he is submissive to his authority and holds *eros* for that which is higher. Those who are above him on the hierarchy begin to elevate him by causing him to take on his mythical role: the likeness of Christ in the degree that is proper to humanity. A similar though somewhat accelerated process occurs in Tinidril. Throughout the novel, Tinidril frequently says that Maleldil is making her "older," because in a perfect world, the age and experience God gives necessarily yield wisdom; the soil on which he plants, it seems, is good soil in that brings forth every seed. Also, as Sammons points out, "Since Perelandra was the first world created after Christ's incarnation, there are no eldila on that planet. Rather, Maleldil and the two humans communicate directly, with no need for intermediaries" (94). Maleldil

---

[28] *That Hideous Strength* tells of the moon's "cold marriages" by "an accursed people full of pride and lust. There when a young man takes a maiden in marriage, they do not lie together, but each lies with a cunningly fashioned image of one another, made to move and to be warm by devilish arts" (271).

[29] When Weston first arrives in Perelandra, he has a perverted misunderstanding of the relationship between Ransom and Tinidril. He accuses Ransom of taking advantage of her, a native woman (*Perelandra* 75).

[30] This and other depictions of sin will be covered more thoroughly in the fourth chapter.

accomplishes this process of elevation miraculously by directly putting thoughts into Tinidril's mind that she could never have known independently. He also causes her to grow "like a tree whose branches [are] growing wider and wider apart" through others as well (*Perelandra* 89). When Maledil does not speak to her on a subject upon which she is ignorant, she says that she will ask Tor to "make her older about it," because to Tinidril, Tor is always objectively "older" than herself, just as both Tor and Tinidril are older than the beasts (90). Ransom says, "The beasts in your world seem almost rational," to which Tinidril replies, "We make them older every day . . . Is not that what it means to be a beast?" (56).

Lewis's eldila differ from Milton's angels in that some of the eldila are distinctly feminine from a human perspective. Because Perelandra is Venus, an archetype of femininity, the novel emphasizes this mythical feminine role in the hierarchy more than *Out of the Silent Planet*'s Malacandra. According to Walter Hooper's *C.S. Lewis: A Complete Guide to His Life and Works,* Lewis wrote a letter to his friend Sister Penelope, saying, "This woman [Tinidril] has got to combine characteristics which the Fall has put poles apart—she's got to be in some ways a Pagan goddess and in other ways like the Blessed Virgin" (224). In *Perelandra,* the creature in any feminine position responds to authority with adoration and submissive love and does not think of itself but of the beloved much in the way that the Bible depicts the Virgin Mary. Further down in the hierarchy, the fish are anxious to give Tinidril a ride through the water. She makes them take turns because she wants to show all of them her love—not because it is a burden for them. Tinidril explains to Ransom, "The beasts would not think it hard if I told them to walk on their heads. It would become their delight to walk on their heads. I am His beast, and all His biddings are joys" (65). The beasts of Perelandra illustrate through their simple, transposed love how humans respond to God and all other authority in their proper degrees. One of the most

revealing incidences of this role is Ransom's interaction with the singing beast, which had been created to make beautiful music for others. When Ransom tries to observe this strange animal, it scampers further away in order to remain unseen. After repeating this process several times, Ransom discovers that the animal is not afraid but modest; it submits to his touch but disappears again the moment he allows it to leave (164). The delight of the character in the feminine position is simply to delight in authority without hope of honor or recognition.

Yet occasionally the feminine has precedence over what might seem to be masculine. Here, *Perelandra*'s unique sense of "becoming" is again at work: the work of the feminine (in transposed language) is often the work of the womb. Perelandra's rule is temporary with a special emphasis on nurturing the young King and Queen, just as a mother raises her son until he is old enough to take command of his own life and become the proper superior of others. Sammons explains that the relationship between the humans and Perelandra resonates with the relationship between men and angels in the Bible:

> Man is created "a little lower than the angels," both physically and intellectually (Hebrews 2:7). Yet the incarnation, crucifixion, and act of atonement of Christ was solely for man's sin, allowing a special relationship between man and God that angels cannot enjoy. Angels have always been available to serve and aid man as messengers of God, but at the future resurrection, man will be made higher than the angels (Luke 20:36). (95)

The feminine role that nurtures and elevates others is represented on many levels of *Perelandra*'s hierarchy. While the Un-man is trying to give Tinidril self-aggrandizing thoughts through his flattery, Maleldil puts it into her mind that her children may grow to be higher on the hierarchy than herself: "[P]erhaps He will bring out of me daughters as much greater than I as I am greater

than the beasts . . . I had thought I was to be always Queen and Lady. But I see now . . . I may be appointed to cherish when they are small and weak children who will grow up to overtop me and at whose feet I shall fall (91). Not only shall she raise her children to surpass her; she will do them honor. On the animal level, the same process is mirrored by the relationship between the singing beast and its nurse:

> The [singing] beasts . . . have no milk and always what they bring forth is suckled by the she-beast of another kind. She is great and beautiful and dumb, and till the young singing beast is weaned it is among her whelps and is subject to her. But when it is grown it becomes the most delicate and glorious of all beasts and goes from her. And she wonders at its song. (168)

Only when the singing beast surpasses its nurse can the nurse enjoy the music it makes. The joy of mythical motherhood is to nurture, and the fruition of that joy is to see the lesser be raised higher than oneself.

All mythical roles in *Perelandra* the point to the Incarnation. For the characters in the novel, the Incarnation of Christ is a central event in the history of the universe, and the mythical sense of becoming is the ripple of that event. The characters often discuss or think about what it means to be human, and the discussion is always in the context of Christ's humanity, not only as a fulfillment but as the keystone uniting all living things. When Ransom sees Tinidril for the first time, he ponders this very question: "For now he realized the word 'human' refers to something more than the bodily form or even to the rational mind. It refers also to that community of blood and experience which unites all men and women on Earth" (49). In other words, man is not simply an individual combination of spirit and matter; he is part of a corporate humanity with Christ as the head. At first, Ransom is troubled because he assumes that without

sharing a lineage, he will look upon her as unnatural and monstrous, yet he remembers that she is created after the likeness of Christ.

As sacramental symbols of Christ Incarnate, Tor and Tinidril are the link between matter and spirit. Sammons notes how this important role is symbolized on the holy mountain:

> In the final ceremony, the hierarchy is represented by the arrangement of beings on one side of the pool: first eldila; then Ransom; next, the four singing beasts; and finally, the other animals. The King and Queen are called the Keystone of the arch, the bridging of the gap between transcorporeal intelligences and beasts which has existed on earth ever since the fall. (51)

Tinidril also explains that all rational creatures since the Incarnation must take the form of humanity in honor of Maleldil the younger (54). She speaks of the Incarnation as the central point or "corner" of the universe, providing the metaphor of a wave's crest. Ransom, before his fight with the Un-man knows that since the Incarnation, Maleldil works through flesh: "He had not yet made men members of His body: since then He had, and through them henceforward He would save and suffer. One of the purposes for which He had done all this was to save Perelandra not through Himself but through Himself in Ransom" (123). Ransom, then, is at once mythical and sacramental, a reflection of God and yet the hands of God himself.

The characters become clearer images of the Christ though obedience to him, withstanding temptation as Christ himself did. Despite the fact that Tor and Tinidril are perfectly without sin, love and obedience will continue to change their forms. Tor says that their bodies, along with the bodies of his descendants, "will not always be bodies bound to the low worlds . . . [I]t is Maleldil's purpose to make us free of Deep Heaven. Our bodies will be changed, but not all changed. We shall be as the eldila, but not all as eldila" (181). Similarly, Milton's Raphael

suggests that Adam and Eve may be changed by God's work in them to something that is both human and "spiritual":

> And from these corporal nutriments perhaps
> Your bodies may at last turn all to Spirit,
> Improv'd by tract of time, and wingd ascend
> Ethereal, as wee, or may at choice
> Here or in Heav'nly Paradises dwell;
> If ye be found obedient and retain
> Unalterably firm his love entire
> Whose progenie you are. (5.496-503)

Their forms are linked to their spiritual states as defined by their obedience to their designated mythical roles. For Milton, this link is important: Raphael digresses from pressing business to explain why he is able to eat physical food.[31] In a similar way the resurrected Christ partakes of meals with his disciples (Luke 24:42, John 21:15). In Christ's case, he demonstrates that his Incarnation remains; he is not a detached soul that belongs in another realm but is still a man of "flesh and bone" (Luke 24:39). Lewis's eldila, though they resemble humanity less than Milton's angels, are also seemingly ubiquitous through speed rather than omnipresence—Malacandra and Perelandra, in the human-like forms, seem to be always rushing forward, because they are aware that the sphere on which they stand is hurtling through the heavens on its divinely appointed track (170). They are more like God in their forms than humankind, but they

[31] While the angels in *Paradise Lost* have forms that are roughly similar in shape to those of humans, the spiritual beings in *Perelandra*—particularly the archons of the spheres—only personify themselves in human form to honor Tinidril and Tor whose form is in the likeness of Maleldil. Otherwise the Oyarsu only appear as diminutions of light. Although they occupy time and space because they are made up of a light-like substance (much like Milton's angels) they are not as restrained by these forces as humankind.

are still not precisely like him in his formlessness. Tor and Tinidril will one day have bodies similar to the eldila as they grow in obedience. The truth Christ presents in the gospels is a reversal of merely human wisdom: in order for the spirit to hold its proper place over the flesh, one must die to the desire of exultation for the pleasure's sake and discover humility through their obedience.

Of course, not all of Ransom is completely devoted to Maleldil's work or his mythical role in the hierarchy; he is not sinless as Tor and Tinidril, but the power Maleldil gives Ransom allows him to withstand temptation and bring him closer to becoming sacramental. Malacandra notes that "in [Ransom's] best thoughts there are such things mingled as, if we thought them, our light would perish," but he adds, "But he is in the body of Maleldil and his sins are forgiven" (166). His imperfections taint even his best motives, but he can one day become like Christ because Christ became a man. In his book *Fantasist, Mythmaker, and Poet,* Bruce L. Edwards notes, "Ransom's two-toned body is an image of his divided self. Though he has submitted to the will of Maleldil (God), he still has within his natural self, his own desire for control, safety, and self-reliance" (37). Although some critics try to apply psychological methods to Ransom's "divided self,"[32] these attempts have seen Ransom's change to be an inner change that is made manifest by outward characteristics. I argue that Ransom's inner change should be viewed through mythical lens with a emphasis on the sacramental theme of the story: the inward and outward influences are one and the same, transforming Ransom into his mythical role.

---

[32] Carnell, Corbin Schott. "Ransom in C.S. Lewis' Perelandra as Hero in Transformation: Notes Toward an Jungian Reading of the Novel." *Studies in the Literary Imagination.* 14.2: (1981) 67. Print
Rossi, Lee D. *The Politics of Fantasy: C.S. Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien*. Ann Arbor: UMI, 1984. Print.

One question seems to haunt the novel: is it the spiritual world that elevates creatures to find their mythical role in the hierarchy or the obedience of the creatures themselves? The answer is that *Perelandra* illustrates is that these are the same question: in *Perelandra* the transformation of the characters into the image of Christ is accomplished through the sacramental goal of myth. Indeed, this is precisely the answer Maleldil gives Ransom on the night before his struggle: "You might say, if you liked, that the power of choice had been simply set aside and an inflexible destiny substituted for it. On the other hand, you might say that he had delivered from the rhetoric of his passions and had emerged into unassailable freedom . . . Predestination and freedom were apparently identical" (127). Becoming one's mythical self is to embrace one's meaning, which ultimately reforms one into a "whole" being where there is no disunity between form and meaning. Although Lewis doubts whether the obedience and victory over temptation necessary to this process can occur before the return of Christ, this "wholeness" is true freedom because being pulled up the ladder of transposition is to step out of a grosser, narrower realm and into a grander one.

Only at the end of the novel does Ransom truly discover that he is becoming a sacramental symbol, and that the more he moves into his mythical role—his true self—the more God can work in and through him. When Malacandra and Perelandra tell Ransom that his great work has been accomplished, the news is almost too much for him to bear, and he falls to the ground. Malacandra says, "Be comforted . . . It is no doing of yours. You are not great, though you could have prevented a thing so great that Deep Heaven sees it with amazement. Be comforted, small one, in your smallness. He lays no merit on you. Receive and be glad. Have no fear lest your shoulders be bearing this world. Look! It is beneath your head and carries you" (169). Without the understanding that true peace comes by embracing one's mythical role,

Ransom could easily view this statement as unfair after all the hardship he has faced for this cause. However, like the singing beast, Ransom's focus is on the Maleldil, his Beloved; he is thankful that Heaven is delighted. Although it may seem contradictory upon a first reading, King and Queen acknowledge Ransom as the savior of the world, calling him "father" (178). By acknowledging Ransom as their savior, they are really acknowledging God.

Several times through the novel, Ransom is referred to as one of Maleldil's many hands. For example, on the night before the battle, Ransom is torn between the idea that he must do something to stop the Un-man and the idea that he can do nothing of himself. Maleldil reveals to him that "[i]f the issue lay in God's hands, Ransom and the Lady *were* those hands. They could, if they chose, decline to save the innocence of this new race, and if they declined its innocence would not be saved" (121). The reason Ransom sees Tinidril and himself as God's hands soon becomes clear: God works through his creatures for their own sake, so that they can discover their mythical roles and take part in him. By this method, God enriches the gift that he gives. Tor understands that he does not (in a sense) deserve to rule the perfect world that was brought about by the pain of so many others:

> I know what they say in your world about justice. And perhaps they say well, for in that world things always fall below justice. But Maleldil always goes above it. All is gift. I am Oyarsa not by his gift alone but by our foster mother's [Perelandra], not by hers alone but by yours, not by yours alone but by my wife's—nay, in some sort, by gift of the very beasts and birds. Through many hands, enriched with many different kinds of love and labor, the gift comes to me. (180)

The hands that give this gift are both the hands of creatures and the hands of Maleldil. They cannot be separated. In the same way, he acknowledges that the fruits and other natural pleasures of the planet are from the environment, from Perelandra, and from Maledil: "We have often wondered whose hand it was that we saw in the long waves and the bright islands and whose breath delighted us in the morning. For though we were young then, we saw simply that to say 'It is Maleldil' was true, but not all the truth. This world we receive: our joy is the greater because we take it by your gift as well as His" (177). The act of giving is sacramental due to the direct action of God through his creatures; although Maleldil gives all good things, Perelandra, Ransom, Tor, and Tinidril are allowed, through obedience, to fully take part in the giving of gifts.

Tor himself embodies the phenomenon of being both a copy and a sacrament. Ransom's first meeting with him is a mythical one: he somehow recognizes Tor, for "[i]t was that face which no man can say he does not know . . . For the resemblance was, in its own fashion, infinite, so that almost you could wonder at finding no sorrows on his brow and no wounds in his hands and feet" (177). Ransom is sure that while Tor is truly the image of Christ, no one could ever mistake him for Christ; the wonderful part about seeing him is that he is like echo or a rhyme of Christ. Lewis's description of Tor is a mythical depiction of what a person who has become a sacrament would really be: the miracle of creation in its fruition. God created beings that both imitate and contain him, and yet they are other than himself.

This question of form, content, and "becoming a whole" is precisely where *Perelandra* begins: the fictional Lewis, having fought off literal demonic attacks against both his soul and body, arrives at Ransom's house to learn that the battle his friend might have to face will be even more of an "incarnate" battle. Lewis questions this idea, saying that the fight against

"principalities and powers" the Bible speaks of (Ephesians 6:12) is simply a "moral conflict," but Ransom indicates that this will not always be the case:

> But . . . [h]aven't you noticed how in our own little war here on earth, there are different phases, and while any one phase is going on people get into the habit of thinking and behaving as if it was going to be permanent? Now your idea that ordinary people will never have to meet the Dark Eldila in any form except a psychological or moral form—as temptations or the like—is simply an idea that held good for a certain phase of the cosmic war: the phase of the great siege, the phase which gave to our planet its name Thulcandra, *the silent planet*. But supposing that phase is passing? (22)

Lewis's struggle against dark eldila contains more physical barriers than he is used to in his spiritual battles against temptation. *Perelandra* is insistent that lines are being drawn and that the world is "coming to a point."[33] Ransom's words to Lewis are truer than he himself realizes: he will indeed defeat the devil in a battle that is at once fully physical and yet fully spiritual.

One may well wonder how and why Ransom warns Lewis of the changed nature of the cosmic war when, at the novel's climax, he himself is so surprised at the necessity to physically kill Weston's body. At first glance, this may seem like mere explication on the narrator's part that ends up being contrary to a later scene. Yet there is a fascinating connection to the form and content that cannot be overlooked: Ransom's voice seems prophetic; he does not know what will happen to him on Perelandra, but his experiences on Malacandra and contact with celestial beings has provided an inkling of the way the drama of the universe will unfold. After his

---

[33] Oddly enough, in *That Hideous Strength,* the sinister Dr. Filistrato explains the same thing to Mark, saying that the battle is no longer one of intellect but of outright physical aggression as well.

experiences on *Perelandra* (particularly his vision of "The Great Dance"), his understanding is greater, but not in the sense that he has simply gained more knowledge—his knowledge has taken on a new dimension as well. In *Reflections on the Psalms,* Lewis argues that the Old Testament prophets, as vessels of God's words, could not comprehend the full significance of what they were saying. A prophetic utterance by the psalmist may describe his own sufferings, the grief of King David, or both. At the same time, the meaning of the psalm may also extend to Israel as a nation. Since the Incarnation of Christ is the fulfillment of humankind and the promise of Israel, the prophecy is about him as well (if not more so), whether or not the speaker completely comprehends the Christological significance of the words. Although Plato and Virgil did not enjoy the benefit of special revelation as the prophets did, Lewis gives them as lesser examples of this phenomenon: their works are mythical in that they anticipate Christ figures without knowing him in the sense that the Old Testament prophets knew him (105-107). They have an understanding—albeit vague and transposed—of the direction of the universe. This is also the nature of Ransom's understanding of the cosmic war against "The Bent One" and why he is still surprised at the truth of his own words: he cannot possibly foresee the countless new ways one may be called on to serve because of the changing nature of the universe.

In the beginning of the novel, as Lewis recounts Ransom's departure and eventual return to Earth, it becomes clear that some extraordinary change has come over Ransom. Lewis says, "I was silent for a moment, astonished at the form which had risen from that narrow house—almost a new Ransom, glowing with health and rounded with muscle and seemingly ten years younger. In the old days he had been beginning to show a few grey hairs; but now, the beard which swept his chest was pure gold" (27). Not only his body, but his mind and spirit are changed as well; there is both a poignancy and robustness about his new attitude toward life.

During the last evening Ransom and Lewis spend together, there is equality and friendship between them; they seem almost equally small in comparison to the cosmic conspiracy taking place all around them. When Ransom returns, Lewis and Humphrey, perhaps rapidly aged by the worries of war, appear as shivering, drab boys in comparison to their old friend. As Ransom tries to live on Earth after Perelandra, he finds that he has a difficulty fitting in with his old set of academic friends; he has been set apart and in some way elevated. He seems to have left Earth as a person, and returned as a personage. Edwards recalls, "To a reader who asked if Ransom was meant as an allegorical representation of Christ, Lewis replied that Ransom played the role of Christ on that world, not in an allegorical sense, but because in fact all Christians must in their calling play the role of Christ," a role which envelops both spirit and physical action (44). In other words, Christians must become transposed Christs—certainly less glorious that Christ himself but noble in their mythical imitation of him. Just as "myths became fact" in Christ, so Christians are not yet perfect sacramental symbols which possess him immanently in their forms.

The beginning of this process, for Ransom, starts when he submits to Malacandra by getting into the coffin-shaped container by which the oyarsa will take him to Perelandra. As he travels to the new planet, he goes in a sleep-like state. His journey in such a strange vehicle is symbolic of death that must take place before growth; he must die to his own will and submit to the authority and care of a higher being, and only then can he be transported to the world of chaste pleasures that awaits the obedient. This "death to self" is not symbolic only; while traveling in it, the lid will be fastened shut, leaving him at the mercy of Malacandra. Lewis, in horror, asks Ransom if he feels "happy" about this arrangement, and Ransom replies that while he trusts the strength and goodness of the oyarsa, there is a separation between his faith and what his physical form anticipates:

> If you mean, Does my reason accept the view that he will (accidents apart) deliver me safe on the surface of Perelandra?—the answer is Yes . . . If you mean, Do my nerves and my imagination respond to his view?—I'm afraid the answer is No. One can believe in anaesthetics and yet feel panic when they actually put the mask over your face. I think I feel as a man who believes in the future life feels when he is taken out to face a firing party. Perhaps it's good practice. (24)

Through obedience, Ransom is learning to kill his passions in order to conform them to Christ's obedience to the Father. His physical form is being remade to include his mythical role. Like Christ, he dies to himself to descend into a world that is not his own in order to save it from destruction. At the end of the *Perelandra*, Ransom discovers that his spiritual journey, like his physical journey, is not over; he has not yet reached the role of a sacramental symbol as Tor and Tinidril have, for the coffin-shaped container waits for him again. There are still temptations from him to overcome and wounds for him to bear on Thulcandra before he can be lifted into the full presence of God, the highest of realms.

While on Perelandra, Ransom hears Maleldil speak to him in the night, and through an inner prompting, he commands Ransom to rid Perelandra of the Un-man once and for all. That night, Ransom has a "garden of Gethsemane" experience; he frets over the fate to which God has led him and is tempted to reject it. After a series of arguments with himself, he ultimately submits to the will of Maleldil, much as Christ says, "Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done" before his crucifixion (Luke 22:42). Maleldil tells him, "It is not for nothing that you are called Ransom," and then adds, "My name is also Ransom" (126) because Ransom, on his own transposed level, is meant to play a mythical redeemer through the masculine love *agape*. He is sent from Earth to ransom the Perelandra

through his sacrifice, as an image of Christ. While he cannot decide, he is tormented by the question of what to do. After he makes the decision, he is able to sleep in peace because his course is set by faith. When he wakes, he still has no doubts about what God wishes him to do or whether he should do it; appropriately, this death to his own will causes him to think about his image in the water he bathes in: "When I wake up after Thy image, I shall be satisfied" (128). Then, unhesitatingly, he attacks Weston's body and begins to fulfill the role for which he was sent.

The two aging scholars serve as a foil to one another; Ransom is completely himself (more himself than he has ever been, he admits), yet with Christ's image and the Spirit of God filling him. Weston, on the other hand, is not at all himself. His body and soul are separated, and the devil lives in him as a mockery of God's spirit. After Ransom dies to his own passions on the night before the battle, he does not heed his body's desire to stop fighting although his body registers pain. The devil in Weston, after he has been severely beaten, is happy to let him bear the pain it has caused. Because the body it uses is not its own, the Un-man can use the body to its full extent and not worry about what the fight will cost it; Ransom too, uses his own body as though it is not his own but Maleldil's. Yet Ransom's gift of his own body is a freely given sacrifice and sacramental symbol of Christ's atonement.

Throughout the following afternoon and evening, there are many moments in which Ransom wonders whether he has beaten his enemy, but the Un-man is not destroyed until Ransom crushes its head with a rock and throws Weston's body into a lake of fire. Ransom soon discovers that his foot is bleeding; the novel never explains when this happens, although Ransom later states that the Un-man bit him (189). While the novel describes how Ransom receives his various other injuries, including whip-like lacerations across his back and chest, much like the

scourges Christ receives before his crucifixion, but there is a mystery around the wound in the heel makes it seem miraculous, as if it is a sort of stigmata alluding to the mythical account of the messiah in Genesis: "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" (Genesis 3:15). The fact that this wound is not an actual stigmata like that of St. Francis is significant, because it places a greater emphasis on a mythical symbolism of Christ rather than a sacramental one (as Tor is a depiction of a fully sacramental character). Ransom is still becoming the perfect image of Christ; the moment of his transformation and final sanctification is still, by comparison, a hazy suggestion of the future; indeed, the heel continues to hemorrhage even after his return to earth. He is meant to bear it until it is one day healed, just as he is meant to patiently bear the ever-narrowing rift between his body and soul.

The characters that exemplify (or in Ransom's case, come to exemplify) sacramental symbol in the hierarchical conception are those who "fall in line" with the medieval hierarchical conception through their mythical roles. In the story, the more obedient a character is to his or her authority, the more mythical he or she becomes; to obey is to become like those on a higher level of authority and therefore more like Christ, the Perfect Form. But while process is Platonic, the result is Aristotelian[34]: eventually, through the direct movement of God through flesh, the characters are made into vessels for God's Real Presence. For Ransom, this process involves mortification of the flesh and an emptying of his own desires; therefore, the work is not complete at the end of the story. For un-fallen Tor and Tinidril, God works uninterrupted through their obedience. Lewis's picture of a world ordered by love is the hope of Dante, Milton, and the countless scholars that integrated the Medieval Model into their literary vision.

---

[34] A thing's meaning becomes both transcendent and immanent.

Chapter 3: On Depictions of Evil

Lewis's depiction of the devil in *Perelandra* is a rare attempt to view him through Augustine's theory that evil is a privation of good. In this sense, *Perelandra* is strikingly similar to Lewis's discussion on the destination of souls in "The Weight of Glory," in which he explains, "It is a serious thing to live in a society of possible gods and goddesses, to remember that the dullest and most uninteresting person you talk to may one day be a creature which, if you saw it now, you would be strongly tempted to worship, or else a horror and a corruption as you now meet, if at all, only in a nightmare" (45). Though some may feel uncomfortable with the words "gods and goddesses," I have argued in the previous chapter that in Lewis's understanding of myth, a Christian will become godlike in the proper degree, not as a rival to Christ but as a "little christ." However, while Lewis's description of Perelandra's hierarchical society is an anticipation of the Earth's renewal, his notion of evil as oblivion haunts the novel. Indeed, Weston becomes "horror and corruption" as Lewis describes the final state of all souls who do not begin to conform to the image of Christ. The diabolical themes in *Perelandra* illustrate a warped view of the Incarnation, a disjointed relationship between of meaning and form, and the nothingness that waits any creature that loses its place on the hierarchy through usurpation.

In *Perelandra,* the concept of the "peccant being" (*Preface to Paradise Lost* 74) in the hierarchy finds its strongest example in the Un-man, which possesses Weston's body. Although it is not clear that the devil who possesses Weston's body is the actual Satan who, in the Bible and *Paradise Lost,* leads the angelic rebellion against God, as Ransom notes, "I know what you are . . . Which of them doesn't matter" (130). Just as there is symmetry and a proper likeness to God on all levels of the cosmic hierarchy, so all things that stray from their ordained roles have a

mythical similarity.[35] Rather than the "differences and contrasts all the way up, richer, sharper, even fiercer, at every rung of the ascent" (*That Hideous Strength* 312) in the hierarchy itself, there is a confusion of persons in the void beyond, as if all rebellious creatures after the devil are "melted down into their Master, as a lead soldier slips down and loses his shape in the ladle held over the gas ring" (*Perelandra* 173). In *A Preface to Paradise Lost,* Lewis explains how sin and corruption occur, regardless of the level of the cosmic hierarchy upon which it takes place:

> The goodness, happiness, and dignity of every being consists in obeying its natural superior and ruling its natural inferiors. When it fails in either part of this twofold task we have disease or monstrosity in the scheme of things until the peccant being is either destroyed or corrected. One or the other it will certainly be; for by stepping out of its place in the system (whether it step up like a rebellious angel or down like an uxorious husband) it has made the very nature of things its enemy. It cannot succeed. (74)

Just as Milton's Satan and the biblical Lucifer plant their own seeds of rebellion by believing, "I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God" (Isaiah 14:13), so in *Perelandra* the Un-man is a result of the devil's attempt to usurp God's place. Having suffered many millennia from the loss of immeasurable goodness, he seems to have given up his dream of usurping God's place as the Supreme Authority of the cosmic hierarchy. Yet while he cannot rule the universe as God, he can usurp God's place in his own soul. Sammons observes, "Throughout all his books, including the trilogy, Lewis emphasizes that when a person chooses to fill the center of his universe with self, he can only find Hell and nothingness. After all . . .

---

[35] However, given Lewis's view of evil as a privation of good, it is important to note that the symmetry of evil things is not due to the nature of evil but to positive existing good. In *A Preface to PL*, Lewis agrees with Augustine that there is no such thing as evil by itself. It only exists as corruption in the hierarchy.

Hell is just the shutting up of a creature in its own mind. But if God is the center, everything becomes more itself!" (118). The natural inclination of evil is an inward turn to the self, which ultimately leads to a narrowing of the universe to the boundaries of one's own selfishness, hideous parodies of goodness in that narrow kingdom of the self, the abandonment of all good things (including harmony and even existence) that come from outside the self.

Lewis, in his devil, takes Milton's concept "I, myself, am hell" further than the poet does in his own Satan. As discussed in the previous chapter, Lewis often borrows Milton's themes but changes details to better serve the imagination and orthodox theology; the same is true about themes that haunt their two devils. Lewis whole-heartedly agrees that the maxims of Milton's Satan are some of the greatest expressions of the truly lost soul:

> The mind is its own place, and in it self
>
> Can make a Heav'n of Hell, a Hell of Heav'n.
>
> . . . Here we may reign secure, and in my choyce
>
> to reign is worth ambition though in Hell:
>
> Better to reign in Hell, then serve in Heav'n. (1.254-255, 261-263)

Yet the Un-man is in many ways different from Milton's Satan. Sammons describes the Un-man as "almost a dead man, with expressionless mouth, evil grimace, staring eyes, and heavy and inorganic folds of the cheeks. Here is wholehearted evil beyond anything [Ransom] had ever seen, something one can truly hate. Inside he is merely black puerility" (110). Un-man has digressed further down on his road to complete self-destruction than Milton's Satan; rather than a depiction of a being newly departed from his place in the hierarchy, Lewis's devil is a depiction of long-term results of such a departure. Lewis is showing not only evil corrupting goodness but

also hell itself as he understood it. Ransom notes the difference between his foe and the popular or even literary depictions of "the Prince of Darkness" that he previously knew:

> Again and again he felt that a suave and subtle Mephistopheles with red cloak and rapier and feather in his cap, or even a somber tragic Satan out of *Paradise Lost*, would have been a welcome release from the thing he was actually doomed to watch. It was not like dealing with a wicked politician at all: it was much more like being set to guard an imbecile or a monkey or a very nasty child. (*Perelandra* 111)

Sammons also notes Lewis's departure from the Miltonic portrayal of the devil: "Although Lewis uses many of Milton's ideas in his own depiction of temptation, Lewis disliked and aimed to correct in *Perelandra* several aspects of Milton's version. Probably foremost was his distaste for Milton's portrayal of Satan, whom many people find so grandiose and magnificent" (113). Once again, Lewis takes a theme from Milton and executes it more like Dante. In his book *The Problem of Evil in Western Tradition*, Joseph F. Kelly notes,"[Like] the Renaissance scholar he was, [Lewis] followed Dante in presenting evil as a vicious little beast which had to be fought on a day-to-day basis in numerous little ways. Like Dante, he used a cosmic backdrop for a personal drama, but a drama with cosmic consequences" (190). As an epic, *Paradise Lost* depicts Satan's fall as epic in nature; Lewis, in the intimate scenes of *Perelandra,* is able to illustrate the spiteful pettiness of his disobedience.

To try to raise one's self in the hierarchy (to grasp at what could be rather than receive what is given), or to fail in one's duties, is to step out of it altogether—into nothingness and oblivion. In *Mephistopheles: The Devil in the Modern World*, Jeffrey Burton notes,"Whenever [the Un-man] suspends his busy intent for a moment, he lapses into the idiot emptiness of evil"

(273). Existence is a good in itself because its source is God, and Hell despises all that is good. Hell, therefore, is ultimately suicidal, and so is anything it chooses to corrupt, including intellect. In *A Preface to Paradise Lost,* Lewis explains that Milton's Satan both wants the cosmic hierarchy, and wants to imagine it differently with himself in a higher position. He wants a distorted hierarchy. But to long for something outside of what is existent is to wander into the non-existent. Lewis explains, "Throughout the poem he is engaged in sawing off the branch he is sitting on . . . since a creature revolting against a creator is revolting against the source of his own powers—including even his power to revolt" (96-97). The Un-man has long ago embraced the yawning nothingness in the bottom of his own soul. Burton observes,"[The Un-man's] evil is far beyond vice; vice is the search for sensual pleasures, which have at least some root in reality, but Weston's search is for pure abstraction—an abstraction which he has alleged to be the welfare of humanity but which is, in fact, simple annihilation" (273). But understanding that his downfall began with the fanning of this dark flame, he seeks to spark the same thought in Tinidril: "He has never forbidden you to think about [sleeping on the fixed land]. Might not that be one of the reasons why you are forbidden to do it—so that you may have a Might Be to think about, to make Story about as we call it?" (90). Tinidril sees that this is nonsense; she may have power to make a story about small variations of reality (just as Maleldil himself makes her flesh green and Ransom's tan), but to imagine something that goes against the "nature of things" is futile. Desiring such non-existent "Might Be's" will ultimately lead to a betrayal of one's objective role in reality.

When one becomes less like one's mythical role, one moves out of reality. For Lewis, the end result of hell is not a necessarily physical restraint and torture in a place reserved for sinners by a Divine Jailer. Hell is ultimately void and nothingness (Matthew 8:11). In *The*

Problem of Pain, Lewis assures his readers, "Hell was not made for men. It is in no sense a parallel to heaven: it is 'the darkness outside,' the outer rim where beings fade away into nonentity" (127). Like Augustine, Lewis sees God as the source of life and joy; everything that exists is good because he created it. Evil is his opposite: a privation of good. Evil is simply good in discord or good mutilated:

> You can be good for the mere sake of goodness: you cannot be bad for the mere sake of badness. You can do a kind action when you are not feeling kind and it gives you no pleasure, simply because kindness is right; but no one ever did a cruel action simply because cruelty is wrong—only because cruelty was pleasant or useful to him . . . Goodness is, so to speak, itself: badness is only spoiled goodness. And there must be something good first before it can be spoiled . . . evil is a parasite, not an original thing. (*Mere Christianity* 45)

In short, sin is the pursuit of what is good in the wrong way. Downing explains Lewis's view in terms of light and darkness: "[D]arkenss is not really the opposite of light but rather the absence of light (one can dispel darkness with just a point of light, a candle, but one cannot dispel light with a point of darkness)" (88). Evil, as a diminution of good, is also a diminution of reality.

If the concept of hell in *Perelandra* is, as the ultimate evil, the absence of all good things, it must not contain any of the goodness that God created. Indeed, the word "nothing" in the novel often shakes Ransom to his core. For example, when innocent Tinidril asks him what his frown and furrowed brow are supposed to indicate, Ransom says, "They mean nothing" (61). Not only is this statement a lie; the blasphemy of this particular falsehood is that it ascribes meaninglessness to something that does contain meaning. The narrator explains this word's effect upon Ransom: "It tore him as he uttered it, like a vomit. It became of infinite importance.

The silver meadow and golden sky seemed to fling it back at him" (61). Similarly, the Un-man frequently taunts Ransom with the sound of his own name while he is struggling to sleep in the blackness, saying " Ransom . . . Ransom . . . Ransom . . . Ransom" and ultimately ends in the word "nothing" when Ransom asks him what he wants (105). Aside from annoying Ransom with his eerie banality, the Un-man is feeding the fear that will later haunt Ransom in the caverns of Perelandra: the fear that Ransom, like everything else, means nothing or will come to nothing in the end. While the Un-man tries to make Ransom associate his very name with the idea of nothingness, Maleldil assures Ransom that "[i]t is not for nothing that you are named Ransom . . . My name is also Ransom" (127). Rather than being nothing, his name is full of meaning concerning his mythical role in Perelandra.

The Un-man is the depiction of a truly lost soul who has so sealed off the kingdom of his own selfishness so completely that the light and air of goodness cannot penetrate it. The mythical descent which all lost souls follow is described in the Book of Romans. It begins with sinners becoming "vain in their imaginations" (1:21), which the Un-man tries so desperately to begin in Tinidril's mind, followed by an exchange of what is eternal and gloried for that which is temporal only (1:23), until the sinner "changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator . . . for this cause God gave them up unto vile affection" (1:25-26). The most terrible judgment of God is the withdrawing of his Glorious Self, the source of all goodness. Indeed, during the climax of the story, the Un-man demonstrates that God's presence is the greatest loss he suffers. He shouts "*Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani*!" (130)[36] in mimicry of Christ's words on the cross, and Ransom realizes that the devil who heard these words of intense suffering treasures the memory of the moment when God the Father turned his

[36] "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Mark 15:35).

back the Son. He is pleased that Christ himself experienced his most awful punishment, if only for a moment.

The beginning of the novel sets up the foundation upon which Lewis will build his depiction of evil. The narrator walks through the English countryside in the evening and describes a sudden fear of evil spirits, which Ransom later claims was goaded on by the dark eldila themselves. At first, what is terrifying for the narrator is that which is unnatural, specifically objects in which he suspects an unnatural combination of spirit and form: in short, he is afraid of haunted or possessed things. The fear begins with the sudden feeling that Ransom could be an "unwitting . . .Trojan horse whereby some possible invader were effecting its landing on Tellus" (12). This is the first undeveloped thought in a chain of wild imaginings about possession. He goes on to wonder if he "should see a figure that looked like Ransom standing with its back to me and when I spoke to it, it would turn and show a face that was not human at all . . ." (14). He describes the houses and factories along the road in sinister, anthropomorphic terms, noting that their windows look like eyes. There is something primal or even childish about his fears, he later admits, but at the moment of terror this fact only contributes to his suspicion that even children and savages know the truth about haunted houses.

When Weston's soul is unhinged from his body, his form becomes haunted, and he embodies the vague fears of the narrator. The physicist is no longer a man but a monstrosity. Lewis does not, like Milton, call his devil Satan; he calls the combination of this evil spirit and Weston's body "the Un-man," indicating a sort of anti-incarnation. The peculiar doctrine with which Weston tries to impress Ransom describes this anti-incarnation. As I have outlined in chapter two, the meaning of a man, his mythical role, should conform his body. The meaning is a reflection of God's spirit in its proper degree, and God works through this union so that man

can take part in that work. In Weston's diabolical philosophy, the opposite is true, with a strange mirror-like symmetry. He says, "That . . . is one of the real weaknesses of organized religion—that adherence to formulae . . . God is a spirit, Ransom. Get hold of that. You're familiar with that already. Stick to it. God is a spirit" (79). For Weston, since pure spirit—what he descries as a "blind, inarticulate purposiveness"—is the goal in and of itself, all form organized by meaning (formulae) should be rejected.

When Weston's physical body and soul become disjointed, the devil, a "pure spirit," may then use his body as dark parody of God's work through Ransom. Weston says that "[a] Force can choose its instruments" and that he himself is being "guided": "Why did I go to Malacandra? It—the Force—has pushed me on all the time. I'm being guided. I know now that I am the greatest scientist the world has yet produced. I've been made so for a purpose. It is through me that Spirit itself is at this moment pushing me toward its goal" (80). A man must be separated from his spirit—lose his meaning—so that something else may take precedence. Just as Maleldil chooses to work through Ransom's combined soul and body, the devil chooses to use Weston's body separated from his soul. When Ransom tries to explain that Weston's point of view is nearly the opposite of Christian doctrine and not a more sophisticated version of it as he has been imagining, Weston becomes irrationally violent, shouting in a strange voice "Idiot . . . Will you always try to press everything back into the miserable framework of your old jargon about self and self-sacrifice"? (82). Thus Weston himself proclaims the difference between his view and Ransom's: self-sacrifice. In the end, Ransom achieves true self-sacrifice by becoming a mythical representation of Christ and his vicarious atonement, and the result is resurrection and new life. Weston ends up sacrificing himself to the devil, but it is not "self-sacrifice" in the Christian sense. Instead of dying to himself in order to live, he lives for himself and ends up

dying by continuing to feed his own ego until the devil is able to possess him. He therefore demonstrates the reversal of human instinct that Christ teaches which runs throughout the gospels: "He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it" (Matthew 10:39).

Because *Perelandra* links the Un-man with discord and bleak chaos, hell is described as neurosis. Before Weston is possessed by the devil, Ransom "felt himself more and more in the presence of a monomaniac. Like an actor who cannot think of anything but his celebrity, or a lover who can think of nothing but his mistress, tense, tedious, and unescapable [sic], the scientist pursued his fixed idea" (77). Similarly, the narrator surveys the landscape and wonders, "Wasn't there some mental disease in which quite ordinary objects looked to the patient unbelievably ominous? . . . looked, in fact just as that abandoned factory looks to me now?" (12). For Lewis, madness and the idea of "haunting" are connected. The growing suspicion that he is going mad puts the narrator in danger of turning back to visit a doctor, thus leaving his friend Ransom without his help and moral support. Fear and selfishness for his own well being over that of his friend may claim his soul. In *Orthodoxy,* Chesterton also describes the nature of evil in terms of neurosis; for the madman, every gesture or glance from another person is significant to him, for he is the center of his own universe:

> Perhaps the nearest we can get to expressing it is to say this: that his mind moves in a perfect but narrow circle. A small circle is quite as infinite as a large circle; but, though it is quite as infinite, it is not so large. In the same way the insane explanation is quite as complete as the sane one, but it is not so large. Now, speaking quite externally and empirically, we may say that the strongest and most unmistakable mark of madness is this combination between a logical

> completeness and a spiritual contraction. The lunatic's theory explains a large number of things, but it does not explain them in a large way. (3)

In his discussion, Chesterton does not say, of course, that it is a sin to be mad or that madness is always a result of a personal sin; rather, he says that sin and madness are both a departure from the good and the straight, and therefore function in similar ways. They both cause the man who suffers from them to suspect that the world is centered on him.

Lewis's description of the hell Weston experiences after he becomes the Un-man is similar to the Greco-Roman myths of the underworld, particularly Homer's description of the ghosts in Hades in The *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. Lewis notes how in Homer, separating soul and form creates these ghastly apparitions: "[Homer] says of men killed in battle that 'their souls' went to Hades but 'the men themselves' were devoured by dogs and carrion birds. It is the body, even the dead body which is the man himself; the ghost is only a sort of reflection or echo" (37). The result of separating a man's soul from himself is a gibbering madness that, according to Homer, can only be cured by a drink of sacrificial blood. Since the Incarnation, however, all sacrifices that will restore one to spiritual sanity must be self-sacrifices, since anyone who hopes to escape hell must "deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow" Christ (Luke 9:23). When the consciousness of Weston, who so vehemently rejected the idea of sacrifice, is apparently allowed to reemerge (presumably to bear the fatigue for which the unman is responsible), he first blathers on about things that Ransom cannot understand:

> I'm at the bottom of a big black hole . . . No I'm not, though . . . I can't think very well now, but that doesn't matter, he does all my thinking for me . . That boy keeps shutting the windows. That's all right, they've taken off my head and put

> someone else's on me, I'll soon be all right now . . . Could you take some of this weight off my chest? (111)

Like Homer's underworld, the inhabitants of Weston's hell are ghostly: cut off from one another, full of hatred of the living, existing in a world without any point of reference. His description also parallels the narrator's fears of madness at the very beginning of the novel. The horrors Weston speaks of are not majestically terrifying but disturbingly banal. Hell is not really up or down, but deep within his isolated self—far away from any responsibility to equals or submission to authority, and thus far away from any point of reference to bring stability of thought. Similarly, while Ransom is climbing the cliffs in the dark caves of Perelandra, he has no sense of proportion: "[T]o work by touch alone made crazy climbing. Doubtless if anyone had seen him he would have appeared at one moment to take mad risks and at another to indulge in excessive caution" (150). Ransom fears that Weston was right, and that at center of all things are darkness, decay, and oblivion. But Ransom, who seeks Maleldil's will for his life, eventually finds the opposite of Weston's description at Perelandra's molten core: perspective and a definite point of reference.

In Lewis's view of hell, much like the rings in Dante's *Inferno*, the further one sinks, the narrower one's existence becomes. In other words, hell shrinks. In the *Great Divorce*, the protagonist's mentor tells him, "A damned soul is nearly nothing: it is shrunk, shut up in itself. Good beats upon the damned incessantly as sound waves beat on the ears of the deaf, but they cannot revive it. Their fists are clenched, their teeth are clenched, their eyes are shut. First they will not, in the end they cannot, open their . . . eyes to see" (123). He goes on to say that hell is so small that a butterfly could swallow it and not notice. For Lewis, hell is more like an onion than an apple; one peels back layer after layer and the rings only get smaller, ultimately opening

into nothingness. After the Un-man pulls Ransom underground, Ransom awakes in a place of literal endless darkness much like the spiritual darkness Weston describes. While he waits for the sun that will never rise, he does not simply concentrate on his own inner feelings or thoughts. Darkness tempts Ransom to narrow his entire world down to his own body and mind, but he rejects this temptation by reciting works of literature that are epic in nature, as if to go outside of his own mind and be involved with something much larger than himself.

All of the Un-man's lies to Ransom about the meaninglessness of life are the opposite of the wholesome human instinct that goodness is a truer reality than evil. The narrator's growing terror during his walk to Ransom's cottage illustrates these lies. He notes, "[E]ach moment my opinion about sanity changed" (14). There is a definite progression in the perversion of truth. He says, "To think the spectre you see is an illusion does not rob him of his terrors: it simply adds the further terror of madness itself—and then on top of that the horrible surmise that those whom the rest call mad have, all along, been the only people who see the world as it really is" (14). Ultimately, hell robs humankind of the belief that sanity itself is sane. Shakespeare's Weird Sisters put this concept very succinctly as they prepare to meet Macbeth: "Fair is foul, and foul is fair" (1.1.11).[37] In *Paradise Lost,* Milton's Satan, knowing now that he cannot ascend into heaven and overtake God,[38] willingly allows this reversal to occur in his own being: "The mind is its own place, and in itself / Can make a Heaven of Hell, a Hell of Heaven" (1.254-255). That which is evil creates a parody of that which is good. The devil in Weston is a warped parody of God in Ransom. In the first chapter, the narrator fears that Ransom is a Trojan horse through which evil spirits will enter Earth, but this concern about the nature of evil is not far

---

[37] Like *Paradise Lost* and *Perelandra,* the madness that follows usurpation is also a major theme in *Macbeth.*

[38] In the second book of *Paradise Lost*, while the other demons plot their revenge against God, Satan's anguish is intensified by the knowledge that God can never be overthrown.

from the truth. Something very similar occurs in Perelandra: Weston's body is the vehicle by which the enemy breaks out of the quarantined Earth and into a clean world.

When evil seems like sanity and goodness like madness, goodness becomes awful to the person who rejects it. As Ransom tries to reason with the diabolically confused Weston before his possession, Weston becomes violently angry whenever Ransom comes close to exposing his fundamental misunderstanding about the relationship between spirit and matter. In *A Preface to Paradise Lost,* Lewis notes that this is what happens to Milton's devils: "The door out of Hell is firmly locked, by the devils themselves, on the inside; whether it is also locked on the outside need not, therefore, be considered" (105). Just as a madman often becomes hostile if one tries to help him by breaking down the framework of his neurosis, so a sinner refuses to hear the voice of God through men. Similarly, when the narrator happens upon Oyarsa Malacandra in Ransom's cottage after passing through the spiritual barrage, he has two curious but connected sensations: the first is that Oyarsa Malacandra is standing straight and that the rest of the world is crooked. He says, "What one actually felt at the moment was that [Malacandra] was vertical but the floor was not horizontal—the whole room seemed to have heeled over as if it were on board ship" (17). The narrator is resentful that this real objective standard for verticalness upsets his earthly horizontalness—which, he admits, is artificial. The second realization the narrator has in coming upon this otherworldly creature is that he realizes such purity is uncomfortable for himself as a fallen man. He says, "I felt sure that the creature was what we call 'good,' but I wasn't sure whether I liked 'goodness' so much as I had supposed" (17). The outward form of this being and its inward goodness work together to expose the narrator's own imperfect spiritual state; similarly, in the gospels, Simon Peter, "fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord" (5:8). Unlike Peter, however, the narrator is resentful of this

intrusion and irrationally angry with Ransom for befriending Malacandra. Once his fears subside, however, his interactions with Ransom help him learn to bear the presence of this sinless being.

Both the narrator and Ransom are still being conformed to Christ's image and are not yet sinless, but their respective victories against the temptation to despair and to accept the lies of devils indicates that they are moving forward and becoming one with their mythical roles. For the Un-man, the spiritual disease of sin is in an advanced stage—too advanced for him to be cured, like the sinners in Romans whom God "gave up" (1:26). In *A Preface to Paradise Lost,* Lewis explains, "For human beings there is often an escape from this Hell, but there is never more that one—the way of humiliation, repentance, and where possible, restoration" (104-105). The difficulty in accomplishing this is that humility and death to self are the very opposite of the evil Weston embraces. Although he whimpers at his fate, he is not dragged to hell kicking and screaming; up to the moment of his possession, he forcefully inclines himself to the nothingness that awaits him.

Chapter 4: Mythical Interaction with Landscape

In most analyses of *Perelandra,* critics note the vivid descriptions of the landscape and its similarity to Eden. For Ward, "[T]he abiding impression of the book is not [the Un-man's] temptations, but the almost overwhelming sensuous richness of the planet itself" (170). But few critics note the deep symbolic meaning of the nature imagery in its relation to the medieval hierarchical conception; if they mention Perelandra's landscape at all, it is only a passing complement about Lewis's imagination. In his book *The Scientifiction Novels of C.S. Lewis: Space and Time in the Ransom Stories,* Jared Lobdell notes the importance of landscape in Lewis's idea of mythology but fails to see its larger implications. Instead, he sees it as a preoccupation that distracts from the medieval themes of the story:

> The background and the heraldry threatened to overwhelm the pageant—the travels—and the philosophic story. The visions of landscape cease to exist for the sake of the story: instead they begin to have life (perhaps it is a Jungian life) of their own. They are what make *Perelandra* memorable. But they are not what make it go. They are not even there to adorn the tale . . . Admittedly they illustrate his view of mythology, but it is highly unlikely that was their design. (98)

Lobdell completely overlooks the fact that Ransom's mythical interaction with the landscape is symbolic of what he calls the "philosophic story" and medieval theme. The symmetry is hardly accidental. As the vehicle through which Oyarsa Perelandra acts, the landscape reveals mythical truths to the characters. In their book *Narnia and the Fields of Arbol: the Environmental Vision of C.S. Lewis*, Matthew T. Dickson and David O'Hara note, "If the Perelandrans are to discover divine virtue, they most do so without having their thoughts drawn upward by their view of the

night sky. Their encounters with the divine in nature will take place entirely at the tangible level" (n.pag.). While Dickson and O'Hara take this notion too far—after all, Maleldil speaks directly and supernaturally to the characters several times throughout the novel—they do make an important point: in *Perelandra*, Lewis seems very fond of conveying a spiritual meaning through natural forms. Howard and Kreeft, in their book *Narnia and Beyond: A Guide to the Fiction of C.S. Lewis,* describe how "simplicity, good fellowship, the goodness of creation, the sheer pleasure of good tastes and smells and textures—fresh bread, raspberries, nuts—even the lowly bean which Lewis lauds in one poem" are often central to his stories (52). Yet Lewis believes that "[w]e discern the freshness and purity of morning, but they do not make us fresh and pure" ("Weight of Glory" 43) because the world is broken. But if natural delights draw humankind to desire their source, how much more would they accomplish in a world that never departs from its original wholeness? In *Perelandra*, Lewis seems to delight in inventing the possibilities in such a setting.

Landscape of Perelandra communicates meaning to the characters. Ransom's tumultuous race over the surface of the planet, his descent into its core, and his ascent to the top of the mountain constitute not only a physical journey but a metaphysical journey as well. According to Downing, the journey motif of Ransom's experiences on *Perelandra* creates a theme of "overcoming fear" (109), indicated by a parallel journey that the narrator makes in the beginning of the novel. While it is true that fear is often an obstacle in the novel—or more accurately, temptation to diverge from a God-ordained path because of self-concern—Ransom's transformation is not that of a cowardly character to a brave one; in fact, the opening chapters of *Perelandra* illustrate that he has already proven himself brave during his journey to the planet Mars, whose Oyarsa is a spirit of war. Ransom does not seem to be the same nervous and

somewhat naïve character he is in the beginning of *Out of the Silent Planet;* rather, he is a confident and wise traveler who is steeped in interplanetary conspiracies. In this sense, he is a stark contrast to the fear-stricken narrator. Ransom does indeed undergo a transformation in Perelandra, but he must not only overcome fear but all forms of self-will.[39] His interaction with the landscape of Perelandra teaches him to die to his own desires and embrace the will of God. Like Ransom, Tor and Tinidril are also on a continual journey throughout the novel, for they are never allowed to rest in one place for too long. Although they do not have to overcome self-will as Ransom does, they (being in an unfallen state) do come into the full maturity of their mythical roles, and their interaction with the landscape helps to raise them up on the cosmic hierarchy. Through the characters' interaction with the mythical landscape, heavenly authority conforms the characters into the likeness of Christ.

As Ransom moves through Perelandra, the condition of his soul changes, too. In this way the novel is the descendant of literary tradition—rooted in the Middle Ages—that depicts life as a journey and the protagonist as a traveler. Ransom travels to Venus, but even after his arrival, his journey is not over, and the landscape suddenly becomes very important to both his physical and spiritual state. Nearly all of the lands on the planet are perpetually moving, forcing him to travel from island to island and to experience the great variety of pleasures Perelandra's landscape can afford. Only when he engages in long and often fruitless arguments with the Un-man does he remain relatively fixed in one place; however, as he experiences physical constancy of location, he also notes a sense of spiritual stagnation, believing "this can't go on" (119). When he finally decides to take physical action against the Un-man, he brings Perelandra

[39] I say "self-will" rather than "will" because Ransom does need a certain amount of willpower to overcome his selfishness. As I have explained in chapter 2, the willpower that allows him to overcome his self-will is, at the same time, the power of God.

spiritual protection: this positive action takes shape in the continuation of his journey. Throughout Ransom's journey to the center of Perelandra, one can feel extreme urgency, similar to Christian's flight to the Celestial City in John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress*. For Lewis, this sense of urgency in Bunyan's work is one if its chief literary qualities: "In my opinion the book would be immeasurably weakened as a work of art if the flames of Hell were not always flickering on the horizon . . .the urgency, the harsh woodcut energy, the continual sense of momentousness, depend upon it" ("Bunyan's Vision" 125). In both books, the journey of the protagonist cannot be delayed for a fraction of a second without fatal consequences: for Christian, the consequence could be the destruction of his body and soul in hell, while Ransom is one false step from the corruption of an entire world. Like Christian, Ransom's road to spiritual freedom is blocked by physical obstacles—real Apollyons to be fought and slain before the day comes to a close. He is no mere spectator in this landscape; he must interact not only with any creatures he encounters but with the landscape itself. While he enjoys these natural pleasures alone, he wonders if he, as a myth, must simply "be" and "perform" an office, or if he were sent to accomplish something. Through his journey, his interaction with the landscape, he discovers that performing a mythical role and accomplishing an urgent task of his own free will are not mutually exclusive.

Yet the nature images in *Perelandra* are far more reminiscent of Dante in his richer use of myth. Bunyan's world is horizontal; there is one straight and narrow road to follow, and the scroll that represents the scriptures clearly explains what Christian must and must not do along that road. Ransom's journey in *Perelandra* is far more like, as Lewis put it, "That long round way which Dante trod" ("Five Sonnets" 125). Dante descends into hell, re-ascends the mountain of purgation, and finally arrives at a summit where he receives the beatific vision of a universe

centered on God; Ransom experiences a mythical death (in his descent into the planet's core), re-birth and transformation. Like Dante, Ransom follows this path because it is the path that Christ himself traveled in his perfection (although Christ was always in a state of submission to the Father).

Unlike the landscape in both *The Pilgrim's Progress* and *The Divine Comedy,* the landscape of Perelandra is a paradise of natural delights of which Ransom may freely partake. In many ways it resembles other mythical paradises, such as the Garden of Eden and the Garden of the Hesperides, in that it is completely unpolluted by contaminated human affairs. In *Reflections on the Psalms,* Lewis worries that space travel could lead to the spread of Earth's contamination, and that we may learn "(God forbid) to . . . distribute upon new worlds the vomit of our own corruption" (103). While the Garden of the Hesperides is broken into from the outside, the Garden of Eden in the original Genesis account falls from within by the sins of its inhabitants. In *Paradise Lost* Milton recognizes and highlights this biblical sense of alien contamination embodied in the character of the Serpent, explicitly giving him the spirit of Satan, who has broken out of hell into the clean world. In a similar way, Weston breaks into Perelandra, not causing the planet to fall with his own sins, but attempting to plant the seed of sin in Tinidril.

In Lewis's depiction of this world that is still uncontaminated, nature imagery is representative of the interaction between the two mythical roles that all things are intended to perform: an authority showing *agape* and its subordinate reciprocating with *eros*. Generally, in his interactions with the natural world, Ransom plays the submissive role. In the medieval model, mankind has authority over animals and plants, but in the perfect world of Perelandra where there is no disunity between a thing's form and meaning, the Ultimate Authority often works through nature. Oyarsa Perelandra, as another one of Maleldil's "hands," guides and

directs Ransom on his journey through the landscape. Although masculinity precedes femininity in the hierarchical conception, in Ransom's case, Perelandra is the higher power in this stage of the cosmic drama, because as an angelic power she is intended to nourish and teach him until he is able to navigate God's will for himself. At first, the planet is thought to have no oyarsa, but the end of the novel reveals that Perelandra has been with all of the characters, nurturing them until they are ripe for a mature relationship with her and Maleldil. Howard and Kreeft note,"[T]he image of the 'feminine' eldil Perelandra, and indeed the very texture of the landscape in the planet Perelandra, warm and fluid, suggest fecundity and nourishment—those qualities brought into play in response to planting of some seed" (52). Tor acknowledges that as God works through her, she works through nature:

> We give you thanks, fair foster mother . . . and specially for this world in which you have laboured for long ages as Maleldil's very hand that all might be ready for us when we woke. We have not know you till to-day. We have often wondered whose hand it was that we aw in the long waves and the bright islands and whose breath delighted us in the wind at morning. For though we were young then, we saw dimly that to say 'it is Maleldil' was true, but not all the truth. (177)

Like the relationships between characters in the hierarchy, in many ways Ransom's interaction with the landscape of Perelandra is similar to the interaction between two lovers. The images of love in the novel are all earthly and are often associated with sex: forceful waves, luscious fruits, and consuming fires. The same might be said for the symbols in the Genesis account of Eden: the tasting of fruit has long been a symbol of sexual love, and because of this, many readers have thought that the story of Adam and Eve in Eden has strong sexual undertones (the emphasis on nakedness and the mythical tasting of forbidden desires yield a theme of seduction). But because

Perelandra is an angelic power, her relationship with Ransom transcends sexuality, taking place on a level above *Venus*—sexual love between man and woman. These images that seem so charged with a mythical sense gender are not symbolic of sex; rather, sex is a symbol of the higher polarity of gender that manifests itself on every level of the hierarchy as described in chapter two.

All of the characters are on a continual journey through the planet of love until the end of the novel; the constant shifting of the islands and Maleldil's commandment forbidding sleep on the Fixed Land, puts them in a state of temporal instability. During one of their long conversations, the Un-man presents a mirror to the Tinidril and offers to let her keep it. She does not understand what he means by the word "keep," and he explains, "I had forgotten that you would not live on the Fixed Land . . . Keeping means putting a thing where you know you can always find it again, and where rain, and beasts, and other people cannot reach it . . . There can be no gifts, no keeping, no foresight while you live as you do—from day to day like beasts" (118). In *C.S. Lewis: An Examined Life,* Bruce Edwards notes the peculiarity of Lewis's invention of the Fixed Land as the sin which Tor and Tinidril must not commit: "At first thought, this may seem like an odd choice of symbolic 'forbidden fruit' on Lewis's part. Readers may associate a Fixed Land with absolutes, eternal truths, anchoring one's self to unchanging realities. And a floating island might connote the opposite—relativism, instability, being driven by the caprices of the moment" (39). When the woman is being tempted by the Un-man to remain upon the Fixed Land, Ransom himself is presented with a dilemma: what indeed is wrong with sleeping there? Is there anything wrong with stability? To understand this, it will be helpful to discuss how Lewis uses the landscape mythically.

Lewis often recycles natural images that have long-recognized symbolic value. For example, he uses fruit to produce a sense of pleasure and tidal waves to indicate power. In other cases, Lewis invents new natural elements such as the refreshing bubble-trees or the floating islands as mythical representations. It is no coincidence that people speak of "falling in love," and Ransom literally falls into Venus, the planet that symbolizes love. The passage describes an experience that is confused and passionate, and it takes place on the shallow, outermost layer of the world. Although he is conscious of being pulled through the air in several directions, the "touchdown" moment escapes his notice. In fact, he is so disoriented that he does not even recognize that he has landed into gigantic waves. Ransom, at the first moment of realization, is not frightened but naturally submits his body to the force of the heaving water: "And now he realized that there was a delicious coolness over every part of him except his head, that his feet rested on nothing, and that he had for some time been performing unconsciously the actions of a swimmer. He buried his flushed face in the green translucence, and when he withdrew it, he found himself on the top of a wave" (32). Of course, after being dropped into the water by Malacandra (an authority in whom he has complete trust), Ransom has little choice but to be tossed around by the powerful waves. At first, he is slightly "flushed" by this daunting situation, but he eventually lets the waves take complete control of his body by bowing his head into the water. In *Paradise Lost,* the poem first finds Satan in the lake of fire "[w]ith Head up-lift above the wave, and Eyes/ That sparkling blaz'd, his other Parts besides/ Prone on the Flood" in his defiance (1.9:3-95). Ransom, in contrast, gives up control by submerging himself, and "it was like meeting Pleasure for the first time" (Lewis 32). True pleasure takes place only when he submits his own power to the power of the waves.

As in a new relationship between two lovers, Ransom's relationship with Perelandra is passionate but still somewhat novel. Even when Ransom makes contact with land, he cannot gain a strong footing, because all of the islands in Perelandra—except one—float around on the surface of the sea, conforming to the shape of every wave. Even while standing on dry land, he must be continually waiting for the next wave to pass him. Walking is difficult at first, so he allows the ever-moving turf to throw him down on the "mattress-like" surface of the island in a "real schoolboy fit of the giggles" (36). As he tries to learn to stand again, he finds that being cast down upon the ground is even more enjoyable than standing on his own. But his body eventually learns to anticipate the waves; rather than resisting them, he must either fall or gracefully accommodate them. As darkness irresistibly overtakes him that night, he reflects that this new world is both violent and intensely pleasurable.

When the golden sky appears again in the morning, the islands continue to rise and fall, but the pace of life seems to become steadier for Ransom. His relationship with Perelandra matures as he learns to receive pleasure in the same way he submitted himself to the waves. All three kinds of the most enjoyable vegetation on the planet are not sought out but offered to him—as if by accident—by the landscape. The gourd, which brings about the most intense pleasure, cannot be forced, because "[t]he rind was smooth and firm and seemed impossible to tear open. Then, by accident one of his fingers punctured it and went through into coldness . . ." (37). Not only does he simply stumble upon the gourd; the very means of enjoying it is provided for him. He is presented with a dilemma:

> As he let the empty gourd fall from his hand and was about to pluck a second one, it came into his head that he was now neither hungry nor thirsty. And yet to repeat a pleasure so intense and almost so spiritual seemed an obvious thing to do

> . . . but for whatever cause, it appeared to him better not to taste again. Perhaps the experience had been so complete that repetition would be a vulgarity. (37-38)

Ransom also discovers "the bubble-trees" accidentally, which are continually "drawing up water from the ocean and then expelling it in this form, but enriched by its short sojourn in their sappy innards" (42). The pleasure of popping them is unlike the pleasure of eating the delicious gourd; it clarifies rather than impassions. He finds berries which are even less "orgiastic," whose appeal is the "delight of munching and being nourished" (45). After eating a few of them, he finds that the ones with red centers are the best, but he cannot tell which has a red center unless he bites into it. The same inner prompting warns him against purposely seeking out all three of these delicacies. The inner prompting Ransom feels is demanding that he obey the hierarchical conception. Such self-willed pleasure is dangerous; all gifts must come from above instead of being grasped for by the lower creature.

With this in mind, the difference between Maleldil's commandment that one must not sleep on the Fixed Land and God's commandment in Genesis that one must not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil is perhaps less startling. Lewis departs from the symbol of fruit found in Genesis, the Greek myths, and *Paradise Lost,* but the Fixed Land is still an immensely desirable forbidden pleasure after the instability of the floating islands: "Ransom slipped both his legs to one side of his fish and groped down with his toes. Oh, ecstasy!—they touched solid pebbles" (67). He assumes that his love of Fixed Land is due to its similarity to Earth, but "a glance at the Lady's face told him he was wrong. He did not know what was in her mind; but her face . . . seemed to shine with something before which he dropped his eyes" (69). The two forbidden pleasures—the fruit of Eden and the Fixed Land of Perelandra—are the same in their meaning yet different in their forms. Instead of a tree of life and a tree that brings forth death,

two fixed mountaintops rise over the Perelandrian sea: "the Fixed Land" which Tinidril knows and ultimately rejects and the Holy Mountain upon which she will be crowned queen. Knowledge is not a sin in itself, but Adam and Eve must patiently wait for God to bestow this gift on them instead of grasping for it with their own power. The stability of the Fixed Land is also not a sin, but Tor and Tinidril must allow Maleldil to give this gift in his own time.

The forms of these two sins—the outward actions—are certainly different. The similarity lies in how these separate commandments highlight not *what* one does but *how* one does it—they emphasize a proper ordering of priorities. For God, eating is clearly not a sin,[40] just as sleeping is not a sin in Maleldil's eyes. Partaking of the fruit, symbolic of the pleasure of knowledge, is gluttony when done outside of God's will; inhabiting the Fixed Land, which means rest and stability for the human couple, is sloth and vainglory while Maleldil forbids it. Through rejecting this sin, Tor and Tinidril learn that "man shall not live by bread alone" (Matthew 4:4), nor shall he live by the place he establishes for himself, or anything else corporeal. Both partaking of the fruit and sleeping on the Fixed Land involve one procuring for oneself the needs of the flesh without reliance on Heavenly Authority. In the Gospels, Christ undergoes a similar temptation in the wilderness when Satan suggests that he fill his stomach with bread made from stones. Christ, of course, resists with the famous adage from Deuteronomy, and is able to overcome the temptation Adam and Eve cannot. He pioneers the way for his future followers, and through following his example without making the error of Earth's original parents, Tor and Tinidril become more like him.

---

[40] "Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which *is* upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which *is* the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat" (Genesis 1:29).

At the end of the novel, Tor and Tinidril come to the summit of the fixed Holy Mountain that Maleldil, through Oyarsa Perelandra, has prepared for them. Maleldil does not change his mind about some arbitrary rule; he gives them the Fixed Land after they learn to reject self-will, just as Adam and Eve may have gained the proper kind of knowledge of sin if they had not chosen to act independently of God. Man's love for God's transcendent Word must order his physical priorities, and until his love is mature enough to accomplish this, God's commandments serve as a ridged "schoolmaster"[41] to conform mankind into his image (Galatians 3:24). In his epistles, St. Paul explains that Christians are free from the law and may practice "Christian liberty" because they live by the love of Christ, enjoying the perfect relationship between *agape* and *eros.* On the day of their coronation, Tor and Tinidril no longer require the lesson of the floating islands or Oyarsa Perelandra as a schoolmaster.

Ransom's descent into the core of Perelandra represents the mythical death to self that one must experience to enjoy this liberty. Christ is the first to demonstrate fully complete surrender of will to God, and because of his selfless life, his followers do not have to experience the complete spiritual death that Christ suffers when, on the cross, he is cut off from the Father. Yet lower down on the hierarchy, Ransom is then able to accomplish this in his own lesser way through God's power. Because of this descent into the blackness, Tor and Tinidril do not have to descend. Ransom, however, is not Christ, and he has yet to learn what waits for him in the underworld of the planet of love.

---

[41] The word "schoolmaster" in the third chapter of Galatians is *paidagogos,* or "tutor in the home." Among Greeks and Romans, such a tutor was often a slave who served as a guardian, teacher, and moral instructor for the children of an upper-class household. As a servant of Maleldil and nurturer of Tor and Tinidril, Oyarsa Perelandra works through the landscape to enact a similar mythical role.

Weston tells Ransom what it was like to be pushed "down there," indicating that he has been in hell or the underworld. He describes it much like Homer describes Hades in *The Odyssey*: "all the dead have sunk down into inner darkness: under the rind. All witless, all twittering, gibbering, decaying. Bogeymen" (*Perelandra* 143). He describes life "above the rind" as beautiful, passionate, yet superficial—which, until Ransom's descent, is true to Ransom's experience with Perelandra's landscape. Weston puts his theory into words that savor something of a disillusioned lover: "Every savage knows that all ghosts hate the living who are still enjoying the rind: just as old women hate girls who still have their good looks" (143). One who has found love to be dead, looks upon lovers with both scorn for their naivety, jealousy for their happiness, and a desire that they become like him. Ransom, the adoring subordinate of Perelandra, begins to fear that he will—on some level—share Weston's fate. He chases Weston's body to the center of the earth and experiences a horror similar to Weston's notion of hell. As he wanders through dark caverns hundreds of feet below Perelandra's crust, he imagines that the landscape around him is covered with black soot and teeming with monstrous beetle-like creatures.

While Ransom waits in darkness, he remembers how the vast Perelandrian seascape had affected him: such wide upon spaces of apparent emptiness and the cry of lonely birds make him uncomfortable. He wonders if Weston had been right: do only those few who live on the membrane of the world have temporary meaning and the rest lost in crushing emptiness? Later he relates this fear to Tor and Tinidril: "I do not even see how your world can rightly be called yours. You were made yesterday and it is from of old. The most of it is water where you cannot live. And what of the things beneath its crust? And of the great spaces with no world at all? Is the enemy easily answered when He says that all is without plan or meaning?" (183). While he

experiences these empty spaces, this feeling returns to him and he is tempted to despair. But when he is navigating the gigantic underground chambers of Perelandra, he begins to understand that the vast landscape that dwarfed him is also full of life. There are strange fish-people living in the depths of the sea, and mysterious gigantic figures rule the underground kingdoms. He thinks, "Assuredly the inside of this world is not for man. But it was for something" (158). Of course, it is very difficult to place these odd fairy-like creatures in the hierarchy of Perelandra, but in *The Discarded Image* Lewis explains that this is part of the allure of the fairy: "In a sense, if I may risk the oxymoron, their unimportance is their importance. They are marginal, fugitive creatures. They are perhaps the only creatures to whom the Model does not assign, as it were, an official status" (122). Although Ransom does not know whether or not they are superiors, he suspects that some reverence is due to them in their own kingdoms. Furthermore, this "filling up" of empty spaces prepares him for the lesson he learns on the mountaintop: Maleldil is at the center of everything; all things are the center of the universe, because all things are at the center with God. The only void that exists is outside of the hierarchy in the empty realms of non-being and non-existence into which Weston's disembodied soul has sunk.

It is significant that Weston's theory about the universe at first seems to parallel Ransom's discoveries in the bowels of Venus—the planet of love. According to Weston's theory Ransom's self-sacrifice to Maleldil is ultimately meaningless, and at the center of everything is disorder, non-personhood, and emptiness. Both his body and his soul may come to the same disorder in the darkness and cold. But Ransom's doubts about the center of love are swept away by the discovery that Venus has a molten core. Although the surface of love may be unstable and exotically pleasurable, in its mature state, love is sturdy and glowing with a constant flame:

> Warmth, together with the red colour of the light, suggested that the upper cave was illumined by subterranean fire . . . The very first glance at the funnel restored dimensions and perspective to his world and this in itself was like delivery from prison . . . It gave him back that whole frame of spatial directions without which a man seems hardly able to call his body his own. (153)

While Ransom is held captive by the darkness in the underground cavern where the devil has dragged him, the inner chambers of his own mind become the entire world. When he discovers the firelight, he knows who he is in relation to the underground landscape of Perelandra. Ransom crushes Weston's head and casts his body into the consuming fire at the center of the planet of love, rendering that corrupt vessel unusable to the devil.

The heavenly power of Oyarsa Perelandra, through nature, provides Ransom with the strength to ascend the mountain of purgation and make his final journey in Perelandra. He is pulled out of the darkness of the earth by a rushing but gentle river and rests by it until he has healed: "[I]t was a second infancy, in which he was breast-fed by the planet Venus herself: unweaned till he moved from that place" (159). The sights, tastes, and sounds he experiences there are the gifts of Perelandra and part of his healing process. As he begins to ascend the mountain, instead of resistance, he finds that all plants bend toward the top and the wind drives everything upward. He does not become weary because Perelandra continues to provide the required strength; it is not a time of weariness but a time of rest.

Ransom's ascent out of the caves and up the Holy Mountain may be seen as a time of purgation in many ways resembling Dante's ascent in *Purgatorio.* Instead of instructive sculptures to help him on his way, all of nature provides the necessary aid to climb to the top of the mountain. The narrator describes Ransom's life in this place of fog and mist: "To be always

climbing this was not, in his present mood, a process but a state, and in that state of life he was content" (165). Lewis believes that a time of purgation for the soul before it ascends into heaven is only reasonable. However, Lewis does not believe that one atones for one's own sins in this state—Christ has already taken the sins of the world upon himself. Instead, purgatory is a time when one is washed of sin's filth. *In English Literature in the Sixteenth Century*, Lewis says, "A modern tends to see purgatory through the eyes of Dante: so seen, the doctrine is profoundly religious. That purification must, in its own nature, be painful, we hardly dare to dispute" (163). Yet in *Letters To Malcolm,* Lewis explains that suffering is not the purpose of Purgatory:

> The Reformers had good reasons for throwing doubt on the "Romanish doctrine concerning Purgatory" as Romanish doctrine had then become . . . If you turn from Dante's *Purgatorio* to the Sixteenth Century you will be appalled by the degradation . . . The right view returns magnificently in Newman's *Dream* . . . The saved soul, at the very foot of the throne, begs to be taken away and cleansed. It cannot bear for a moment longer "With its darkness to affront that light." (293)

In his fictional world of sinless pleasures, Lewis removes pain even further from Ransom's experience. The only suffering Ransom must endure is that of his wounded heel, indicating that the mountain of purgation is continuing to conform him to his mythical role and the likeness of Christ.

But Ransom's transformation is not complete, and he must die to his will again: at the top of the mountain is another coffin-shaped vehicle to take him back to the corrupt Earth. He must return to Earth, and the sanctifying work of God remains and continues after his return home. Perelandra is not the paradise that is Christ's full Incarnate Presence; it is a transposed heaven, not heaven itself. One of the most fascinating elements of *Perelandra* is how beautifully Lewis

depicts the possibilities of world where nature has not fallen. Maleldil is able to use the landscape because it is whole: there is no disunity between its meaning and its form, and he speaks through both clearly and mythically in ways that are impossible in a natural world like ours whose thorns and thistles are a constant reminder of its brokenness.

A Conclusion Transposed:

Understanding how transposition, myth, and sacramentalism affect hierarchy gives us important insights into C.S. Lewis's literary vision in *Perelandra* and may well provide further means of studying the *Ransom Trilogy* as a whole. As many critics note, each book appears very different from the last; further application of my argument to the first and third books of the trilogy could result in a better understanding of its unity. *Out of the Silent Planet,* the story of Ransom's first journey to Malacandra, is less concerned with the intricate "wheels within wheels" hierarchy of *Perelandra,* but hierarchy and myth are still incredibly important in grasping the notion of true equality. One of Ransom's primary interests in *Out of the Silent Planet* is to discover which of the three rational species of Malacandra rules the others; because of his fallen nature, he has a very difficult time comprehending that hrossa, seroni, and pfifltriggi are not striving for dominance over one another through physical force. Malacandra rules the creatures, not because he can overpower them, but because it is his role as Oyarsa to love them with *agape.* Their role to is to respond to him with *eros* and interact with one other with *philio.* They lovingly accept whatever command he gives to them. They respond in the same way to Maleldil's will, for they understand that Oyarsa serves as his hands. The Hrossa, for example, have a mating ritual that only comes once in each hross's lifetime, and it would be "bent" for them to pursue sex outside of the appointed time of ritual. Indeed, since the hrossa are keenly aware of their mythical roles, they do not seek sex outside of that time.

In *That Hideous Strength,* Lewis carries on the notion of hierarchy as myth, but localizes it in a far more familiar setting: Thulcandra (Earth), the silent planet. This time he borrows earth's symbols—particularly those of fairytales and Arthurian legends—and combines them with *Perelandra*'s theme of a mythical cosmic hierarchy. Because of this, Lewis is able to

further explore gender as metaphysical polarity that runs throughout the universe, especially how it translates in corporeal creatures as sex. He does this against the backdrop of post-war England—a time when gender roles are being put under severe scrutiny as Freudian projections of the subconscious. The female protagonist, Jane, is resentful of all things masculine because of its inherent dominance over femininity. Throughout the novel, Jane begins to learn that pure masculinity, as myth, dominates with *agape* and not physical or sexual force. When she discovers this truth through interaction with the Director (Ransom), she no longer sees masculinity as brutish, but must still decide whether or not to submit to her husband as unto God. Although she begins to see more clearly, she may yet—like the devil—refuse to obey what she knows to be true. Mark, on the other hand, is rather selfish; he desires Jane for her body and views her as "the little woman," yet in many ways he is a very uxorious husband. He is doomed to resort to both of these extremes until he begins to love Jane as Christ loves the Church (Ephesians 5:25) and learn his mythical role as a husband through his submission to God.

Michael Ward claims in *Planet Narnia* that C.S. Lewis is first an allegorist and later a symbolist, suggesting a shift in Lewis's interest. While I agree that Lewis seems to move away from allegory in his later fiction, this does not mean that he was ever less interested in myth. Indeed, in one of his earliest works of fiction, *The Pilgrim's Regress,* Lewis still uses myth and symbol in his allegorical story. By citing various works from many different stages of Lewis's life, I have tried to show throughout this document that his concentrated use of myth in *Perelandra* may help uncover and elucidate mythical concerns in his fictional, didactic, and devotional works. My argument about myth and hierarchy in *Perelandra* may also be useful in an analysis of *The Pilgrim's Regress, Till We Have Faces,* and particularly *The Chronicles of Narnia,* as well as his essays in *The Weight of Glory* and *God in the Dock.* Indeed, his interest

in the medieval hierarchical conception as myth striving for sacramentalism is not only a theme of *Perelandra*; it is fixed concern in his literary personality.

Lewis's depictions of myth and the medieval model in Perelandra suggest insight into the nature of hierarchy itself: the relationship between superior and subordinate, in its purest form, is no mere evolutionary impulse for the stronger to forcefully dominate the weaker in order to live longer and propagate its linage. Nor is the relationship a projection of transferred sexual urges, as Freud would have it. Still less does the hierarchy exist simply to exclude those on its lower levels from the higher levels. For Lewis, the hierarchy is one of objective mythical relationships whose orbits are defined, rather considerably, by the gravitation of perfect love: superiors rule their subordinates in principle with *agape*, and creatures in their submissive roles reciprocate for the most part in a lower form, *eros*. Since, for Lewis, evil is the privation of good, the views of hierarchy advanced by Marxism, for example, are only observations of a diminution of reality. The true nature of hierarchy is pure, virtuous love—a solid reality that finds its source in God himself. Lewis's hopeful depiction of a perfect world where meaning and form are one—where rational and non-rational creatures as well as vegetation and minerals are truly themselves—the entirety of creation enjoys the radiance of God's love shining through all things.

Works Cited

Abbott, Edwin Abbott, William F. Lindgren, and Thomas Banchoff. *Flatland*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2010. Print.

Augustinus, Aurelius. *De Doctrina Christiana*. Trans. R. P. H. Green. Oxford: Clarendon, 1995. Print.

Carnell, Corbin Schott. "Ransom in C.S. Lewis' Perelandra as Hero in Transformation: Notes Toward an Jungian Reading of the Novel." *Studies in the Literary Imagination.* 14.2: (1981) 67. Web. *JSTOR*. Web. 10 March 2012.

Chesterton, G. K. *Orthodoxy*. San Francisco: Ignatious, 1995. Print.

Dante, Alighieri, Burton Raffel, and Henry L. Carrigan. *The Divine Comedy*. Evanston, IL: Northwestern UP, 2010. Print.

Dickerson, Matthew T., and David O'Hara. *Narnia and the Fields of Arbol: The Environmental Vision of C.S. Lewis*. Lexington: U of KU P, 2009. Print.

Dostoyevsky, Fyodor. *The Brothers Karamazov.* Trans. Constance Garnett. Chicago: Encyclopædia Britannica, 1955. Print.

Downing, David C. *Planets in Peril: a Critical Study of C.S. Lewis's Ransom Trilogy*. Amherst: U of MA P, 1992. Print.

Dyrness, William A. *Poetic Theology: God and the Poetics of Everyday Life*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans 2011. Print.

Edwards, Bruce L. *C.S. Lewis: Life, Works, and Legacy*. Westport, CT: Praeger, 2007. Print.

Holy Bible: The Authorized Version. Zondervan, 2012. Print.

Hooper, Walter. *C. S. Lewis: A Complete Guide to His Life and Works*. San Francisco: Harper, 2005. Print.

---. *Letters of C. S. Lewis*. San Diego: Harcourt Brace, 1993. Print.

Howard, Thomas. *Narnia and Beyond: A Guide to the Fiction of C.S. Lewis*. San Francisco: Ignatius, 2006. Print.

Lieb, Michael. "Milton and the Metaphysics of Form." *Studies in Philology* 71.2 (1974): 206-24. Web. *JSTOR*. Web. 10 Jan. 2012.

Lewis, C.S. *An Experiment in Criticism*. London: Cambridge UP, 1961. Print.

---. *A Preface to Paradise Lost*. London: Oxford UP, 1961. Print.

---. “Bluspels and Flalansferes.” *Rehabilitations and Other Essays*. London: Oxford UP, 1939. Print.

---. "Bunyan's Vision." *Selected Literary Essays*. Ed. Walter Hooper. London: Cambridge U.P., 1969. Print.

---. *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century.* London: Oxford UP, 1968. Print.

---. *Mere Christianity*. San Francisco: Harper, 2001. Print.

---. *Miracles: a Preliminary Study*. San Francisco: Harper, 2001. Print.

---. “Myth Became Fact.” *God in the Dock: Essays on Theology and Ethics*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970. Print.

---. “On Science Fiction.” *Of Other Worlds: Essays and Stories*. San Diego: Harcourt, 2002. Print

---. *Out of the Silent Planet*. New York: Scribner Classics, 1996. Print.

---. *Perelandra: a Novel*. New York: Scribner Classics, 1996. Print.

---. *Poems*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1965. Print.

---. *Prayers: Letters to Malcolm*. Glasgow: Collins, 1986. Print.

---. *Surprised by Joy*. London: Fount, 1998. Print.

---. *That Hideous Strength: a Modern Fairy-tale for Grown-ups*. New York: Scribner Classics, 1996. Print.

---. *The Abolition of Man.* New York: Macmillan, 1978. Print.

---. *The Allegory of Love; A Study in Medieval Tradition.* New York: Oxford UP, 1958. Print.

---. *The Discarded Image; An Introduction to Medieval and Renaissance Literature*. Cambridge: University, 1964. Print.

---. *The Great Divorce*. New York: Macmillan, 1946. Print.

---. *The Four Loves*. London: Harper Collins, 2002. Print.

---. *The Pilgrim's Regress; An Allegorical Apology for Christianity, Reason, and Romanticism.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959. Print.

---. *The Problem of Pain*. San Francisco: Harper, 2001. Print.

---. *They Stand Together: The Letters of C.S. Lewis to Arthur Greeves, 1914-1963*. Ed. Walter Hooper. New York: Macmillan, 1979. Print.

---. *Till We Have Faces; a Myth Retold.* New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1957. Print.

---. "Transposition." *The Weight of Glory and Other Addresses*. New York: Macmillan, 1949. Print.

---. *Reflections on the Psalms.* New York: Walker, 1985. Print.

Lobdell, Jared. *The Scientifiction Novels of C.S. Lewis: Space and Time in the Ransom Stories*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2004. Print.

Merton, Thomas. *The Wisdom of the Desert; Sayings from the Desert Fathers of the Fourth Century.* New York: New Directions, 1961. Print.

Milton, John. *Paradise Lost*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2005. Print.

Pearce, Joseph. *C.S. Lewis and the Catholic Church*. San Francisco: Ignatius, 2003. Print.

Rossi, Lee D. *The Politics of Fantasy: C.S. Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien*. Ann Arbor: UMI, 1984. Print.

Russell, Jeffrey Burton. *Mephistopheles: The Devil in the Modern World*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1986. Print.

Sammons, Martha C. *A Far-off Country: A Guide to C.S. Lewis's Fantasy Fiction*. Lanham: University of America, 2000. Print.

---. *A Guide Through C.S. Lewis' Space Trilogy*. Westchester, IL: Cornerstone, 1980. Print.

Sayer, George. *Jack: A Life of C. S. Lewis*. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2005. Print.

Shakespeare, William. *The Tragedy of Macbeth;*. Ed. Eugene M. Waith. New Haven: Yale UP, 1954. Print.

Ward, Michael. *Planet Narnia: the Seven Heavens in the Imagination of C.S. Lewis*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2008. Print.