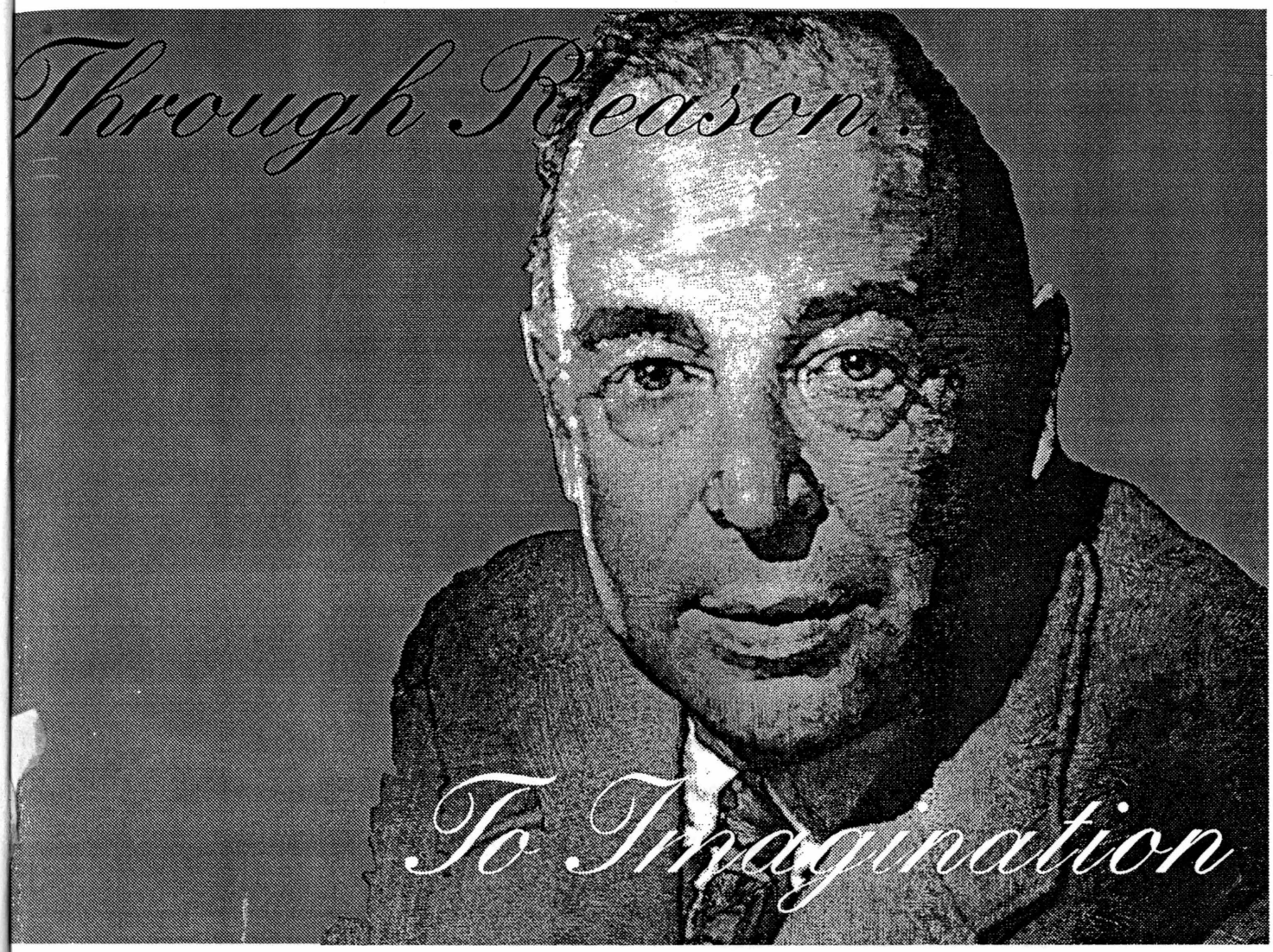

The Intellectual Development of C.S. Lewis

(1922-1960)

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Introduction

THE LEWIS-ANSCOMBE ENCOUNTER

News of Elizabeth Anscombe's dismantling of C.S. Lewis' argument for the circularity of naturalism during a meeting of the Socratic Club in February 1948, must have given Lewis' good friend, J.R.R. Tolkien, no small pleasure. Lewis served as the society's senior member from its founding in 1941 as an underground meeting group for Oxford Christians until his departure to Cambridge in 1954, and until Anscombe's challenge to a chapter in his newly published book, *Miracles*, Lewis also served as the society's uncontested champion--eloquently and brilliantly trumpeting the Christian apologetics that, in his books and radio talks, were garnering him widespread popularity in both England and the United States. Tolkien long had been skeptical of Lewis' apologetics, in part no doubt from the jealously with which the teacher (for Tolkein was largely responsible for Lewis' conversion) often views his pupil's surpassing him. But Tolkien also held a deeper skepticism that Lewis' theology was not entirely sound--that though undeniably appealing to the sensibilities of his modern audience, his theology sometimes lacked coherence. Reacting to Lewis' claim in *Mere Christianity*[1] that there are two rules for divorce--one for Christians, a second for

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[1]Then *Christian Behavior*.

non-believers, "But I should like to point out that your opinion is in your booklet based on an argument that shows a confusion of thought discoverable from that booklet itself."[2] It was a similar incoherence that would provide Anscombe a rare opportunity to disturb the near unshakable confidence that Lewis possessed during and immediately following the conclusion of World War II. Though A.N. Wilson's recent assertion that "any dispassionate reader can at once see many flaws in Lewis' argument here," sorely mischaracterizes the precise nature of Anscombe's objection to the Lewis thesis (as many present at the debate concluded Lewis won as that he lost), only the most devout Lewis votary would deny the overall impact of the encounter, that quite certainly Lewis himself acted as though Anscombe had enjoyed the better of the argument. Some weeks after the debate, Lewis confided to a pupil that he feared many simple minds would confuse disproving his argument for the existence of God with disproving the existence of God. Perhaps conceding that "a little knowledge is a dangerous thing," Lewis also maintained that he would write no more Christian apologetics. Though in the fifteen years before his death he would twice violate this intention (revising *Miracles* for subsequent editions and publishing *The Four Loves*), the Lewis that emerged after the Socratic debate was a markedly different thinker, one who abandoned his self-described "vernacularized" apologetics demonstrated in the ever popular *The Problem of Pain* and *Mere Christianity*, in favor of a more profound, albeit less systematic, theology in *The Chronicles of Narnia*, *The Four Loves* and *Till We Have Faces*.

I shall not argue here, as many modern critics do, that Lewis' fault lay in his "oversimplification" of theology. Lewis considered translating the traditional Christian doctrine into his own vernacular the true test of anyone's understanding of the Faith. If one could not defend beliefs in common language, using contemporary analogies, then that is a good sign that he might not comprehend his own faith as well as he should.[3] Lewis further remarked that if theologians had been doing their work a century earlier--that of defending the faith in language and terms communicants could understand--the Church would not be

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[2]J.R.R. Tolkien, "To C.S. Lewis," letter 49 of *The Letters of J.R.R. Tolkien*, ed. Humphrey Carpenter (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin Company, 1981) 60. The date of composition for this letter is unknown as Tolkien never mailed it. The letter was found inside a book following Tolkien's death.

[3]Thomas Talbot, "C.S. Lewis and the Problem of Evil" (*Christian Scholars's Review*, September 1987) 38.

in such trouble as it is today and, consequently, there would be no need for the likes of Lewis. And much to his credit, Lewis was doing what few other apologists were even attempting: reaching out to the skeptic and non-believer. Lewis' writing addresses the core philosophical questions about the feasibility of miracles, faith, morality; he pitches traditional Christianity to the average man on the street, providing Christian answers to what modernity considers secular concerns. In short, Lewis asserts the relevancy of what "a man" did and endured 2,000 years earlier. That Lewis chose to write for a lay audience, in itself, has caused many philosophers and theologians to ignore his work.[4]

Elizabeth Anscombe did not. Anscombe, herself a Roman Catholic, did not wish to disprove Lewis' claim in *Miracles* that reason is divinely inspired. She instead had the more limited objective to demonstrate that the existence of reason and the validity of naturalism were not absolutely contradictory. Had Lewis stopped short of completely repudiating naturalism, Anscombe probably would not have challenged Lewis at all. In the first edition of *Miracles*, Lewis defines naturalism as "the doctrine that only Nature--the whole interlocked system--exists."[5] Furthermore, Lewis continues, "if that were true, every thing and event would, if we knew enough, be explicable without remainder (*no heel-taps*) as a necessary product of the system."[6] Lewis also concedes in this chapter that even supernaturalists are affected by the naturalist way of thinking. Thus, he attempts to persuade the modern reader to overcome anti-supernatural preconceptions and accept the mere possibility of miracles. Lewis necessarily begins by assaulting Naturalist preconceptions.[7]

Lewis' first and second edition argument describe the role of inference in man's accumulation of knowledge. The more we observe the world, the more order we discover, and consequently, the more we use ordered reasoning to draw conclusions about the world. Lewis asserts, "All possible knowledge, then, depends on the validity of reasoning."[8] Without an acceptance of the validity of our sensory and reasoning capacities, we would

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[4]Talbot, 39.

[5]C.S. Lewis, *Miracles: a preliminary study*, 2nd ed. (New York: Collier Books, 1960) 12.

[6]Miracles (II), 12.

[7]Victor Reppert, "The Lewis-Anscombe Controversy: a discussion of the issues" (*Christian Scholar's Review*, September 1989) 34.

[8]*Miracles* (II), 14.

have no reason to accept the validity of the sciences. Hence, we must not accept any philosophical theory that undermines the validity of our reasoning. In the first edition Lewis argues, "a proof which sets out by assuming the thing you have to prove, is rubbish."[9] Naturalism, Lewis continues, is exactly one such philosophy.

Lewis attempts to establish naturalism's circularity by discriminating between rational and irrational reasoning. A man who believes that a black dog is dangerous because he has seen the dog muzzled and seen others avoid the dog is rationally afraid of the dog. If, however, his fear of the dog is based on nothing more than having been bitten by a different black dog in his childhood, then the latter fear is irrational. Thinking men have a commitment to withdraw confidence from those whose thoughts are the result of irrational causes.[10] Or as Lewis defines it: "No thought is valid if it can be fully explained as the result of irrational causes."[11] But if everything is Nature, part of the same, total system, then there can be no reason. Reason requires an independent standard against which to judge its validity. Man, according to the Naturalists, is part of Nature, and the particles of Nature--be they fully determined by the laws of Nature or not--certainly do not decide where they wish to move on the basis of whether or not it would be "good" for them to go there.[12] For reason to exist then, it must exist outside the total system. But naturalism, by its own definition, denies the existence of anything outside the total system. Hence, Lewis gives the reader two options: either reject the validity of reason (and in so doing, severely undermine the significance of science, philosophy, and art) or reject the foundation of naturalism. Because most modern readers value their own reasoning capability as well as mankind's collective reasoning capacity, and as they attribute the accomplishments of science largely to reasoning's validity, the extent to which Lewis demonstrates that naturalism undermines people's perception of how and why the human mind functions is the degree to which he disproves it. And, to be sure, Lewis weakens the naturalist prejudices that pervade modern society. In their place, Lewis describes a reasonable framework for accepting supernaturalism as well as the possibility of miracles. What is

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[9]*Miracles* (I), 23.
[10]Reppert, 35.
[11]*Miracles* (I), 21.
[12]Reppert, 33.

questionable is whether or not Lewis thoroughly destroys the naturalist framework as well. His fault here, and elsewhere, is Lewis' tendency not simply to establish the acceptability of traditional Christianity, but also to attempt to completely discredit the alternatives. This sometimes causes trouble.

In Anscombe's article, "A Reply to Mr. C.S. Lewis's Argument that naturalism is Self-Refuting,"[13] she challenges Lewis' use of certain terms. First she distinguishes between "non-rational" and "irrational" causes. Irrational causes, Anscombe defines, are "passion, self-interest, wishing only to see the agreeable or disagreeable, obstinate and prejudicial adherence to the views of a party or school with which one is connected, and so on."[14] But Anscombe notes, there are other causes, non-rational ones, that cannot be grouped with the previously described irrational causes. "There are also tumours on the brain, tuberculosis, jaundice, arthritis and similar things."[15] Only by equating irrational causes with non-rational causes, Anscombe concludes, is Lewis able to indict naturalism.

Anscombe then challenges Lewis' assertion that man is capable of questioning the validity of reasoning as a whole. She readily concedes that pieces of reasoning may be evaluated, but not the process in its entirety: "You can talk about the validity of a piece of reasoning, and sometimes about the validity of a kind of reasoning; but if you say you believe in the validity of reasoning itself, what do you mean?"[16] Anscombe here employs the Paradigm Case argument, an argument against the possibility of meaningfully raising certain skeptical questions.[17] According to Anscombe, we know which arguments are valid and invalid by comparing them to our conception of valid and invalid arguments. In other words, before we can begin distinguishing between the two, we must first have encountered one of each. Thus the term "valid" is really a reflection of a man-created system to distinguish between types of argument: "What *can* you mean by 'valid' beyond what would be indicated by the explanation you would give for distinguishing between valid and

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[13]For the convenience of the reader, I have included a complete copy of her argument in Appendix A.

[14]G.E.M. Anscombe, "A Reply to Mr. C.S. Lewis's Argument that 'Naturalism' is Self-Refuting,' *The Collected Papers of G.E.M. Anscombe*, 3 vols. (Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 1981), Vol. 2., *Metaphysics and the Philosophy of Mind*, 224-5.

[15]Anscombe, 225.

[16]Anscombe, 226.

[17]Reppert, 37.

invalid, and what in the naturalistic hypothesis prevents that explanation from being given and from meaning what it does?"[18]

Reppert's response to Anscombe's objections, the Best Explanation Argument, does not entirely destroy Anscome's position--much as Lewis sought to destroy naturalism's position--but it does squarely undermine it. The Best Explanation Argument asks a larger question than whether or not we can define 'valid.' It concerns not whether reason is valid, but whether, in a naturalistic world, one can account for the fact that it is valid.[19] And Lewis' response, the revised edition of *Miracles*, more closely models itself upon this argument.

Instead of distinguishing between rational and irrational causes,[20] Lewis considers the connection between the Ground-Consequent system and the Cause and Effect system. Lewis points out the difference between a young boy crying out because something hurt him (cause and effect) and something having hurt the young boy because he cried out (ground-consequent). "The one (cause and effect) indicates a dynamic connection between events or 'states of affairs,'" Lewis writes, "the other (ground-consequent), a logical relation between beliefs or assertions."[21]

Lewis asserts that all reasoning begins with the ground-consequent system. One believes *B* because he knows *A* to be true. Nature, on the other hand, relies upon the cause and effect system. *B* occurs because *A* caused it. Unless a conclusion derives from a consequent, it cannot be described as true, excepting random chance. And unless a conclusion also has a cause, it could not have occurred at all. Thus reasoning requires both ground-consequent and cause and effect to be valid.[22] But these systems are disjunct: "To be caused is not to be proved."[23] Lewis concludes, "One thought can cause another not by *being*, but by *being seen to be*, a ground for it."[24] If knowledge is totally explicable in terms of

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[18]Anscombe, 226.

[19]Reppert, 37.

[20]Lewis reformulation of his argument in *Miracles* is, as Reppert points out, stronger, but not entirely necessary to refute Anscombe's objections. After all, the focal point of Lewis' original argument is not the distinction between rational and irrational causes, but rather that reason requires *rational* causes.

[21]*Miracles* (II), 15.

[22]*Miracles* (II), 16.

[23]*Miracles* (II), 16.

[24]*Miracles* (II), 17.

sensory perception, i.e., cause and effect, then it is not knowledge at all, but rather only sensory perception. What is known cannot be determined by the total system itself. Hence, "Any thing which professes to explain our reasoning fully without introducing an act of knowing thus solely determined by what is known, is really a theory that there is no reasoning."[25] This is, of course, precisely what naturalism attempts to do. Anscombe's objections to the first argument do not address Lewis' position in the second one.

C.S. Lewis published this revised argument twelve years after the original encounter. In style, if nothing else, the first article is much easier and more enjoyable to read. In addition to justifying the legitimacy of miracles, it is unquestionably an indictment of opposing beliefs. Anscombe successfully calls Lewis on ambiguity of language that he would not tolerate in his pupils, but yet sometimes permits in his own work. Some of his use of language must certainly be attributed to the desire to speak at his audience's level, but not all of his language can be so justified. Some of it must simply be ascribed to Lewis' ardent wish to win converts to mere Christianity. Use of high polemics and subtle rhetoric is just one more device. Lewis never considered the consequences of another scholar successfully challenging his argument, until it occurred. Apart from the revision of *Miracles* and *The Four Loves*, Lewis never permitted himself to write apologetics again. The personal reasons for Lewis' withdrawal is a question for biographers; what I will address is the effect that the Anscombe encounter bore on his writings before and afterwards.

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[25]*Miracles* (II), 18.

A Look Of One's Own

By April 1925, when awarded the fellowship at Magdalen College, Lewis had developed many of the supernatural and idealist philosophical precepts he would later expand in the third chapter of *Miracles*. Contrasted with the undergraduate Lewis of only six years earlier, his philosophical and theological maturation from the time of his Magdalen appointment until his death consists primarily of exploration and development of what Lewis called "the Absolute." Late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century belief in the Absolute--Oxford idealism, "the tradition established by Plato, perfected by Decartes and Kant"[26]--traces its revival to a singularly popular and beloved Oxford tutor, Thomas Hill Green. Though Green held the Whyte professorship of moral philosophy for only four years, when he died in 1882, Oxford's overwhelming acceptance of his distinctive idealism appeared to have given his philosophy a lasting and influential position in the university. When Green became a tutor 1873, "Oxford lay abjectly imprisoned within the rigid limits of Mill's logic. Individualistic sensationalism held the field. There was a dryness in the Oxford air."[27] Green, and the idealists who followed him, defended the axiom that knowledge leaves

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[26]James Patrick, *Magdalen Metaphysicals* (Mercer: Mercer University Press, 1985) xvi.
[27]Patrick, 5.

neither knower nor known unchanged, while they also remained dedicated to the possibility of thought as a means of establishing the existence of a Cosmic Mind, the Absolute.[28] Though Green's idealism reached its zenith in Oxford shortly following his death, in the decade that followed, Oxford's newer minds were already actively pursuing the philosophical challenge to it, realism.

John Cook Wilson, whose career began in 1874, first taught Green's idealism, with some modifications. As the century closed, however, he adopted an increasingly independent critical position that more closely resembled the empiricism of Hume and Mill and the pluralism of Aristotelian text than it did the positions of Plato and Kant that Green had taught.[29] By 1900, Wilson's evolving rebellion against Idealism and T.H. Green had matured so that he was viewed as the "bulwark" of Oxford realism and the "arch opponent of idealism."[30] Wilson considered knowledge "unanalyzable, staunchly denying that the act of knowing changed known or knower and convinced of the objectivity of all experience." Anticipating the logical positivists to follow, he taught that "logic was to be kept free of psychology, free from all dependence on the subjectivity of the thinker." For it was his view that "exercising any activity on the object" was "incompatible" with the idea of knowledge. Furthermore, Wilson dismissed religious belief as simply the "working of a poetic faculty."[31]

Arguably a far more lucid defender of this new faith was Thomas Case, who served as a Waynflete professor from 1889 until 1910, and as president of Corpus Christi from 1905 to 1921. Philosophical realism probably took its name from Case's book, *Physical Realism*, published in 1888.[32] In it, Case argues that idealism could deal neither with matter nor with the mutual impenetrability of bodies, while also acknowledging a fault of realism, namely that it could give no account for origins of bodies, consciousness, or of bodies' becoming good for conscious beings. But in the balance, the argument shifts against idealism, Case writes, because idealism maintains "the arbitrary hypothesis of a sense of

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[28]Patrick, xvi.
[29]Patrick, 7
[30]Patrick, 8.
[31]Patrick, 8.
[32]Patrick, 8.

sensation or of ideas," and it also suffers from "the intolerable neglect of logical inference."[33]

Revision of the Green philosophy by his disciples further contributed to idealism's declining popularity. Bradley, recognized as idealism's leading apologist shortly before the turn of the century, began adapting the philosophy to address realism's concerns that man could never know the Absolute. By 1901, Oxford idealists had abandoned the notion that the Absolute described God as known to Christianity, or that it even reflected God in a religious sense at all. Bradley, and other idealist thinkers, had succeeded entirely in divorcing theology from philosophy as it pertained to idealism.[34] And though when the war was over in 1918, idealism in the form advocated by Green ceased to enjoy prominence, it still seemed to C.S. Lewis to be an official philosophy powerful enough to "justify undergraduate rebellion."[35] Lewis writes, "Idealism was then the dominant philosophy at Oxford and I was by nature 'against Government.'"[36]

The undergraduate Lewis relished the association with what he considered philosophical heresy, but there are other reasons for Lewis' association with the realists. Realism appealed to what would remain his lifelong love for the objective: "I wanted nature to be quite independent of our observation; something other, self-existing, indifferent."[37] Science, or more specifically the New Psychology, revealed that imagination might be pure fantasy. Realism, and later Lewis' self-described "New Look," were common-sense philosophies; they dispensed with or explained away imagination, fantasy and other meddlesome human impulses. On a personal note, E.F. Carritt, a University tutor, had identified Lewis as a promising scholar as early as 1916. After Lewis had taken double Firsts in Honor Mods and Greats and was yet still unable to secure a fellowship in Oxford, Carritt sponsored the search for him, writing testimonials to many colleges. In 1924, when Carritt accepted a one year position lecturing at the University of Michigan, it was Lewis whom he selected to replace him.[38]

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[33]Patrick, 8.
[34]Patrick, 15.
[35]Patrick, 11.
[36]C.S. Lewis, *Surprised by Joy* (San Diego: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1956) 209.
[37]*Surprised by Joy*, 209.
[38]Patrick, 114.

And yet, both due to what Lewis called his "longing for Joy" and his appreciation of aesthetic experience, such as literature and opera, Lewis never fit squarely into the realist camp. "We [Owen Barfield and C.S. Lewis] had been, in the technical sense of the term, "realists;" that is, we accepted as rock-bottom reality the universe revealed by the senses. But at the same time we continued to make for certain phenomena of consciousness all the claims that really went with a theistic or idealistic view. We maintained that abstract thought (if obedient to logical rules) gave indisputable truth, that our moral judgment was 'valid,' and our aesthetic experience not merely pleasing but 'valuable.'"[39]

Lewis first met Owen Barfield late in 1920 or early 1921, when Lewis was already breaking with realism in favor of his New Look. The New Look offered Lewis a form of "stoical monism"--a clear, no nonsense perception of the universe that was above all modern. But Lewis was unable to doubt the fruitfulness of thought and the power of reason to touch reality. Thus he found the radical subjectivism of the new psychology incomprehensible and, likewise, the poetry of the 1920s unapproachable. He began turning to the writings of Bradley (the turn of the century atheist-idealist) to help him fashion a view that was "manly, realistic, void of self-pity and calculated to contain joy."[40] Though Lewis rejected behaviorism, this New Look philosophy was, as much as anything, a mere product of his current condition.

By the summer of 1922, Lewis had completed both the Greats (Classical Philosophy) and Honor Mods (Classical Literature). Though his father continued to support him through college, because Lewis had moved in with and was financially supporting the mother and family of a friend killed during the war, he was impoverished. And more unsettling for Lewis, who could cope with poverty, was his future. He could not find an appointment in Oxford. Lewis had received offers from colleges both in other parts of England and in the States, but rejected them because he could not afford to move the Moores with him. It was suggested that Lewis pursue yet another degree, English Language

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[39]*Surprised by Joy*, 208.
[40]Patrick, 113.

and Literature in the Oxford Honours School, a curriculum far more concerned with language study than that of most other universities.[41]

A.N. Wilson describes the effect that English would have on Lewis' outlook:

> Greats had sharpened his wits to the point where he thought not only that he was a philosopher, but that life and its problems could be adequately explained by purely cerebral means....English was to restore to him with inescapable force the message which he had been hearing haphazardly but forcibly ever since he became addicted to reading as a small child in Northern Ireland. This was the knowledge that human life is best understood by the exercise not only of the will, but also of the imagination; that poets and moral essayists and novelists, with their rounded sense of human experience, have perhaps more to teach us than logicians; that while no academic, and indeed no individual pursuing the truth, can dare to discard the rigour of logic, this is no more than an instrument.[42]

The realism Lewis learned from Carritt threatened collapse in mid-1922. At this time Lewis and Barfield initiated what they described "the Great War" after Barfield announced that he was an anthropomorphist. During this summer, Barfield made Lewis acknowledge that if aesthetic experiences were valuable, values must exist. In his reading of *The Republic* and *The Metaphysics*, Lewis discovered that reason and behaviorist theory were incompatible. Lewis found that the mind was "no late-come phenomena [*sic*]... the whole universe was, in the last resort, mental; our logic was participation in the cosmic logos."[43] Barfield furthermore cured Lewis of the notion that one's philosophy of life must be contemporary.[44] In preparation for the fall's studies, Lewis read English literature during that summer. He noted, "I was deeply moved by the *Dream of the Rood*; more deeply still by Langland: intoxicated (for a time) by Donne; deeply and lastingly satisfied by Thomas Browne. But the most alarming was George Herbert. Here was a man who seemed to me to excel all the authors I have ever read in conveying the very quality of life as we actually live it from moment to moment."[45]

In the spring and summer of 1922, Lewis also prepared a paper, "The Hegemony of Moral Value" to demonstrate his worth to Oxford colleges. The paper was a response to Bertrand Russell's *Worship of a Free Man*, a book that had earlier arrested Lewis. "I found a

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[41]George Sayer, *Jack: C.S. Lewis, the man and his times* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1988) 98.

[42]A.N. Wilson, *C.S. Lewis: a biography* (New York: W.H. Norton & Company, 1990) 77.

[43]Patrick, 115.

[44]Sayer, 132.

[45]*Surprised by Joy*, 214.

very clear and noble statement of what I myself believed a few years ago. But he [Russell] does not face the real difficulty--that our ideals are after all a natural product, facts with a relation to all other facts, and cannot survive the condemnation of the fact as a whole." Russell caused Lewis to reconsider the questions posed by Socrates and Plato, such as "What is the Good?" Lewis furthermore asked, "If the universe is what the 19th century materialists believed it to be, and if human beings are no more than physical phenomena within it, to be scattered as soon as their brain cells are interfered with or their bodies decay, then how can they attach a hierarchy of significance to the thoughts which pass through their heads?" By the fall of 1922, Lewis realized that once one accepts a hierarchy of values, both moral and intellectual, then he is taken outside the realist realm into that of the idealist--into the metaphysical.[46]

Bertrand Russell, Ludwig Wittgenstein and later A.J. Ayer would answer this difficulty by presupposing the standard, 'the world is that which is the case,' and hence labeling Lewis' objection as a merely being "non-sensical"--a question that cannot by its nature be answered. But Lewis could not accept their response, for to him their conclusion consequently meant that the "areas which had concerned the noblest and most agile minds of the previous 23 [*sic*] centuries were put on one side as being not merely unimportant but actually nonsensical." The nature not only of his conversations and discussions with Owen Barfield, but that of his rejection of Russell indicate that by the time Lewis entered the English Language and Literature program in fall 1922, his real conversion had taken place. Lewis and Barfield both had concluded that moral value must exist outside and apart from the human experience to possess any signficance. What was the nature of this moral value and who or what (if any one or thing) oversaw it? It would require nearly another decade for Lewis to realize that his "hegemony of moral values" was truly manifest in the Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

If an intellectual crisis in 1922 prompted Lewis to consider idealism, then personal crisis in the following year nudged him further and further into the new philosophy's camp. Lewis watched a friend and priest from a discussion group go mad in his quest for immortality that had increasingly focused on the priest himself and ignored God. And in

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[46]Wilson, 86.

1923, Janie Moore's brother, the Doc, also developed a mental illness. He suffered from delusions that he was going to hell. In the Doc, Lewis saw his mentor of years earlier--a man with whom he had fashioned his New Look and his "no nonsense" philosophy--devolve into a lunatic, doubtful of his own salvation. Was this the logical consequence of realism? Lewis, like much of Oxford in the early 1920s, had been very interested in the psychology of Freud and the Viennese school, but this madness further focused Lewis in direction of "objective, traditional" morality and away from psychological introspection.[47] Lewis wrote to his close friend Arthur Greeves, "whatever you do, never allow yourself to get a neurosis....Keep to work and sanity and open air....We hold our mental health by a thread, and nothing is worth risking for it. Above all, beware of excessive daydreaming, in seeing yourself in the center of a drama."[48]

But it was Lewis himself who was in the center of a drama at this point in his life. As much as an intellectual pursuit, English literature had reawakened Lewis' appreciation of art, and secondly, it served to legitimize Christianity as an acceptable intellectual pursuit. In addition to the Christian authors to whom Lewis was exposed were the Christian pupils. Neville Coghill was the first. "I soon had the shock of discovering that he--clearly the most intelligent and best informed man in the class--was a Christian and a thoroughgoing supernaturalist."[49] As significantly, Lewis still considered himself a 'modern,' while he considered Coghill 'archaic.' Coghill caused Lewis to question the notion that Lewis had held at least as long as he had been in Oxford that the calendar was a measuring stick for the truth--that the moderns were entirely more advanced than the ancients. "Had something really dropped out of our lives? Was the archaic simply the civilized, and the modern simply the barbaric? It will seem strange to many of my critics who regard me as a typical *laudator temporis acti* that this question should have arisen so comparatively late in my life."[50]

By the summer of 1923, Lewis had completed his work in English literature and was again seeking a position at Oxford. Were it not for his friend and mentor, F.W. Carritt,

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[47]Sayer, 132.
[48]Sayer, 101.
[49]*Surprised by Joy*, 212.
[50]*Surprised by Joy*, 212.

then Lewis might not have found one at all, even after having completed another degree. Carritt was offered a one year teaching position at the University of Michigan, and he asked Lewis to take his place. Lewis' responsibilities included fourteen lectures and a reduced tutorial load. In preparing these lectures, he read widely in philosophy and ethics, enjoying especially Hobbes, Bergson and Hume.[51] It was during this year, when Lewis taught nothing but philosophy that he was able to question whether he still believed that Plato was "always wrong."[52]

Also, at this time, Owen Barfield had returned to Plato via the writings of Rudolph Steiner. Steiner enabled Barfield to question the Darwinian--materialistic--vision of the world. Steiner recovered from Plato the idea of consciousness and imagination as reflections on the soul and mind of the human. "Lewis was always prepared," Barfield writes, "to follow any proposition to its logical conclusion, including his own propositions, and he was ready to follow them to any conclusion, irrespective of the result or how unpleasant it might be."[53] And Lewis was intellectually honest enough to recognize that if what Barfield was saying were true, it would profoundly affect everything. There cannot be greater difference between the realist who supposes that mankind--its philosophy, art, science and religion-- is a mere 'atomic accident' in a meaningless universe and the idealist who maintains that there is a plan and design under-girding it all.[54] The conclusion of Steiner and Plato, Lewis and Barfield concluded, was Subjective Idealism:

> Each human being has, or is, an empirical self that is integrated into the causal system, and is, by what we call laws of nature, a helpless cog in the wheel of necessity. But by virtue of the fact that man also has a mind which can grasp the process as a whole, each individual also has a higher self, which is free from causal determination and exempt from the interruption even of death, free precisely because it is itself the source from which all things, including death and causality, are derived. This higher self, is therefore, free and immortal. But you are not to think of the higher self as therefore participating in some way in a world of immortal spirits. Behind the phenomenal world and producing it, and behind your own empirical self and producing it, is the Absolute. And the higher self is not part of the Absolute but identical with it. There is no halfway house. On the one hand, your empirical self is experiencing, suffering, delighting, contemplating, and so forth; and every conscious experience is empirical. On the other hand, it is really the Absolute which is doing all of this through you. The

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[51]Sayer, 105.
[52]Wilson, 85.
[53]Owen Barfield, *Owen Barfield on C.S. Lewis* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1989) 9.
[54]Wilson, 87.

> last is a process of ratiocination. You can never make the existence of the Absolute your own actual experience. Either you are merged with the Absolute altogether or you are totally cut off from it by the empirical self. It is one or the other.[55]

Lewis, unlike his contemporaries, did not consider philosophical theories mere formulae to be disregarded in the living of one's life. Though tutors did not overtly encourage their own philosophical belief in the minds of their pupils, they very often did encourage cynicism towards all beliefs.[56] Lewis did not accept that philosophy could have no bearing on a man's life. Barfield notes, "[Lewis] tried to live by it."[57]

A new breed of 'reactionary' faculty arrived in Oxford in 1925--among them the late Rawlison and Bosworth Professor of Anglo-Saxon, J.R.R. Tolkien--the year Lewis finally received a fellowship at Magdalen College. Tolkien first met Lewis at a faculty meeting at Merton College in May 1926. Though they viewed one other as potential adversaries (Lewis, though a medievalist, was in the Literature camp as opposed to the Classics, and Tolkien was a Roman Catholic), Lewis soon developed a firm affection for this "long-faced keen-eyed man who liked good talk and laughter and beer, while Tolkien warmed to Lewis' quick mind and generous spirit."[58] Tolkien asked Lewis to join an Icelandic-language reading group he had founded upon returning to Oxford, the Kolbitar, an Icelandic kenning for Coal-Biters or a group who sits around a fire. By 1927, Lewis joined. Here, despite their other differences, Tolkien and Lewis forged a bond in discussing Nordic myths. How did it happen? In addition to their shared interest in "northernness" and Norse mythology, Lewis and Tolkien were reading and commenting on each other's poetry. Lewis once offered his criticism in the form of a story in which Lewis attributed the poem's shortcomings to goblins who had altered the manuscript, as the author certainly could not have been responsible for them. Tolkien appreciated the creativity of Lewis' criticism, but ignored the suggestions. Tolkien never revised his text. He either ignored the criticism or entirely rewrote the passage.[59] Lewis described Tolkien's breakdown of Lewis' prejudices: "At my first coming into this world I had been (implicitly) warned never to

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[55]Barfield, 8.
[56]Sayer, 130.
[57]Barfield, 8.
[58]Humphrey Carpenter, *Tolkien: a biography* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1977) 143.
[59]Carpenter, 144-6.

trust a Papist, and at my coming into the English Faculty (explicitly) never to trust a philologist. Tolkien was both."[60]

But Tolkien was not the only philologist that Lewis met in his first year at Magdalen. Lewis quickly became friends with Paul Beneke, Adam Fox, and J.A. Smith. J.A. Smith, the Waynflete Professor of Moral and Metaphysical philosophy, himself a philologist, spawned an interest in words that became habit for Lewis. As a teacher, Lewis is remembered widely for his insistence on precise diction, and many of his tutorials were later included in *Studies in Words*. Paul Victor Mendelssohn Benecke, a senior fellow of the college, like Lewis had Firsts in Honour Mods and Greats, but in addition he also had top ranking in theology. Benecke's charity work greatly impressed Lewis, and he viewed Benecke as the model of sanctity he could never attain.[61]

In late 1925 or early 1926, Lewis began meditating on the "supreme Spirit." Although it was a tenet of all philosophers linked to Hegel that one could not contact the Absolute, Lewis set about trying to. He tried to "peel away layers" to get in the presence of the pure spirit. Lewis was, of course, following the prayer process without knowing it; he was acknowledging God without calling it God.

In 1926, Lewis read two books that further changed his views toward God and Christianity. Australian-born, Samuel Alexander's study of *Space, Time, and Deity* increased Lewis' distrust of introspection and modified his attitudes toward joy and the idealist philosophy. In Alexander's concept of contemplation, one has contact, not with the object, but merely with the idea of it.[62] The significance of Alexander's explanation and elaboration of Plato upon Lewis is reflected in the length he devoted to Alexander in *Surprised by Joy*. Responding to the realists that man does not really hope but rather think about hope, Lewis discovered "You cannot hope and also think about hoping at the same moment; for in hope we look to hope's object and we interrupt by this (so to speak) turning around to look at hope itself. Of course the two activities can and do alternate with great rapidity; but they are distinct and incompatible."[63] Because the act of hoping upon an

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[60]*Surprised by Joy*, 216.
[61]Sayer, 111-2.
[62]Sayer, 131.
[63]*Surprised by Joy*, 218.

object and the act of recognizing the act of hoping are necessarily distinct, Lewis agreed with Alexander's new distinction replacing the "conscious and unconscious" with the "unconscious, the enjoyed, and the contemplated."[64]

Alexander, furthermore, enabled Lewis to focus his intellectual uncertainties. "We do not 'think a thought' in the same sense in which we 'think Herodotus is unreliable.' Whenever we think a thought, 'thought' is a cognate accusative (like 'blow' in 'strike a blow'). We enjoy the thought that Herodotus is unreliable and in so doing, contemplate the unreliability of Herodotus. I accepted the distinction at once and have ever since regarded it as an indisputable tool of thought."[65] And this reasoning, finally, justified Lewis' own longing for joy. Joy, as the title of his autobiography *Surprised by Joy* indicates, remained Lewis' second instrument of conversion (reason being his first). Why did man experience joy and of what did it consist? In reflection, Lewis realized that he could never remember joy itself; he could only remember having experienced it. Was joy then a deception? "We mortals, seen as the sciences see us and as we commonly see one another, are mere 'appearances.' But appearances of the Absolute. In so far as we really are at all (which isn't saying so much) we have so to speak, a root in the Absolute, which is the utter reality. And that is why we experience Joy: we yearn, rightly, for that unity that we can never reach except by ceasing to be the separate phenomenal beings we called 'we.' Joy was not a deception."[66]

In summer 1926, Lewis read C.K. Chesterton's *The Everlasting Man*, and shortly thereafter events conspired as to give Chesterton's *aut deus aut homo malus* (either God or a bad man) argument increasing credibility. Whatever the public's opinion is regarding Christianity, Jesus himself retains some authority as a moral teacher. In *The Everlasting Man*, Chesterton utilizes the sentiment to challenge a popular misunderstanding of what Christ really taught in the Gospels. Jesus was not merely a good man, Chesterton argues; he was either God or a fool. Christ claimed to be the Son of God and, therefore, divine. Regardless of early twentieth-century man's view of that claim, for a Jew at that time to have claimed that was blasphemy of the highest order. Christ's claim of divinity was not a

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[64]*Surprised by Joy*, 219.
[65]Wilson, 107.
[66]*Surprised by Joy*, 221-2.

side aspect or inconsequential part of his teaching; it was the central premise of the Gospel. Without the power of Christ's saving grace behind it, the Gospel was an empty promise. And historically, if not the Son of God, Christ was not simply a heretic of the most heinous nature, but also a fool. He could have avoided execution for his blasphemy by simply recanting. This argument caused Lewis to reconsider his easy dismissal of Christianity. Furthermore, Chesterton's book also answered many of the popular textual criticisms of the Bible.

If the Chesterton book established a respect for the integrity of the Bible and the credibility of Christianity, a specific conversation with an elderly Oxford gentleman intensified them both. T.D. ("Harry") Weldon, a well known, respected and thoroughgoing skeptic, shocked Lewis when after both had been drinking and conversing at length one afternoon, Weldon told Jack that there was, in fact, good evidence to support the validity of the Gospel. Sayer succinctly describes the effect of the encounter: "Lewis was deeply affected."[67] Perhaps Lewis' literary background also contributed to his reevaluation of the Bible. When he reread the Bible in late 1926, Lewis concluded that the stories were not myths or made-up stories because the authors were simply too artless and unimaginative.[68] Towards the end of 1926, reflecting the conflict between his skepticism toward organized religion and his sympathy toward Christianity, Lewis remarked in a letter, "Christianity itself was very sensible apart from its Christianity."[69]

For the next twenty-four months, however, Lewis steadfastly adhered to his notion that the Spirit or Absolute was the true focus of the universe and that theism, Christianity in particular, was merely a distraction. But at the same time, in addition to his new friendship with orthodox Christians like Tolkien and Coghill, was the developing intellectual evolution of his friend Owen Barfield, who had also joined the ranks of the theists. Lewis writes, "And nearly everyone was now (one way or another) in the pack: Plato, Dante, MacDonald, Herbert, Barfield, Tolkien, Dyson, Joy itself."[70] In 1929, Lewis' rejection of theism collapsed, and he began attending church services--not as an

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[67]Sayer, 132.
[68]Sayer, 133.
[69]*Surprised by Joy*, 233.
[70]*Surprised by Joy*, 225.

acceptance of the Church, but rather to indicate to his atheist colleagues that he had left their camp.[71] Lewis finally realized, "Idealism can be talked, and even felt; it cannot be lived."[72] Instead of meditating *on* the supreme Spirit, Lewis began praying *to* God. Though still a theist, the distinction was particularly relevant to Lewis. Rather than attempt to live his life by the mathematical formulae of a New Look or even the abstract Idealism, Lewis was appealing to his God; the impersonal and nebulous was becoming increasingly personal and defined.

At the same Lewis was returning, albeit slowly, to the religion of his childhood, so was his brother. That Warren began attending church and praying, of course, reinforced Lewis' own conversion, but the reason that Warren converted would later contribute to Lewis' popular theology. Unlike his brother, Warren viewed Christianity and the structure of the church as the best means of helping him recover from his indolence and alcoholism. Whereas, for Lewis, Christianity provided him with the secure foundation necessary to unleash his potential as a writer and thinker, for Warren, it merely provided the strength to tackle a material affliction.[73] The result in both brothers was the same: allow Christ to intervene in one aspect of one's life and He will eventually affect all aspects.

On September 19, 1931, Lewis met Tolkien and another friend, Hugo Dyson, for dinner. Following the meal, the three of them returned to the topic of the Gospel. Lewis said that though he loved the myths of the Bible, he could not fully accept them as true. They were myths, after all. Tolkien replied that all myths originate from God--they preserve something of God's truth, though distorted. In presenting a myth, then, or in writing stories full of mythical creatures, one may be doing God's work. The Christian story was a myth created by God Himself, by a God whose dying could transform his followers.[74] But this explanation was only half-sufficient for Lewis. It was not enough that the events in the Gospel were true, but rather as he later remarked in a letter to a friend, "how the life and death of Someone Else (whomever He was) two thousand-years ago could help us here

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[71]Not to mention that with the death of his father in that same year, Lewis could no longer consider not attending church a required gesture against the political churchgoing of his father.

[72]*Surprised by Joy*, 226.

[73]Sayer, 134.

[74]Sayer, 134.

and now--except in so far as His *example* could help us."[75] Dyson and Tolkien asked Lewis to appreciate the Gospel myth in the same spirit of "imaginative understanding" that he would bring to the pagan myths, for when Lewis encountered the idea of sacrifice in the mythology of a pagan religion, he admired it and was moved by it.[76] "But," Lewis replied, "myths are lies even though they are lies breathed through silver." "No," said Tolkien, "they are not." As creatures come from God, the myths that are woven by man will contain a "splintered fragment of the true light, the eternal truth that is with God."[77] By becoming a "sub-creator" and inventing stories, a man may ascribe to the prelapsarian state.[78] Lewis wrote to his good friend Arthur Greeves, "...I have just passed on from believing in God to definitely believing in Christ....My long night talk with Dyson and Tolkien had a great deal to do with it."[79]

Hence, by that evening in September 1931, Lewis' attempt to fashion a modern philosophical outlook was resolved with his conversion back to the Christianity of his childhood. But rather than restrain his creative energies, as Lewis feared orthodoxy would do, Christianity unleashed them. And much like Chesterton's self-styled sailor described in the opening chapter of *Orthodoxy* who sails around the world, thinks he has discovered a new land and a new people only later to realize that the island is the same England he had left behind, the length and breadth of Lewis' philosophical journey gives him a necessary outlook for his work to follow. Lewis now turns against science, psycho-analysis, and modernity; in short, all the building blocks of his New Look of a decade before now become objects of his often bitter scrutiny. Because Lewis' conversion was essentially an intellectual one, notwithstanding the several personal factors in that process, Lewis in the 1930s and 40s yet lacks a deep and personal understanding of the Gospel or of the finer points of Christian theology. This intellectual imbalance, coupled with absence of any significant personal challenge or test of his faith or theory for the next seventeen years, leaves Lewis and his writing vulnerable to the Anscombe attack.

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[75]Carpenter, 147.

[76]Sayer, 134.

[77]Though there are a varying number of myths, for the purpose of this paper, I will use the Tolkien-Lewis definition.

[78]Carpenter, 147.

[79]Sayer, 135.

DEVILS, SCIENTISTS, AND PLANETS

The next major division in Lewis' life, beginning with his conversion to Christianity in 1931 and ending roughly with the publication of the first edition of *Miracles* and the Anscombe encounter, witnessed Lewis' rise from a mere Oxford don to the preeminent English Christian apologist of the half-century. And though this rise distanced him somewhat from many of the people who contributed to his conversion,[80] Lewis' elevation supplied him with the means to help his friends. *The Lord of the Rings* was published, in part, on the strength of Lewis' recommendation to the publisher. The Inklings and later the Socratic Society, both with Lewis as their acknowledged head, also received national attention. Christianity in England was once again in vogue among certain intellectual circles, and Lewis was championing its return. This success, however, had two unintended effects. One, Lewis was elevated to the level of a demi-god himself. And, two, Lewis became the choice target for those wishing to debunk traditional, "mere" Christianity.

The first significant work of this period is *The Screwtape Letters* (1942). Written nearly a decade after his conversion, *Screwtape* is the most important of the first widely

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[80]Tolkien, for example, was not at all impressed by his popular apologetics and, accordingly, mildly resented his popularity

accessible works Lewis wrote. Immediately following his conversion, Lewis wrote *The Pilgrim's Regress* (1934), a spiritual metaphor of his conversion. But *Regress* is a densely literary work and few ever read it. It did not shape the public's perception of Lewis, nor did Lewis successfully convey in it the justification of his faith. And *The Problem of Pain* (1940) and *Out of the Silent Planet* (1938) primarily received attention for their being the works of the Screwtape author. *Screwtape* originally appeared in *The Guardian* shortly following the outbreak of World War II. As its title suggests, the book is epistolary--a series of letters from Screwtape, a senior devil, to his nephew Wormwood, a junior devil. The plot describes a young man's conversion, or reconversion, to Christianity. The human subject to Wormwood is an Everyman whose goal is Heaven. Because he leads such a quiet, nondescript existence, his pilgrimage is not noteworthy, save to a demonic spirit with its acute vision.[81] Wormwood is assigned the young man's soul and is responsible for delivering it to hell. As Screwtape's increasing frustration with his nephew reveals, the young man escapes Wormwood, first converting to Christianity before dying in a German bombing raid. By assuming the persona of the devil, Lewis is able to detail successfully how modernity (or the Devil) strips humanity and spirituality from this man without his knowing it. But *Screwtape*'s potency most often rests in Lewis' critique of his pre-conversion self.

Lewis' first target in the opening letter is realism and all the other philosophies popular in contemporary England. Lewis mocks the prevailing Oxford view that philosophy is inapplicable to one's own life. Also, Lewis' derides what was his own earlier desire to fashion a "New Look," while also leading the reader first to laugh at moral absurdities before questioning them himself! "This [Screwtape] does by applying the clear light of Hell to human nonsense."[82] Screwtape writes to Wormwood, "It sounds as if you supposed that argument was the way to keep him out of the Enemy's clutches. That might have been so if he had lived a few centuries earlier. At that time the humans still knew pretty well when a thing was proved and when it was not; and if it was proved they really believed it. They still connected thinking with doing and were prepared to alter their way of life as a result of

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[81]Chad Walsh, *The Literary Legacy of C.S. Lewis* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1979) 24-5.
[82]Walsh, 27.

a chain of reasoning."[83] Then Lewis explicitly describes his former self: "Your man has been accustomed, ever since he was a boy, to having a dozen incompatible philosophies dancing about together inside his head. He doesn't think of doctrines as primarily 'true' or 'false,' but as 'academic' or 'practical,' 'outworn' or 'contemporary,' 'conventional' or 'ruthless.' Jargon, not argument, is your best ally in keeping him from the Church. Don't waste time trying to make him think that materialism is *true*! Make him think it is strong or stark or courageous--that it is the philosophy of the future. That's the sort of thing he cares about."[84] Screwtape is like a modern psychologist who claims to understand almost everything about the human condition and promises that someday he will know it completely.[85]

Lewis also reminds the reader that reason, properly exercised, is a divine instrument and not the Devil's. Accordingly, Screwtape urges Wormwood to frown upon reason in the mind of his man: "By the very act of arguing, you awake the patient's reason; and once it is awake, who can foresee the result?" Remembering his own contorted path to conversion, Lewis continues, "Even if a particular train of thought can be twisted so as to end in our favour, you will find that you have been strengthening in your patient the fatal habit of attending to universal issues and withdrawing his attention from the stream of immediate sense experiences." Nebulous concepts and uncertain emotions blind man to the true reality that surrounds him: "Your business," Screwtape instructs Wormwood, "is to fix his attention on the stream. Teach him to call it 'real life' and don't let him ask what he means by 'real.'"[86]

The success of the Screwtape letters, both in commercial and literary terms, must be attributed, in part, to its form. As the epistles of a devil, the book enables Lewis to remove himself personally from the work, but by relying on a third person (a devil) to explain how God and spirituality are ignored by the modern mind, Lewis begins to utilize his literary and imaginative talents in addition to his polemic and analytic ones. The literary device itself has important consequences. The human condition, with its hopes and

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[83]C.S. Lewis, *The Screwtape Letters, Revised Edition* (New York: Collier Books, 1961) 7.
[84]*Screwtape*, 8.
[85]Walsh, 25.
[86]*Screwtape*, 8.

perils, is sifted through the mind of a hostile observer.[87] Like most of his books written during this period, *Screwtape* is a response to an intellectual challenge, in this case: How does the devil operate? By using a devil, of course, Lewis stacks the deck. The entire framework of *Screwtape* assumes a supernatural universe. Screwtape, himself, is a thoroughgoing supernaturalist. *The Problem of Pain*, *Mere Christianity*, and *Miracles*, need to assume, or quickly to establish, a supernatural framework in a philosophical context, and this causes Lewis intellectual difficulties that fiction avoids. At the very least, the correspondence of a devil induces a playful and provisional willing suspension of disbelief, enabling Lewis to exhibit his strengths in a psychological examination of sin and the modern sensibility. With *Screwtape*, Lewis realizes the potential of the myth. By spinning a story--one certainly subject to the shortcomings of fallen man, even though they are "lies breathed through silver"--Lewis nevertheless reflects a splintered fragment of the true light.

And by assuming the voice and perspective of the devil, he could safely describe how his contemporaries mistakenly and erroneously view the world. Lewis gently rebukes his own previous prejudice against the church: "All your patient sees [when looking at a church] is the half-finished, sham Gothic erection on the new building estate." Churchgoing, once a scorned reminder of his father, became a focal point of Lewis' spiritual development, and hence, Screwtape instructs Wormwood to keep his man out of the church--and if he cannot do that, then to elicit ridicule while attending: "Your patient, thanks to Our Father Below, is a fool. Provided that any of those neighbors sing out of tune, or have boots that squeak, or double chins, or odd clothes, the patient will quite easily believe that their religion must therefore be somehow ridiculous."[88] All of these arguments are like those that Lewis had employed to justify his own skepticism.

But the most personal subject in *Screwtape* concerns the guiding emotional or spiritual motivation for his conversion, namely Joy. Joy both terrifies and disgusts Screwtape because of its potency and divinity. Screwtape elaborates: "What the real cause [of Joy] is we do not know. Something like it occurs in Heaven--a meaningless acceleration in the rhythm of celestial experience, quite opaque to us....Besides, the phenomenon is of

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[87]Walsh, 22.
[88]*Screwtape*, 12.

itself disgusting and a direct insult to the realism, dignity, and austerity of Hell."[89] In addition to reason, the senses can also bring a man to God. "You allowed him two real positive Pleasures," Screwtape chides his nephew: "Were you so ignorant as not to see the dangers of this? The characteristic of Pains and Pleasures is that they are unmistakably real, and therefore, as far as they go, give the man who feels them a touchstone of reality."[90] Here Lewis not only acknowledges the contribution of pleasure and Joy to his conversion, but also attacks the behaviorist position that feelings consist of nothing more than chemical reactions. Modern science, a consistent target for Lewis during this period and afterwards, is closely akin to the devil.

"Nothing I can say," Lewis writes in *The Abolition of Man*, "will prevent some people from describing this lecture as an attack on science. I deny the charge, of course."[91] *The Abolition of Man* is Lewis' second critical work of the period. *Abolition* consists of three lectures Lewis delivered at Durham University in 1943,[92] but the philosophical argument dates back to a paper he wrote in 1924. Critics often categorize *The Abolition of Man* as an argument for the existence of Natural Law. It is actually very little of the sort. Rather than argue for the existence of Natural Law, or as Lewis describes it in *Abolition*, the *Tao*, Lewis observes that until our present age, mankind assumed its existence. *The Abolition of Man* details the consequences of denying that existence, which is, as its title suggests, the actual abolition of man.

Lewis defines Nature as consisting of those physical phenomena that man comprehends. As mankind's knowledge expands, so does the expanse of Nature. Lewis argues that in comprehending something, mankind primarily reduces it to something he can understand: "We reduce things to mere Nature *in order that* we may 'conquer' them. We are always conquering Nature, because 'Nature' is the name for what we have, to some extent, conquered. The price of nature is to treat a thing as mere Nature."[93] Lewis does not deny that the subjugation of Nature has some benefits, but he warns that it can go too far. The *Tao*, Natural Law, was accepted by previous generations precisely because it cannot be

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[89]*Screwtape*, 50.
[90]*Screwtape*, 58.
[91]C.S. Lewis, *The Abolition of Man* (New York: Collier Books, 1947) 86.
[92]Dabney Adams Hart, *Through the Open Door: A new look at C.S. Lewis* (???), 87.
[93]*Abolition*, 82-3.

proven. If it could, then it would not constitute a First Principle or premise, as Lewis' describes it: "You cannot reach them as conclusions: they are premises."[94] But these premises are exactly what science insists on proving or discarding.

The Abolition of Man opens with Lewis' describing a representative modern British textbook, generically named *The Green Book*, that attempts to educate students against the dangers of mass communications by improving their critical reading and analysis of words' connotations. Lewis does not discount the dangers of propaganda or the obvious threat that Fascism and Communism posed to Western Civilization. But Lewis warns against a more subtle danger, confusing the subjective nature of value statements with the subjectivity of value itself. If all value judgments are reduced to mere subjectivity, two potential dangers result. First, values inherited from antecedents will be lost. Second, man will be vulnerable to any power that attempts to manipulate and reformulate him.[95]

Science, writes Lewis, has now turned her sights on the human soul: "The stars do not become Nature till we can weigh and measure them: the soul does not become Nature till we can psycho-analyze her. The wresting of powers *from* Nature is also the surrendering of things *to* Nature."[96] The *Tao*, however, is that premise that defines humanity; it is the only restraining force against dictators and tyrants. Once freed from the *Tao*, man is free to recondition his soul entirely, however he pleases. But this does not mean that each man will do so, rather that a few men will do so for all posterity. Lewis does not dismiss this danger as mere speculation: "It is in Man's power to treat himself as a mere 'natural object' and his own judgment of value as raw material for scientific manipulation to alter at will."[97] Man's ability to do this is directly paralleled by the necessary repudiation of his humanity: "But I am not supposing them to be bad men. They are, rather, not men (in the old sense) at all. They are, if you like, men who have sacrificed their own share in traditional humanity in order to devote themselves to the task of deciding what 'Humanity' shall henceforth mean."[98] Science, to be sure, is a power game; Man's power over Nature is really some men's power over other men with Nature as its medium.

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[94]*Abolition*, 53.
[95]Hart, 89.
[96]*Abolition*, 83.
[97]*Abolition*, 84.
[98]*Abolition*, 76.

Accordingly, each generation exercises decreasing power over each successive generation: "Each generation exercises power over its successors: and each, in so far as it modifies the environment bequeathed to it and rebels against tradition, resists and limits the power of its predecessors."[99] Because Nature now encompasses so much of the Universe, Lewis fears that the final stage is not far off: "The final stage is come when Man by eugenics, by pre-natal conditioning, and by an education and propaganda based on a perfect applied psychology, has obtained full control over himself. *Human* nature will be the last part of Nature to surrender to Man."[100] In so far as recognition of the *Tao* prevents this surrender, *Abolition* is an argument for the existence of Natural Law. But more significantly, *Abolition* is an explanation of Man's ability to destroy himself: "In the *Tao* itself, as long as we remain within it, we find the concrete reality in which to participate is to be truly human....But the moment we step outside and regard the *Tao* as a mere subjective product, this possibility has disappeared."[101] The same generation that rescued mankind from the Nazis may betray humanity to a brave new world.

Lewis wrote *Abolition* with an audience of undergraduates in mind. Reflecting the Oxford professor that he was, the lectures contain a determination to keep his audience awake, often resorting to shocking them by challenging their prejudices, questioning their judgments, and provoking their imaginations. Lewis' characteristic use of metaphor and analogy leaves Lewis open to challenges of oversimplification to be sure, but *Abolition* nevertheless succeeds.[102] This philosophical question, that of absolute principles and universal truth, was of primary concern to Lewis. Even as an atheist, Lewis had strongly sensed the existence of the Absolute, and that awareness had provoked his conversion. Unlike finer doctrinal questions, which even after his conversion Lewis ignored, the problem of Natural Law remained the focal point of Lewis' philosophy. Lewis opens *Mere Christianity*[103] with the question of universal morality and the philosophical problems its existence poses for the layman. Accordingly, *Mere Christianity* is most successful when it

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[99]*Abolition*, 70.
[100]*Abolition*, 72.
[101]*Abolition*, 86.
[102]Hart, 74.
[103]*Mere Christianity* is a collection of BBC radio talks and first published in three parts: *The Case for Christianity* (1943), *Christian Behaviour* (1943), and *Beyond Personality* (1945)

describes the *Tao* in language accessible to the layman, though as Tolkien's objection in the unmailed letter to Lewis illustrates, Lewis sometimes trips upon the finer points of Christian theology. The *Space Trilogy*, completed prior to the first printing of *The Abolition of Man* (1947), concerns both the modern sensibility as critiqued in *Screwtape* and the consequences of stepping outside the *Tao*.

Like the supernatural framework of a devil's epistolary, the setting of the Heavens enables Lewis to puruse the myth. Lewis further used the science fiction genre to address the influence of H.G. Wells, Olaf Stapledon, G.B. Shaw, and C.H. Waddington that Darwinism could extend into the metaphysical sphere, speculating that mankind might evolve into its own species of divinity, jumping from planet to planet. According to these authors, interplanetary space travel constitutes mankind's best hope for immortality and, thus, science fiction served as a modern substitution for Christianity.[104] (*Out of the Silent Planet* most closely resembles a traditional science fiction novel of the three novels.) In *Out of the Silent Planet*, as in all three books of the Trilogy, Lewis does not tell a story, rather he constructs a myth. One of the more common criticisms of the Space Trilogy is that once Lewis establishes just enough of a plot to begin developing his myth, the story line is neglected. *Out of the Silent Planet* begins with the protagonist, a philologist named Ransom, walking in the country and looking for a place to sleep, as there was no room in the nearest town. Ransom encounters an old classmate, the greedy Devine, and his accomplice, Dr. Weston. These two men are preparing a return trip to Mars to mine gold, but because they believe the natives of Mars desire a human sacrifice, the pair is attempting to capture a town boy when Ransom arrives. Weston and Devine instead capture Ransom, and the three travel to Mars. Shortly after arriving, Ransom escapes his two captors and encounters the *hrossa*, a strange, seal-like creature, that surprise Ransom with their rational capacity. Being a philologist, Ransom attempts to communicate with the hrossa and learns their language.

In his interaction with the *hrossa*, Ransom discovers that the planets of outer space are not dead entities, but that they embody the spiritual harmony intended for Earth.

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[104]David C. Downing, *Planets in Peril: a critical study of C.S. Lewis's Ransom Trilogy* (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1992) 36.

Ransom learns that the Creator of the universe, Maleldil, has entrusted each of the planets to an Oyarsa, a guardian creature answerable only to Maleldil. But the Earth's Oyarsa has rebelled against Maleldil, and hence, the Earth has no contact with other Oyarsa. The creatures to whom Devine and Weston planned to give Ransom for "sacrifice" are the *sorns*, a gentle and highly intelligent race, who, following the Oyarsa's directives, intended to present the pair to their leader. As each of the Martian, or Malacandrian, creatures co-exist in a harmonious hierarchy, the *hrossa* insist on escorting Ransom to the *sorns*. Ransom also learns that Malacandria is a dying planet--casualty of the Earth's "bent" Oyarsa who had attacked and severely damaged it. Rather than abandon it, the Malacandrians attempt to live on their own planet as best they are able. This benign acceptance of one's allotted condition is in marked contrast to Weston's desire to conquer Mars for the advancement of mankind. Attempting to satisfy the scientific knowledge of his readers, the lines of Mars--then believed to be canals--Lewis describes as Malacandria's effort to conserve the heat of the planet, as the attack upon it had destroyed most of Malacandria's atmosphere. Malacandria is a sad planet, stripped and denied much of the Joy Maleldil intended for it. When Ransom meets the Oyarsa, he discovers how much more tragic the "silent planet" is.

The *sorns* wanted Devine and Weston, not to sacrifice them, but because Malacandria's Oyarsa wished to meet with them. Maleldil tells Ransom, "If they had come a few miles to see me I would have received them honorably; now they have twice gone a voyage of millions of miles for nothing and will appear before me nonetheless."[105] Following Ranson's meeting with Maleldil, Weston and Devine are brought before the Oyarsa. Weston and Devine, who still consider Mars a primitive planet, believe that the Oyarsa is a contraption, and so they speak before Maleldil in a basic speech: "You no roar at me," Weston snapped at the hrossa, "Me no afraid of you."[106] Maleldil considers Un-Bodying, executing, the pair, but because the creatures are the property of another Oyarsa, he instead returns them to Earth. The Oyarsa are forbidden from interfering with the affairs of the "bent" Oyarsa, unless it "attacks" first. The Oyarsa gives Ransom the opportunity to

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[105]C.S. Lewis, *Out of the Silent Planet* (New York: Collier Books, 1965) 122.
[106]*Planet*, 128.

remain on Malacandria, a temptation Ransom considers, but decides instead to return home with the others.

Out of the Silent Planet traces Ransom's development. In the opening chapters, he is a nominal Christian. Though he has not critically considered either his faith or his conception of the universe, Ransom exhibits religions tendencies nevertheless. When he fears that he is going to die, he prays; when he encounters new creatures, he ponders converting them. Ransom's evolution begins shortly after he is placed on the spaceship. He reflects that the old word "heavens" is so much more appropriate and descriptive than the new word "space."[107] Once on Malacandria, Ransom observes a world of accepted order. Each creature knows his place in relation to each other and in relation to the Oyarsa. No formal hierarchy exists among the creatures. Their positions simply are.[108]

The travels on Malacandria are primarily a mechanism for exploring Christian "mythology." Ransom faintly discerns *eldilia*, angel-like creatures of light, that roam the planet. As the Oyarsa serve Maleldil on the individual planets, the *eldilia* assist the Oyarsa. These supernatural entities, to Ransom's surprise, are accepted as a natural and self-evident aspect of life on Malacandria. In the lives and the creatures of Malacandria Ransom finds spirituality embodied with the certitude that Ransom wishes to, and later will, possess. Whereas mankind deliberates and ponders religion, the Malacandrians exhibit it instinctively. And only when Ransom is delivered to the Oyarsa, does he fully recognize the consequences of life on the silent planet. Though to the twentieth-century man's sensibility a world in which order so effortlessly exists seems boring and, perhaps, totalitarian, in the presence of the Oyarsa Ransom witnesses the actualization of Piccarda's declaration in *Paradiso*, iii: "In His will is our peace."

And while Ransom grows as a Christian, the reader detects some of Lewis' pagan and medieval sympathies. Ransom discovers a map of the solar system that utilizes the same symbolism for the planets that the ancients used. Venus is depicted with breasts and Mars as a male warrior. Earlier Ransom discovers universal threads in language. Through

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[107]Clyde S. Kilby, *Images of Salvation in the fiction of C.S. Lewis* (Wheaton, Illinois: Harold Shaw Publishers, 1978), 11.

[108]Chad Walsh, *The Literary Legacy of C.S. Lewis* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1979) 89.

interplanetary travel, Ransom realizes that the spirituality attributed to the heavens by the ancients was not arbitrary or imaginary.

Out of the Silent Planet is Lewis' first exploration of scientism's threat to mankind. Weston is the malignant, mad-scientist Lewis later describes in *Abolition of Man*. He views Mars as a new planet, a new conquest for science and a necessary one to sustain the human race: "To you I may seem a vulgar robber, but I bear on my shoulders the destiny of the human race."[109] But Weston does not really care about sustaining individual life, his own included. He is willing to sacrifice Ransom, and he is willing to sacrifice himself: "Me die," he tells Maleldil. "Man live." Weston wishes to preserve the "seed of humanity" because he conceives no other means of fighting mortality.[110] As Weston still retains a sense of the *Tao*--one entirely absent in him in *Perelandra*--he believes that he is fighting for a noble, moral cause. And, accordingly, he is willing to die and to kill others for the cause. But because, as a scientist, everything Weston sees is necessarily reduced to his level of comprehension, he ignores the spiritual harmony that surrounds him and that could save him. On the return trip, Ransom senses a slight change in Weston. Whatever awakening occurred in Weston is fleeting, as Weston returns in *Perelandra* a creature completely devoid of humanity. Ransom, on the other hand, is saved by his "profession." Unlike the scientist, a philologist discerns the depth of the universe through his own and other languages. Ransom, like Lewis, discerns a splintered fragment of the true light within language. And as Ransom discovers, the universality of language outside the "silent planet" enables him to communicate with Venus when he encounters her on Perelandra.

Of all his books, Manlove writes, *Perelandra* was Lewis' favorite. This was partly because Lewis believed that he had successfully depicted the true Venus, "so much so that he began almost to believe that Venus might in some reality be like that, and that the fiction had caught truth."[111] In the second novel of the trilogy, Ransom is summoned to Venus, Perelandra, by Maleldil. Here he discovers a newly created world, free from the "bent" influence of the Earth's Oyarsa. A prelapsarian Adam and Eve reside on this planet, largely free to roam the fixed regions of Perelandra by day, but forbidden to sleep anywhere

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[109]*Planet*, 135.
[110]C.N. Manlove, C.S. *Lewis: his literary achievement* (New York: St. Martins, 1987), 33.
[111]Manlove, 45.

but on the floating islands of the planet. Weston joins Ransom on Perelandra, this time as his enemy; he is sent by the Devil to tempt Eve to rebel against Maleldil. A combination of Nietzsche's *Übermensch* and Shaw's Life-Force, Weston is now called the "Un-Man," a creature so utterly emptied of his humanity and the *Tao* as not rightly to be described as a man at all. Because the Devil cannot invade Perelandra himself, he has trained Weston to go instead. And being an Un-Man secures Weston advantages over his enemy, Ransom.

Weston does not require sleep, and thus is capable of continually tempting Venus day and night. Before encountering Ransom and Weston, Venus possesses no real awareness of the concept of choice. She simply acts by nature in accordance with Maleldil's will. In her discussion with Ransom, Venus discovers that she does have a will a part from Maleldil's, and that it has naturally mirrored the Oyarsa's: "I thought that I was carried in the will of Him I love, but now I see that I walk with it."[112] Here Lewis once again illustrates acceptance of Divine Will as constituting perfect freedom. Inverted, the Lady's realization also constitutes an indictment of modern man's sensibilities: Fallen man believes that *he* walks on his own, though really he is carried by popular will--or worse. Modernity's obstinacy is further demonstrated as Weston cannot comprehend that only in obedience may man obtain true freedom. Thus, he challenges Venus to exercise her own will as a demonstration to Maleldil that His creature has matured and discovered individuality.

The Lady responds favorably to Weston's arguments, and Ransom fears that he will be responsible for allowing the Fall of the second planet. Ransom abandons logical argument and instead tells Venus of Man's Fall on Earth. Disobedience does constitute individuality, Ransom has learned; it was rebellion against Maleldil, and consequently Earth is now a silent, bent planet. Weston acknowledges that a Fall occurred, but argues that it was a good Fall as it enabled Maleldil to become a man, visit Earth and redeem His creation. But when Ransom turns to the Un-Man and asks whether he rejoices in that Incarnation, Weston can do no more than open his mouth and howl like a dog.[113] With

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[112]C.S. Lewis, *Perelandra* (New York: Collier Books, 1944) 69.
[113]Kilby, 18.

this victory, Ransom realizes that he is not alone. Maleldil has not only planned the trip, but is assisting him during it.

This argument ends Weston's logical entreaties with the Lady; he then turns to seducing the Lady through her vanity. This too fails, and Ransom is forced physically to defeat the Un-Man. That Maleldil wishes Ransom to attack the Un-Man surprises him, for Ransom had always thought that opposition to Satan was simply a "spiritual" matter.[114] Ransom defeats his enemy by using his physical existence to preserve Perelandra, and returns to Earth.

Perelandra complements *Out of the Silent Planet*. Throughout the first novel, the reader senses that Ransom's adventures result from something more than random chance, but not until Ransom lands on Venus, armed with both the language and knowledge of Maleldil does Lewis confirm that his characters live in a Divinely orchestrated universe. As *Out of the Silent Planet* serves as a training ground for the character Ransom, so too does it prepare both Lewis and the reader for both *Perelandra* and *That Hiddeous Strength*. Lewis experiments with the science fiction genre. The first several chapters, with their deliberate development of plot and character, very closely resemble a traditional science fiction novel. Only when Ransom first observes the majesty of outer space, the Heavens, do either the reader or Lewis fully realize the potential science fiction possesses for relaying medievalism to a modern audience. *Out of the Silent Planet* owes much of his language to pagan and medieval theories of the heavens; *Perelandra* allows Lewis to recast *Paradise Lost* as he believed Milton might have written it in our time.

In the *Preface to Paradise Lost*, Lewis says that the reader must possess the necessary literary and moral equipment to accept the cultural and spiritual assumptions upon which Milton wrote, even if he no longer shares them.[115] Knowing that contemporary England will not bear those assumptions applied to itself, in *Out of the Silent Planet* and *Perelandra*, Lewis recasts those cultural and spiritual assumptions on different planets and in different periods.[116] Only in the third novel does Lewis, so to speak, return home.

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[114]Kilby, 20.

[115]Manlove, 2.

[116]As Perelandra is a "new" planet, regardless of however old it actually is, the battle between Ransom and Weston cannot be accurately described as contemporary, but rather as existing outside of time.

When the reader next encounters Ransom, he is a much older man, and has become a literal vanguard of traditional Christianity in the small British town of Edgestow, where he oversees a small Christian enclave, St. Anne's-on-the-Hill. The first two novels in the trilogy are based on different models of experience in other worlds; the third addresses humanity's frontal assault on its own model of truth.[117] The title comes from the Scottish medieval poet's, Sir David Lindsay, description of the Tower of Babel:

> The Shadow of that hyddous strength
> Sax myle and more it is of length.[118]

Lewis' title reinforces a consistent theme of the trilogy, namely an identification of human corruption with corruption of language.[119] And in *That Hideous Strength*, Lewis provides a model of the kind of scientism he warns against in *The Abolition of Man:* the National Institute for Co-ordinated Experiments (N.I.C.E.).

That Hideous Strength opens with the N.I.C.E. trying to purchase some land, Bracton's Wood, from the college in Edgestow. Though the college desperately needs the funding, and though the town wishes for the Institute to settle there, some fellows in the college are reluctant to sell the property, as legend records that Merlin is buried beneath a well in the forest. N.I.C.E. wishes to obtain the property precisely for this reason, figuring that they can exploit Merlin's magical powers. Here Lewis reiterates his claim in *The Abolition of Man* that magic and science are close cousins: "The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries are the high noon of magic. The serious magical endeavour and the serious scientific endeavour are twins: one was sickly and died, the other strong and throve....They were born of the same impulse."[120] Lewis further compares Bacon with Faustus: "You will read in some critics that Faustus has a thirst for knowledge. In reality, he hardly mentions it. It is not truth he wants from his devils, but gold and guns and girls....In the same spirit Bacon condemns those who value knowledge as an end it itself: this, for him, is to use a mistress for pleasure what ought to be a spouse for fruit [*sic*]."[121] The goal of the N.I.C.E. is to obtain conditioning powers over humanity so that they may refashion the race as they

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[117]Hart, 131.
[118]Walsh, 109.
[119]Hart, 36.
[120]*Abolition*, 87.
[121]*Abolition*, 88.

please. Ranking members of the Institute feel an inescapable loathing for the human condition, its prejudices, its emotions and its values. The first step of this conditioning is to reduce the human condition to chemical formulae.

Lewis' demonic portrayal of scientists in *That Hideous Strength* is the root of many critic's dismissal of Lewis as overly anti-science. Lewis quite certainly characterizes the members of the N.I.C.E. in terms fully applicable to the most diabolic Nazis, but--like the Nazi "scientists"--the N.I.C.E. more closely resembles a totalitarian bureaucracy than it does an institute of scientific research. Lewis never attacks science; he attacks scientism--the quasi-religious belief that through science mankind can achieve immortality and a form of godhood.[122]

As the Deputy Director of the Institute, Frost, tells the young sociologist Mark Studdock, "Our reactions to one another are chemical phenomena. Social relations are chemical relations. You must observe these feelings in yourself in an objective manner. Do not let them distract your attention from the facts."[123] Initially the both Mark and the reader view the N.I.C.E. as a clinical institute where necessary scientific research takes place. And this is precisely the perception the Institute must foster, but as Mark Studdock probes deeper and deeper into the heart of the N.I.C.E., he discovers that the scientists there boast of a far bolder objective--the development of a *macrobe*, a being more intelligent than Man. Of course, very few existing humans can assist in the transformation, but, Frost assures Studdock, "The Institute will soon have official powers of liquidation."[124] Frost offers to initiate Mark into the Institute, an initiation in which Mark's psyche will be reduced to mere facts:

> The great majority of the human race...cannot be trained into the total objectivity of mind which is now necessary....I am aware of the emotional (that is, the chemical) reactions which a statement like this produces in you, and you are wasting your time in trying to conceal them from me. I do not expect you to control them. That is not the path to objectivity. I deliberately raise them in order that you may become accustomed to regard them in a purely scientific light and distinguish them as sharply as possible from the *facts*.[125]

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[122]Downing, 144

[123]C.S. Lewis, *That Hideous Strength* (New York: Collier Books, 1946) 255.

[124]*That Hideous Strength*, 255.

[125]*That Hideous Strength*, 259.

At the end of this discussion, Frost explains to Mark that he ought to cooperate with this "creative evolution" simply because the process was obviously occurring.[126] This is the essence of scientism: an evolutionary process though which mankind achieves immortality.

The Institute, Frost informs Mark, will either initiate him or liquidate him. The realization that in either scenario he will die, marks the beginning of Mark's conversion and is what ultimately saves him. Physical and emotional experience, Lewis discovered during his conversion, are real, relevant, and consequently they draw man to God. To draw a useful parallel, in *Screwtape*, the senior devil warns his nephew, "If you were trying to damn your man by the Romantic method...you would protect him at all costs from any real pain; because, of course, five minutes' genuine toothache would reveal the romantic sorrows for the nonsense they were and unmask your whole stratagem....As a preliminary to detaching him from the Enemy, you wanted to detach him from himself."[127] The physical pain Mark endures in the Institute, coupled with a fear of dying, are the first real emotions the reader witnesses him feeling in the book. Mark realizes that sociology and the self-important desire to contribute to the advancement of humanity--in short, everything Mark held as real and worthwhile--were empty and false: "The knowledge that his own assumptions led to Frost's position combined with what he saw in Frost's face and what he had experienced in this very cell," Mark discovers, "effect a complete conversion. All the philosophers and evangelists in the world might not have done the job so neatly."[128]

To the surprise of the Institute, later after his recovery, the magician Merlin does not supply the magical power they desire; instead, Merlin delivers them to destruction. The Institute gathers for a dinner, where the N.I.C.E. Director and figurehead, Horace Jules, chosen by the Institute for his standing within the scientific community in the eyes of the British public, will deliver a speech. Frost views the dinner solely as a media event, as yet another opportunity to garner legitimacy in the eyes of the nation. During Jules' speech, however, Merlin casts the curse of Babel: "They that have despised the word of God, from the them the word of man shall also be taken away."[129] The dinner devolves into a frenzy

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[126]Kilby, 115.
[127]*Screwtape*, 58-9.
[128]*That Hideous Strength*, 296.
[129]*That Hideous Strength*, 351.

as the participants begin shouting unintelligible nonsense at one another, followed by the release of the Institute's animal research collection, and concluded with the animals that the N.I.C.E. had tortured killing all the guests and the members of the Institute. Because the Devil had intruded upon Maleldil's domain by sending Weston to Perelandra, He may retaliate by intervening to destroy the N.I.C.E.

The quick and convenient ending of *That Hideous Strength* epitomizes the weakness of the novel: it attempts too much. In *Out of the Silent Planet* Lewis describes the pagan and medieval view of the heavens. The planets are not empty entities in cold, dark space, but rather spiritual forces that, with the exception of Earth, exist in divine harmony. Lewis also relates his theory of language, its universality. Finally, Lewis explores the power of the myth. By constructing a theological framework for the solar system, Lewis reveals splintered fragments of God's existence in the universe. *Perelandra* constructs a second myth. It is *Paradise Lost* retold. Ransom's development continues, but the central focus of the novel is not Ransom himself, rather it is the conflict between him and Weston for the obedience of the Lady. *That Hideous Strength* attempts far more than the previous two novels.

That Hideous Strength is both myth and story. Lewis continues the myth of Maleldil and His conflict with the bent Oyarsa, but also tells an entire new story--that of Mark and Jane Studdock, their troubled marriage, their encounter with the N.I.C.E. and St. Anne's, and the successful revival of their relationship. Lewis resurrects the half-pagan, half-Christian mythical magician Merlin and uses him as an instrument in Maleldil's victory. And finally, Lewis also adds most of his argument from *The Abolition of Man* about man and the *Tao*. The breadth of Lewis' endeavor does much to explain why the final volume of the trilogy is longer than the first two volumes combined.

Critics are sharply divided concerning whether or not the final novel works: "The fundamental question is whether Lewis tried to pack too much into [*That Hideous Strength*] and whether the final chapter loses strength and cogency because of this."[130] To be sure, Lewis brandished his mythological weapon widely in the final volume. And this causes more problems than simply ending the novel too quickly; it clouds the myth that Lewis lucidly constructs in the first and second novels. Why does Maleldil have to resurrect a

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[130]Walsh, 118.

pagan sorcerer to defeat the Devil? Were Merlin to have been found by the N.I.C.E., would the Devil have triumphed? Whereas Ransom's evolution into a Christian clearly occurs because of his interaction with Maleldil, Jane's conversion does not directly take place because she aware of Maleldil at all. St. Anne provides comfort and succor when she needs it and because she witnesses the *Christian Behaviour* of *Mere Christianity*. And Mark's conversion occurs because he accepts Lewis' argument contained in *Abolition*, not because of the myth detailed in *Out of the Silent Planet*. In the preface to *That Hideous Strength*, Lewis confesses that the themes of the novel are compiled from previous books and lectures. But much of the plot is, too.

Unlike *Screwtape*, where Lewis assumes a metaphysical world for his epistolary exchange between the senior and junior devil, the volumes of the *Space Trilogy* increasingly attempt to justify that framework as well. Why does Lewis interject his theories regarding a woman's role within a Christian marriage? And why does he weigh those personal interjections with the authority of Maleldil? Certainly these polemics endear Lewis to members of his audience who agree, but they quickly cost him the sympathies of other members who do not. Were they an integral aspect of his fiction, then the tradeoff would be one that Lewis would have to address. But his theology is not. Explaining that Mars and Venus actually embody the spiritual and sexual characteristics that the pagans attributed to them casts a myth through which the reader may glimpse a fragment of revelation. Demanding that married couples not use contraceptives develops no such sympathies, and such injunctions threaten to unravel the myth as a whole.

The writings of this period are divided. All of them stem from Lewis' response to varying intellectual questions: what is the role of the Devil? what are the consequences of discarding Natural Law? what is science's objective in interplanetary travel? Aside from Lewis' intellectual experience, none of these questions relate to his personal encounters, and thus Lewis inevitably is subject to applying often his clear and lucid mind to problems that he has never experienced. As an atheist, Lewis disdained what he perceived to be Christianity's immaturity. Now a believer, Lewis still sometimes defends the faith as though it actually were elementary. This is not to undermine the significance of Lewis'

contributions to both Christian apologetics and literature, but to suggest that they fall short of what Lewis would accomplish following the Anscombe debate.

A Face Of His Own

Had C.S. Lewis written a book about human and divine love before his conversion, the book's title might have been a more modest, *The Two Loves*--addressing Need-Love and Gift-Love. Written as late as the Anscombe encounter in early 1948, the book would have encompassed no more than three loves: affection, friendship, and charity. Only following his relationship and marriage to Joy Davidman could Lewis have addressed *eros* in the manner that he does in *The Four Loves* (1960). But prior to the Anscombe debate, C.S. Lewis would not, in any case, have written the type of apologetics that *Loves* undertakes. *The Four Loves* is unlike any book Lewis had previously written. Whereas *Mere Christianity* and *Screwtape* attempt to undermine naturalist and other secular assumptions that grip modern sensibilities, *The Four Loves* undertakes no debunking of any particular viewpoint or assumption at all. Rather, it describes how love at four levels--and their accompanying emotions: hate, jealousy, pride--function in the human soul. This very subject material demonstrates the nature of Lewis' metamorphosis following the Anscombe encounter. Whereas in the previous decade Lewis viewed reason, properly exercised, as necessarily demonstrating the existence of God as defined by traditional Christianity, in the 1950s reason becomes less and less important, while myth and imagination become more so. Furthermore, as Lewis executes *Mere Christianity* and *The Problem of Pain* with precise detachment and objectivity, much of his work of the 1950s--*Surprised by Joy*, *Letters to*

Malcolm, and *The Four Loves*--reflect this increased exercise of subjectivity. Lewis acknowledges the relevance of his own experiences, where a decade earlier he did not. He reveals in his writing that though personal experience may not enjoy the full weight of calculated reason, it nevertheless constitutes a stirring testament to the Faith. But this realization has its most profound effect, not upon Lewis' apologetics, but on his fiction.

Accompanying *The Four Loves* is *Till We Have Faces*, Lewis' last and finest fiction. For the convenience of the reader, I will rehearse the classical plot upon which it is based: In the original Cupid and Psyche myth (recorded by the Latin author Apuleius two centuries after Christ)[131], Psyche is the youngest and most beautiful of three sisters. She is so beautiful that people worship her at the expense of the goddess Venus. Venus seeks revenge by ordering her son, Cupid, to induce an affection in Psyche for the ugliest of men. But upon seeing Psyche, Cupid falls in love with her, and instead of obeying his mothers's behest, hides Psyche in a beautiful palace where he loves her by night but prohibits her from seeing his face. Though largely happy, Psyche misses her sisters and begs Cupid to allow her to see them, and Cupid reluctantly agrees. The sisters outwardly rejoice at their sister's fortune, though they are envious of her riches. They plot to destroy her happiness, and convince Psyche that her husband is actually a monstrous serpent. The sisters persuade the gullible Psyche to conceal a lamp and a knife in her bedroom, so that she can view the creature after it has fallen asleep and then kill it.

But when Psyche sees the sleeping god, she is filled with love. A drop of hot oil falls from the lamp and wakes Cupid. He rebukes her and vanishes. Cupid then arranges for the death of her sisters, while leaving Psyche destitute and wandering. She once attempts to kill herself, but Pan prevents it and instructs her never to try it again. Later in Psyche's wanderings, Venus discovers and seizes her, instead of killing her, sets her impossible tasks. She is to divide seeds into separate heaps, wherein she is assisted by friendly ants. Venus orders her to gather the wool of a man-killing sheep. This she accomplishes by gathering the wool from bushes that the sheep have rubbed against. Next, she is sent to get a bowl full of water from the river Styx--a task which can be completed only by climbing impossible mountains. An eagle befriends Psyche, taking the bowl to the river and

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[131]Peter J. Schakel, *Reason and Imagination in C.S. Lewis: a study of* Till We Have Faces (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1984) 2.

returning it full. Her last task requires that from the lower world she retrieve a box containing the beauty of Persephone, Queen of the Dead. A voice warns Psyche that she will be tempted by people worthy of her help on the journey, but that, nevertheless, she is to stop for no reason. And under no circumstances is she to open the box. She succeeds, but at the last curiosity overwhelms her and she opens the box. She loses consciousness. Cupid now returns to Psyche and forgives her. Jupiter arranges their marriage and metamorphoses Psyche into a goddess. And Venus is reconciled at last to Psyche.[132]

This traditional version of the Cupid and Psyche myth had bothered Lewis for decades. Lewis saw that Apuleius himself misses the real significance of the myth. Primarily, Lewis observed that the sense of divine mystery, absolutely essential to mythical imagination, was absent: "For Lewis this failure was epitomized by the fact that the sisters could see the palace of the god. From his first reading of the story he thought that could not have been the way it was."[133] Secondly, Lewis addresses the motivation of the sisters' jealousy. Must it be that simple jealousy caused the sisters to successfully deny their sister, Psyche, her riches and comfort? If so, why did Psyche allow her spiteful sisters to hoodwink her? Simple naiveté? Finally, must the sisters suffer physical death at the hands of the gods, or could they be redeemed through suffering and penitence? These questions, which Lewis addresses in detail in *Till We Have Faces*, are far deeper literary and theological ones than those addressed in the works of the previous decade. They are questions that cannot be answered with razor sharp logic and honed rhetoric alone; they require imagination and faith--the perfect media for the myth itself.

Much as the Space Trilogy illustrates the philosophical argument of *The Abolition of Man*, *Till We Have Faces* offers a psychological characterization of *The Four Loves*. The first of the four loves that Lewis describes is Affection, what the Greeks called *storge*.[134] Affection is the most primitive of all loves, the most animal like. Lewis does not intend to slight Affection by this characterization, but rather to demonstrate that as the most humble of all loves-- It gives itself no airs."[135] It is the love of familiarity, and, consequently, one

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[132]C.S. Lewis, *Till We Have Faces* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanich, 1957) 311-3.
[133]Schakel, 5-6.
[134]C.S. Lewis, *The Four Loves* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanich, 1960) 53.
[135]*The Four Loves*, 56.

that easily combines with the other loves. For example, the mode of love known as Friendship is distinct, as Lewis later shows, from Affection, but the two often co-exist. Likewise, Lewis admits that he can think of few more unfortunate experiences than to encounter *eros* without Affection. But the real significance of Affection is that it draws people together who would otherwise ignore one another. To grow fond of "old-so-and-so" simply because he is there suggests that one is overcoming personal idiosyncrasies and learning to appreciate intelligence or goodness for their own sake, rather than because they match one's tastes and preferences.[136] One chooses his friends and lovers, the saying goes, but he does not choose his affections. Of all the loves, writes Lewis, Affection most demonstrates a capacity to enjoy human excellence.

Affection is a combination of Need-Love and Gift-Love, and each presents its own dangers. As for Need-Love, Affection is often considered to be "built-in" by nature. Fathers assume the love of their children, sometimes without wondering whether or not they did anything to achieve that love. Though nature does provide an inclination for Affection in man, "nature may work against us."[137] The same forces that make Affection possible can also create a peculiar distaste. Hence the father who assumes his son's love, but does nothing to earn it, may find his son possesses a "wearisome loathing" for his father. The ungrateful neighbor may find that people refer to him with an odious endearment: "at his old tricks," "in his own way," "the same old thing."[138] The goal of Gift-Love, as Lewis describes it, is to give so that the recipient might no longer need the gift at all. And the Gift-Love aspect of Affection poses its own threats. Lewis illustrates this side of Affection by describing a family member who continually does for other family members what they do not want done for them. The woman who "lives for her family" in this instance is not working for her "own abdication."[139] Gift-Love potentially operates all the more ruthlessly because it sees itself as functioning "unselfishly."[140]

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[136]*The Four Loves*, 59.
[137]*The Four Loves*, 64.
[138]*The Four Loves*, 64.
[139]*The Four Loves*, 76.
[140]*The Four Loves*, 77.

"I suppose no one now believes that jealousy is especially connected with erotic love."[141] Change is a threat to Affection, just as it is to any of the other loves. But change may threaten Affection even more because it stems largely from man's desire for continuity. When one of two people who have shared the same experiences finds something new--science, art, religion--and the other cannot share it, he is left behind. And the one left behind will become jealous of whatever separates them. The microscope will be hidden, the classical radio station turned off, and the faith will be belittled. The reaction is not unlike the response one would expect to a robbery: "*It* (whatever 'it' is) has stolen him." Furthermore, sometimes a "double jealousy" occurs. In addition to debunking, the one left behind questions whether or not the new art, science, or religion can be true. And if so, then why should *he* be the one to find or see it? Why not me?[142] Gift-Love has its own jealousies, namely the fear that the giver should no longer be needed. The goal of the parent is that his children will no longer need him; the professor should teach until his pupil can outthink him. Here lies the real danger of Affection, if it is not practiced properly: it will turn on itself. Love carries in it the seeds of hatred.[143] Exploring the nature and function of Affection within his characters is one of the means Lewis employs to address one of the primary difficulties within the traditional Cupid and Psyche myth: why did the sisters act to destroy Psyche's happiness? Lewis begins by illustrating this varying nature of Affection.

Till We Have Faces, unlike the original myth, is set in a fictional state, Glome. Glome is a pagan nation that rests on the fringes of Hellenic influence. Consistent with Western culture's traditional viewpoint that Greek and Roman culture constitute the civilizing influence on its history, the king of Glome envies the cultural achievements of the Greeks. Thus, he purchases a slave, nicknamed "the Fox," to educate the sons he anticipates having, but until they are born, the Fox instead tutors the king's two daughters: Redival and Orual.

Orual narrates *Till We Have Faces*. As the opening sentences detail, Orual presents the novel as her indictment against the gods for the cruelty with which they allegedly

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[141]*The Four Loves*, 70.
[142]*The Four Loves*, 74.
[143]*The Four Loves*, 83.

treated her--namely that they failed to fully reveal the nature of their existence to her. The novel is supposedly written in Greek, for Greeks--that is, rationalists, people who, like the Fox, think of the gods (if at all) in terms of reason and benevolence rather than sacrifice and fear.[144] The Fox's philosophy not necessarily describes any one Greek theory of over two thousand years ago, but rather what the cumulative effect of Hellenic culture is on the modern mind today. His philosophy, however, does often closely resemble that of the Greek stoics. And one of the Fox's most consistent targets is Glome's religion, the worship of Ungit. If God or religion exists at all, the Fox maintains, it does so purely as a rational, objective spirit. Fox dismisses Ungit as merely a crude model of the Greek god Aphrodite. But unlike the Greek god, Ungit is a bloody god who occasionally requires human sacrifice and who covets the devotion of her subjects. She is, furthermore, a mysterious god. Her priest keeps her temple dark, and he allows the smell from sacrifices to remain in the room. Ungit keeps a group of temple prostitutes to serve her, and brides must offer her presents. Ungit is, in short, a personal god--jealous as well as just. According to the Fox, Ungit and Aphrodite are both "only lies of poets....Not in accordance with nature."[145] The Fox accepts only what he can directly experience. He remains cynical regarding the existence of any supernatural phenomenon, and is quick to "explain away" any superstition the people of Glome posses. Though the Fox is a Hellenic citizen, he could comfortably function in Britain in the twentieth century, much as Lewis' preconversion philosophy demonstrates.[146]

The first of Orual's complaints against the gods surrounds her own physical appearance. Orual, by her own admission, is physically ugly. Some critics question whether or not Orual's ugliness is real or merely perceived, but because the initial physical ugliness the reader encounters represents the spiritual ugliness that he later discovers, Orual's self-

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[144]Schakel, 21.

[145]*Till We Have Faces*, 8.

[146]In contrasting the religion of Ungit to that of Aphrodite, Lewis extends the Psyche myth to consider whether the Greeks and Romans were in all aspects more advanced than the Nordic, pagan cultures. For decades Lewis and his counterpart, J.R.R. Tolkien, maintained that they were not. The Greek and Roman religions lacked the "bloody" mysticism of the Nordic and other pagan rites. Furthermore, Oxford of Lewis' day emphasized the Classics and their cool stoicism while largely disvaluing much of Britain's own Nordic heritage. The prevalence of popular misconceptions about the so called Dark Ages, in part, led Lewis to write The Discarded Image--an examination of medieval philosophy. Lewis' criticism of the Fox could be applied to any number of his colleagues at Cambridge and Oxford.

described appearance must be accepted as accurate. This ugliness, however, is not shared by other members of the family: both her older sister, Redival, and her younger sister, Psyche, possess differing levels of attractiveness. The contrast between the sisters Redival and Orual is revealing in the opening passages of the novel.

Orual begins her story with the death of her mother. The mourning ritual dictates that the daughters of the diseased are shaven as a symbol of grieving. No one in the court pities Orual's loss of hair, though some do comment regarding how unfortunate cutting Redival's locks is. But Orual exacts her revenge against her older sister by largely excluding her from their interaction with the Fox. When their father remarries and Psyche is born, the exclusion becomes more complete as Orual and the Fox raise Psyche, entirely ignoring Redival.

The Fox, Orual and Psyche form the important threesome in the novel's opening chapters. The interaction among them enables Lewis to demonstrate the nature of Affection and its interaction with the other loves. As the elder and wiser sister, Orual considers Psyche her responsibility. Orual's relationship to Psyche embodies Gift-Love Affection. But Orual's relationship is also Need-Love, as she especially needs the Affection that Psyche returns--her father ignores her and her appearance is ugly. Almost all of Orual's love focuses on her younger half-sister: "I wanted to be a wife so that I could have been her real mother. I wanted to be a boy so that she could be in love with me. I wanted her to be my full sister instead of my half sister. I wanted her to be a slave so that I could set her free and make her rich."[147] Orual is not alone. Psyche's beauty is so luminous that when famine strikes, Glome's subjects worship her. She displaces Ungit as the object of the people's worship. The famine and disease consequently worsens, and--for the time being--the people of Glome worship Psyche all the more desperately. Outside the palace they demand that she walk among the people and heal them. But the famine does not end, the people retitle Psyche the Accursed, and the King searches for a means to appease Ungit. The priest tells the King that Ungit requires the sacrifice of the Accursed, Psyche. And the King submits.

Ungit's demand for Psyche's sacrifice and her father's acquiescence marks the central turning point for Orual, who has hitherto assented in obedience to the gods. Orual

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[147]*Till We Have Faces*, 23.

cannot accept the loss of her sister, even though it will restore the fertility of her father's kingdom. Here begins Lewis' exploration of jealousy. Primarily, Orual blames the gods for the sacrifice. "They're tearing us apart," she tells her sister on the night before the sacrifice.[148] During what Orual and Psyche believe will be their final conversation, Orual steadfastly attempts to comfort her sister, but ironically finds that it is instead rather Psyche who succors her. Orual has difficulty accepting anything from her sister as she maintains that it is she who is to give: "As [Psyche] spoke I felt," Orual observes, "amid all my love a bitterness. Though the things she was saying gave her (that was plain enough) courage and comfort, I grudged her that courage and comfort. It was as if someone or something else had come between us."[149] Something had, and the nature of that something and why it necessarily did come between them illustrates one of the distinctions that Lewis makes between Friendship and Affection in *The Four Loves*.

What is that nature of that which has "come in between" the sisters? Should the reader attribute divinity to Psyche? In his critical writings on the subject, Lewis makes it explicitly clear that he does not intend for Psyche to be considered some form of Christ-substitute. In a letter to Clyde Kilby, Lewis describes Psyche as an instance of the *anima naturaliter Christiana*, the naturally Christian soul. The letter continues that we must not say that she is a symbol of Christ, but rather that Psyche is like Christ just as every good man or woman is like Christ.[150] But surely Psyche is more than merely the good Christian neighbor down the street. Psyche's beauty and her goodness attract large numbers of peasantry to her. Also, Ungit demands that the sacrifice, the bride of her son, must be perfect--no thief or traitor will substitute. Only Psyche, the Accursed, is considered perfect. As a daughter of the King, she possessed the gods' blood. Finally, there is Psyche's attraction to the mountains upon which she is to be sacrificed. Years earlier, in the company of both Orual and the Fox, Psyche looks a the Gray Mountains and declares that her husband will build her a palace in them. The prophecy proves accurate. And it is the prophecy that divides the two sisters. Orual can accept the beauty and purity of her sister.

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[148]*Till We Have Faces*, 71.

[149]*Till We Have Faces*, 75.

[150]Evan K. Gibson, C.S. *Lewis, Spinner of Tales: a guide to his fiction* (Grand Rapids: Christian College Consortium, 1980) 241.

While the crowds worship Psyche, Orual takes pride in her sister's attributes. What she cannot accept is that the gods exist and that they wish to taker her sister away. Her Friendship and Affection, in other words, require possession.

Lewis opens his chapter on Friendship with the observation that the importance of Friendship in contemporary society has significantly diminished. It has diminished so much that many do not consider Friendship love at all. Lewis attributes this displacement to Friendship's being the least natural of all loves: "We can live and breed without Friendship."[151] And because of its decline, Friendship is probably the least understood of all loves. Lewis thus distinguishes Friendship from *eros*. First, Friendship does not typically discuss itself: "Lovers are always talking to one another about their love; friends hardly about their Friendship."[152] Secondly, *eros* exists between two people only; Friendship best experienced requires more. A group of friends only fully experience one another when all members are present as each member of the group reveals a distinct aspect of each other's personality. Whereas lovers typically seek to isolate themselves, friends usually seek to increase their numbers--at least when Friendship functions properly.

As Friendship can be a school of virtue, so too can it be a school of vice.[153] First, Friendship can serve to reinforce incorrect ideas among its members, just as really it can present a stronghold against heresy. Second, its occasional indifference to outside opinion can devolve into wholesale deafness. Friendship's sense of corporate superiority may not always be tolerant; it may be "militant and embittered."[154]

The primary significance of Friendship for the Christian grows out of its seemingly random nature. So many friendships result from odd coincidental meetings. Had so-and-so chosen a different university or not attended the same class, then any number of friendships never would have occurred: "But for a Christian, there are, strictly speaking, no chances."[155] In many respects Friendship is the most heavenly of all loves as it most closely

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[151]*The Four Loves*, 88.
[152]*The Four Loves*, 91.
[153]*The Four Loves*, 115.
[154]*The Four Loves*, 120.
[155]*The Four Loves*, 126.

anticipates man's shared experience of Divinity in heaven. It is God's instrument of revealing the beauties of His creation.[156]

Once again, rather than answering a particular philosophical or theological difficulty, Lewis characterizes and describes Friendship as he has experienced it within his life. Lewis relies on logic to be sure, but he primarily relies on experience. He justifies the significance of Friendship not only for the reader, but for himself and his friends. This type of personal reflection and analysis is all but unique to *The Four Loves* among Lewis' theological works. And this reflection is not all evident within the Space Trilogy. Characters in those novels discover God through their experiences and their reason, not through the nature of their relationships.

Orual, however, does not yet appreciate any Divine revelation within her triumvirate friendship. Following Psyche's sacrifice, Orual pits herself against the gods. And demonstrating the potential dark side of Friendship, the Fox contributes to her "case against the gods" by attempting to persuade her that Ungit does not exist. Orual desperately wants to believe that the gods do not exist, but she cannot. The sacrifice is successful--at least the drought, famine, and pestilence end, and Glome again returns to prosperity. This sign, however, provides no peace for Orual. The sacrifice is not Psyche's alone. Orual has lost her sister and her best friend. According to Lewis' model for friendship, Orual has lost those aspects of her character and of the Fox's that only Psyche can reveal. The sacrifice seemingly irretrievably took significant aspects of Orual away from herself as well. Orual laments her own loss, not her sister's.

Orual persuades a favorite servant of the King, Bardia, to accompany her to the site of Psyche's sacrifice so that she can give her sister a proper burial. When the pair arrive at the tree to which Psyche was attached, they find no sign of her. Orual continues down the other side of the mountain, into the Valley of the Gods and finds Psyche alive and well on the other side of a stream. Her sister assists Orual across the river; Psyche rejoices in their reunion.

Here Lewis again significantly alters the nature of Apuleius' myth. Whereas in the original myth, the sisters briefly are reunited with Psyche only through Psyche's direct

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[156]*The Four Loves*, 126.

intervention with Cupid, Orual, at the very least, believes she is responsible for the sisters' meeting. The nature of the meeting is also different. Orual sees only Psyche and the valley in which she lives. She sees nothing of the palace and wealth that Psyche describes while the two sisters are talking. Her sister's apparent delusion causes Orual to view Psyche's account of the sacrifice with skepticism. Other than the obvious fact that Psyche is alive, her story is incredible. Lewis tells a myth within a myth. Lewis subtitled *Till We Have Faces, a myth a retold.* Not only does Lewis restructure the Cupid and Psyche myth, he retells it within the myth itself. The reader must consider the myth from different vantage points. And the reader, like Orual, may either accept or reject Psyche's account of the sacrifice. A "Greek" reader necessarily will reject the account and immediately begin to reconstruct a "logical" explanation for the occurrence. Orual, herself now intellectually divided between her pagan heritage and her Hellenic sympathies, considers her sister's account from both points of view.

Psyche recounts the sacrifice to Orual. The morning of the Great Offering, the priest dresses Psyche in an elaborate costume. She is drugged with wine, and consequently her fears are numbed. She is bound to a great tree and abandoned on the mountain, Psyche recalls. Her fear is not that the Shadowbrute, Ungit's son, exists and will kill her, but that he does not exist and that she will die from starvation and exposure. A storm develops and the wind stirs all around her. Psyche then describes the arrival of the west-wind, not as a phenomenon of nature, but as a god. Being in the presence of a god reminds Psyche of her mortality, and she experiences inadequacy and shame. Orual objects, "But how could you help that?" Psyche replies, "Don't you think the things people are most ashamed of are the things they can't help?" Orual is reminded or her own ugliness and says nothing.[157]

Lewis prepares the reader for what next happens to Psyche. Perhaps humanity cannot help its inadequacy to face the gods; the inadequacy, nevertheless, exists. The west-wind frees Psyche and delivers her to the palace of the Shadowbrute, residence of her husband to be. Following the marriage, the Shadowbrute returns every night to Psyche, but he forbids her to see him. This bidding Psyche accepts without question. She understands it. But Orual neither understands nor accepts it. She does not yet grasp that Psyche is

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[157]*Till We Have Faces*, 111.

incapable of seeing her husband face to face, much as she cannot accept that she herself is incapable of even seeing the palace or any of the riches that Psyche enjoys. As a bride, Psyche possesses a happiness and fulfillment that Orual cannot comprehend: "especially...you, Sister,' Psyche reminds Orual, "who are a virgin."[158]

During the discussion, Orual considers whether her sister suffers from delusion, but acknowledges to herself that Psyche enjoys a confidence she has never experienced. Several times during their interchange, Orual realizes that she believes her sister, even though she desperately wants not to. Orual cannot tolerate that someone, or something, else could command Psyche's love--but she nevertheless believes that someone else does. Orual has witnessed it. Orual resolves to return Psyche to Glome with her by force. But Psyche is stronger than her sister and will not go. Psyche asks her sister to return, and promises to entreat the Shadowbrute to enable her sister to see the palace where she lives. Orual, then, resigns; she crosses the river and camps with Bardia. That night the Shadowbrute briefly grants his wife's behest. Orual awakes in the middle of the night; she glimpses the palace that Psyche describes, but then wills not to believe. While kneeling, she penitently reflects on the error of her doubting Psyche. She plots returning to her sister to beg her's and the Shadowbrute's forgiveness. But when she rises to cross the stream, the palace vanishes. Having seen the palace necessarily has no effect upon Orual as she already *knew* that the Shadowbrute exists; she had previously choosen *not* to believe. "Physical" proof is irrelevant.

This section of the narrative acutely reveals the evolution of Lewis' thought. Throughout the 1930s and 1940s, Lewis pursued reason as the necessary instrument of conversion. Essay after essay, radio talk after radio talk, book after book, Lewis refined and honed his philosophical argument for the existence of God and the validity of traditional Christianity, as though he could achieve the elusive, irrefutable case for Christianity. *Till We Have Faces* not only acknowledges the impossibility of that pursuit, but the futility of it. Those who do not believe, possess the will not to believe. They deny, rationalize, and "explain away" the mystery that they in fact encounter. Reason and proof, alone, cannot surmount pure spiritual obstinacy. The strengths of myth and imagination constitute a

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[158]*Till We Have Faces*, 162.

means to persuade the mind and heart where logic and "hard evidence" will not. But those inclined to reject God, will do so regardless. Thus the Fox, the preconversion Lewis, deconstructs Psyche's account of the Great Offering.

When Orual recounts to the Fox what she has seen, he quickly explains the entire occurrence away. Of course her sister is deluded, the Fox tells Orual. And furthermore, he is convinced, she is the victim of some mountain dweller who freed her from the tree. The Fox explains that some man is holding her prisoner and has brainwashed her into believing that he is some god who has supplied her with a palace while he takes advantage of her. Self-righteously, the Fox becomes enraged with he appreciates the consequence of his own conjecture. Never mind that the Fox's explanation for Psyche's condition requires at least as many presuppositions as does accepting Psyche's, or that the Fox relies upon faith of a different sort in describing her condition, the Fox's glib and convenient explanation suffices as a rationale for the Stoic repudiation of supernatural intervention.

Orual does not really accept this solution, but it nevertheless justifies her jealously and enables her to suppress what she truly believes--Psyche's explanation. Now using the Fox's explanation, Orual plots her sister's rescue. She relies upon Psyche's love for her to bring her home. Orual returns to the mountain where she again encounters her sister. Again Orual and Psyche discuss the palace and the Shadowbrute, and again Psyche refuses to leave her husband: "Dear Maia, I am a wife now. It's no longer you that I must obey."[159] Orual now resorts to the dark potential of Friendship and Affection. Orual relies upon Psyche's love for her to coerce Psyche to implement her plan: Orual produces a dagger, stabs through her forearm, and threatens to kill herself if Psyche does not agree to her plan. Orual tells Psyche that she must conceal a lamp under her bed. After the Shadowbrute falls asleep, she must produce the lamp, view her lover, and kill him. Orual retreats to her encampment across the river and watches as Psyche follows the plan. Orual sees the lamp in the distance and watches her sister view the Shadowbrute. She hears a tremendous roar, followed by a torrential downpour. The violence of the storm forces Orual to retreat from the river she is trying to cross. Orual prepares for the death that she knows is imminent. She hears a voice cry that Psyche shall henceforth be exiled--that she will endure hard

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[159]*Till We Have Faces*, 127.

labor and trial. Finally she hears the proclamation, "You also shall be Psyche."[160] Orual returns to Glome without her sister, resigned to living the remainder of her life in scorn and hatred of the gods who have stolen her sister.

"You also shall be Psyche," Orual hears. This is the fundamental departure from the original Apuleius' account. Instead of killing the jealous sister, the gods require her to suffer along with Psyche. Orual will endure trials as will her sister, and in becoming Psyche, she will share Psyche's burden. Lewis maintained that Apuleius totally ignored the potential redemptive aspect of the Cupid and Psyche myth. The nature of two loves, *eros* and *agape*, explain how Orual's ugliness, both spiritual and physical, enable her to prepare a face to present before the gods.

Eros is the third human love that Lewis addresses in *Faces*, and the one love about which Lewis could only speculate until his relationship with Joy Davidman. As discussed above, this is one love that Orual cannot share with Psyche; it is also the one love that Orual cannot experience at all. As a result, Orual again blames the gods for another consequence of her physical and spiritual ugliness. In discussing *eros* in *The Four Loves*, Lewis distinguishes between love and lust. Lust is simply the animal-like need for sexual gratification, and though physical desire often accompanies *eros*, they are not the same impulse. Lewis describes the difference; a lover wishes to focus on the companion; sex is secondary: "if you asked him what he wanted, the true reply would often be, 'To go on thinking of her.'"[161] But without *eros*, sexual desire is a gratification of oneself, and once the lust has been satisfied, the instrument of sexual pleasure is discarded. Lewis equates the used love with a pack of empty cigarettes: the pack is empty; it is thrown away. But coupled with *eros*, sexual desire speaks of the Beloved. If one analyzes the gratification, then one returns to the self--to the central nervous system. It is little different, Lewis suggests, than reducing the power of a mountain to impulses within our retina.[162] The principal difficulty with *eros* is that just as one "falls in" love, one "falls out" as well. *Eros* requires the other

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[160]*Till We Have Faces*, 174.
[161]*The Four Loves*, 133.
[162]*The Four Loves*, 136-7.

loves to sustain it. And like the other two previously described loves, the proper function of *eros* requires the assistance and sustenance of Divine love, *agape*.

Whereas the three human loves--Affection, Friendship, and *eros*--constitute a psychological study of the human soul, Divine love, redemption and preparing a face for God is the primary subject of *Till We Have Faces*. If the dark potential of Affection and Friendship successfully destroy Psyche's happiness and garner Orual the scorn of the gods, only a higher, divine love can redeem them both. The Apuleius myth, it can be argued, addresses the human loves at a rudimentary level--*i.e.*, jealousy, revenge and forgiveness--but despite Venus' punishment of Psyche, no real process of redemption. In the original myth, the gods are described as pitying Psyche; they are not described as redeeming her. Only within the Christian tradition is Lewis capable of fully exploiting the myth's potential.

Orual returns to Glome determined to scorn and hate the gods for the remainder of her life. Orual now hates the gods not only for taking Psyche away from her, but also because she believes that they have refused to reveal themselves to her.[163] Shortly following her second return from the mountain, Orual's father dies and she becomes the Queen of Glome. The position of sovereign and its responsibilities enable Orual to isolate herself in her work, in effect, to cease being Orual and instead only to be the Queen.[164] Now the Queen, her relationships with Bardia and the Fox reveal the negative capacity of human love when divorced from Divine love. Her first action as sovereign is to free the Fox. But to her surprise, the Fox, exuberant in his restored freedom, immediately announces his plans to return to his homeland. Orual, who cannot bear the loss of the Fox, shares none of his joy and becomes sullen that her friend would leave. She epitomizes the giver Lewis describes in The Four Loves who cannot bear that she might no longer be needed. The Fox, seeing the bereavement of his friend, devises some excuse for staying and forgoes his homeland. Orual cannot yet recognize her own ugliness. Bardia, her loyal and most trusted military advisor, further evokes her possessiveness. In her attempt to isolate herself in her work, in the attempt to kill Orual, the Queen of Glome keeps Bardia in the

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[163]Schakel, 12-3.
[164]Schakel, 58.

palace, doing whatever work she can create to keep him with her. Orual's relationship with Bardia is a close to *eros* as she ever comes. But having eliminated Orual, her life has no meaning apart from her work.[165]

Though Orual may embody both physical and spiritual ugliness, the Queen of Glome is a good and successful monarch. Her people enjoy prosperity, and she defends her kingdom from foreign invaders. Orual wears a veil to hide her physical ugliness, and this veil contributes to the mystery that her people find in her. No one knows what the veil conceals. But what starts as a means of covering her physical ugliness, becomes, symbolically, a way to hide her inner ugliness and alter her self-identity. The veil almost functions as a burial shroud for her old and despised self.[166]

Near the end of her life she and the Fox visit neighboring countries. Orual discovers a temple dedicated to Psyche. She enters the temple and inquires of the priest the details of this faith. Here again, Lewis retells the Apuleius myth. According to the priest, Psyche is the youngest and most beautiful of three sisters. The gods, jealous of her beauty, arranges Psyche's sacrifice to a goddesses' son. Instead of sacrificing Psyche, the son hides her from his mother in a palace he constructs for her where he visits her only at night and forbids her from looking at his face. Orual recognizes the story, but then the priest surprises her.

"And so," he says, "when her two sisters had seen the beautiful palace and been feasted and given gifts, they--"[167] At first, Orual cannot accept the trick that she believes the gods have played on her. She maintains to the confused priest, that it is a lie--that she never saw the palace. But the priest continues. The sisters wanted to destroy Psyche because they were jealous. From within the confines of her selfish love for Psyche, Orual rejects this characterization of her. It is all plot against her, she maintains. She concludes her case against the gods by declaring that her complaint is unanswerable. Thus ends Part I.

With the end of Part I, Lewis has recast the myth in his own terms. The reader fully appreciates the significance of Orual's ugliness, and her motivation for causing Psyche to disobey. Depending on the reader's perspective, "Greek" or Christian, he may also sense

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[165]Schakel, 60.
[166]Schakel, 56.
[167]*Till We Have Faces*, 243.

that not only Psyche but Orual is preparing to face the gods. What Lewis does in Part II is to return to the myth within a myth that he used in the climax of Part I. Instead, however, of explaining how Faith requires both reason and imagination, Lewis explores how only imagination and the myth can reveal how the most fallen of men develops a face to present before God.

Part II of the novel begins only a few weeks after Part I completes. It opens with the death of Bardia, her loyal Knight and advisor. Reflecting on the nature of Friendship not to dwell on itself, her response to news of his death is, "It seemed to me that all would be bearable if, once only, I could have gone to him and whispered in his ear, 'Bardia, I loved you.'"[168] Following the funeral, Orual visits Bardia's wife, who reluctantly reveals to the Queen the extent of her selfishness. As Bardia's wife, she tells the Queen, she experienced only s wife, she tells the Queen, she experienced only *eros* and Affection for her husband. Friendship her husband reserved for his Queen. Could Orual be responsible for working Bardia to death? But the Queen is angrier still to believe that anyone could possibly be jealous of her. She snaps at Bardia's wife. "Look, you fool!" she points to her face. "Are you jealous of this?"[169] The revelation of Bardia's wife forces Orual to examine her soul. This self-examination initiates her reconciliation with the gods. The Queen begins to question to what extent she has used people to help her prepare a face for God and not helped others to prepare their own face. This conflict is resolved in the climax of the novel and of Lewis' literary accomplishments: Orual's dream sequences.

In the first dream, her father takes her into the Pillar Room of the palace and has her dig into the floor. The two of them jump into the pit, and they find themselves in a smaller, similar room. They dig into the floor and another pit opens between them. This is the third Pillar Room. The King asks "Who is Ungit?" Orual looks around the room, filled with "living mirrors" and concludes that she herself is Ungit. She is the blood-thirsty, ugly god who devours her subjects; she is the jealous god who demands the affection of her subjects. Orual leaves the Pillar Room, but for the first time, she removes the veil from her

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[168]*Till We Have Faces, 258.*
[169]*Till We Have Faces, 262.*

face. She is barefaced and now realizes that her physical ugliness mirrored her ugliness of soul. No shortcoming of the gods prevented their more fully revealing themselves to her; Orual's spiritual ugliness--her lack of face--prevented her from seeing the gods. Because she cannot face the gods, and because she is unwilling to accept the consequences of her ugliness, she walks out among her people, wondering if they will worship her as Ungit. Orual walks to a river and considers drowning herself until a voice calls: "Do not do it." She asks, "Lord, who are you?" The voice replies, "Die before you die. There is no chance after."[170] Only, in other words, by dying to self before she dies physically can she escape the spiritual death that her ugliness of soul deserves.[171] She returns home from the river and the first dream ends.

The second dream follows a few days later. In this dream, Lewis reveals how Orual has borne some of Psyche's punishment, and in so doing, assisted Psyche with her trials.[172] Orual finds herself surrounded by a flock of sheep. She decides to achieve beauty of soul by collecting the sheep's wool. Orual concludes that the gods are answering her argument against her. Much as no man will many a woman with an ugly face, neither will the gods tolerate an ugly soul. She must prepare a face for the gods. But as she tries to collect some of the sheep's wool, they charge her. At first she despairs that she will ever achieve beauty and attempts to retreat into her old, dying self. Because the sheep do not kill her, however, she concludes that they are not trampling her in anger, but in joy. And after the sheep leave, Orual observes that by attracting the sheep, another woman (Psyche?) is able to collect the wool from branches of surrounding bushes.[173] Orual is frustrated that her best efforts to obtain beauty of soul fail. What she does not realize is that through substitution, she is bearing Psyche's trials herself. She consoles herself with the reflection that whatever ugliness she may be responsible for, she at least loved Psyche truly. She then finds herself enduring the next of Psyche's tests: she walks on burning sands for one hundred years in search of the River of Death from which she is to draw a bowl full of water.

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[170]*Till We Have Faces*, 279.
[171]Schakel, 75.
[172]Schakel, 70.
[173]Schakel, 76.

Overhead, an eagle approaches. When the eagle asks what it is that she is carrying, she replies that it is a bowl, but looking at the object she discovers that it is a book--her complaint against the gods. The eagle takes her to court to present her case. She is presented at the court and stripped of all her clothes. All of her pretenses, love of Psyche in particular, are taken away.[174] The reader is reminded of Psyche's fears of inadequacy when presented to the Shadowbrute. Before the Judge, she not only presents, but judges her own case. Looking at the book she does not recognize it as what she had written, and as she resolves not to read it; she finds herself reading it, nonetheless. In her confession, Orual reveals that she knew the gods were real and that she resented their *stealing* Psyche's love from her. Orual admits that she would have preferred that the gods kill Psyche. Outwardly, Orual blamed Ungit for devouring her sister. But now she is Ungit; she is the jealous god who ate her own.[175] The gods interrupt Orual and ask if her complaint is answered. She answers that it is. She answered it herself.

In only one book written prior to the Anscombe encounter does Lewis contemplate whether man's will, and not God's, causes man's own damnation: *The Great Divorce*. There Lewis retells Dante's *Divine Comedy*, and he concludes that fallen man so resents God's grace that, while on earth, sin and the Devil become ingrained and, thus, man becomes incapable of receiving it in the Hereafter. Even if transported from Hell to Heaven, most souls will choose to return to Hell, as they cannot (in Blake's terms) withstand the pure light of God. *Till We Have Faces* considers the consequences of sin even more deeply. Sin, rather than an instrument of damnation, can serve as a medium of salvation if by self-examination sin leads one to recognize the ugliness of his soul. Orual's selfish devouring of Bardia, the Fox, and Psyche also constitute her trial. That which has separated her from the gods is also that which redeems her. The redemption is painful, to be sure, and it need not necessarily succeed, but her salvation is nevertheless present in the roots of her damnation.

Now having presented her case against the gods, Orual must wait to hear whether the gods will in turn bring judgment against her. While she waits, she is joined by the Fox.

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[174]Schakel, 77.
[175]Schakel, 78.

Orual begs his forgiveness for selfishly keeping him from his homeland, and the Fox asks her forgiveness for the skepticism towards the gods in his teaching. Most telling in their interchange is that the Fox rejoices most that he has committed a sin for which to be forgiven. In Heaven, union with God stems from separation, or sin. The Fox shows Orual in a series of living pictures, how Psyche completed the four tasks given her. Psyche gathers the wool from the branches. An eagle brings her the bowl full of the water from the River of Death. She, with the help of the ants, separates the seeds. Orual now recognizes that she has been assisting her sister throughout all her trials. It was Orual "who bore the anguish. But [Psyche] achieved the tasks."[176]

Unless bound by Divine love, human loves will unravel; they will turn on and devour themselves. Likewise, reason--unless surrendered to myth and imagination--cannot fully divulge Divine truth. Reason is a tool, and like any other tool, must be discarded when it has achieved its purpose. Human loves, too, must be sacrificed when they have served their function--*i.e.*, implanted a sense and need for Divine love. Orual was unwilling to surrender her love for Psyche, and thus the love turned on itself and those around her. Orual and her perverted love constituted the distractions that Psyche endured while completing her tasks:

> "Did we really do those things to her?" [Orual] asked.
> "Yes. All here's true."
> "And we said we loved her."
> "And we did. She had no more dangerous enemies than us. And...this will happen more and more...mother and wife and child and friend...in league to keep a soul from being united with Divine Nature."[177]

As Ransom discovers in the Space Trilogy, only by surrendering self to God's will can man achieve perfect freedom: "Oh Psyche, oh goddess," Orual tells her sister. "Never again will I call you mine; but all there is of me shall be yours."[178] Psyche touches Orual and then the Queen realizes by her burning touch that Psyche has in fact become a goddess. Psyche leads her sister before the gods. They do not condemn her; rather they unmake her. A voice calls, "You also are Psyche."[179] Her transformation is complete.

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[176]Schakel, 82; *Till We Have Faces*, 301.
[177]*Till We Have Faces*, 304.
[178]*Till We Have Faces*, 305.
[179]*Till We Have Faces*, 308.

Lewis' literary transformation is, too, complete. The Oxford youth who intended to fashion a philosophic New Look simply because he was "against government" surrendered not only his will but also his reason to the depths of Christian understanding. Lewis, in different periods of his life, embodied several characters of *Till We Have Faces*. In his undergraduate days and afterwards, he was the Fox--cunning and insistent on the validity of what could be seen and observed, what could be rationally and objectively proven. But Lewis was also Orual: a man who never experienced *eros* until late in his life, and a man who achieved his fullest potential as a writer, thinker, and Christian by way of his shortcomings, of which the Anscombe encounters and his atheist undergraduate days constitute only the two most obvious examples.

C.S. Lewis ranks among a small handful of the most influential Christian thinkers of the twentieth century. His enduring popularity is due to his Christian apologetic "short takes"--*The Screwtape Letters*, *The Problem of Pain*, *Mere Christianity*, and *The Abolition of Man*. His most significant contributions, however, were his last--*Till We Have Faces* especially. Lewis acknowledged that "an apologist who is focusing on arguments for the existence of God cannot at the same time be tasting the reality of God:"

> I have found that nothing is more dangerous to one's own faith than the work of an apologist. No doctrine of that Faith seems to me so spectral, so unreal as one that I have just successfully defended in a public debate. For a moment, you see, it has seemed to rest on oneself: as a result, when you go away from that debate, it seems no stronger than that weak pillar. That is why we apologists take our lives in our own hands and can be saved only by falling back continually from the web of our own arguments, as from intellectual counters, into the Reality--from Christian apologetics into Christ Himself.[180]

In *Till We Have Faces*, Lewis successfully transcends reason through imagination and myth, witnessing and exposing a fragment of the true light by his own lies of poets breathed through silver.

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[180]Schakel, 150; C.S. Lewis, "Christian Apologetics," *God in the Docks: essays on theology and ethics*, ed. Walter Hooper (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1970), 103.

APPENDIX A

A Reply to Mr C. S. Lewis's Argument[181] that "Naturalism" is Self-Refuting[182]

I want to discuss your argument that what you call "naturalism" is self-refuting because it is inconsistent with a belief in the validity of reason. With this argument you propose to destroy 'naturalism' and hence remove the determinist objection to miracles.

For my purpose it is not necessary to go into your description of 'naturalism' or your claim that one must either believe it or be a 'Super-naturalist'--i.e. believe in God. For you say that 'naturalism' includes the idea that human thought can be fully explained as the product of natural (i.e. non-rational) causes, and it is this idea which you maintain is self-contradictory because it impugns the validity of reason, and therefore necessarily of any thinking by which it itself is reached.

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[181] A short version of Lewis' argument can be found in his paper "Religion without Dogma" on pp. 87-8 of this issue of the *Socratic Digest* which is also commented on by Prof. H.H. Price in his reply to that paper, section 4, p. 98. The argument in full is in "Miracles", Chapter III of the first edition.

[182] I wish to acknowledge that I was very greatly helped in writing this paper by discussing it with Mr Y. Smythies: naturally, he is not responsible for its faults.

What I shall discuss, therefore, is this argument: the hypothesis that human thought can be fully explained as the product of non-rational causes is inconsistent with a belief in the validity of reason.

You state it as a rule that "no thought is valid if it can be fully explained as the result of irrational causes", and you give examples to show that we all universally apply this rule: we do not attend to the belief of a man with delirium tremens that the house is full of rats and snakes; we are less impressed by a man's gloomy views if we know he is suffering from a bad liver attack; the disruptive power of Marxism and Freudianism against traditional beliefs has lain in their claim to expose irrational causes for them.

About the first two examples I should like to say that it is only because we already know that men with delirium tremens see things that are not there, and that men with liver attacks take gloomier views of the situation than they would normally take, or than is reasonable, that we dismiss a man's belief by ascribing it to delirium tremens or to a liver attack when we know he has one of these complaints.

What sorts of thing would one normally call "irrational causes" for human thoughts? If one is asked this, one immediately thinks of such things as passion, self-interest, wishing only to see the agreeable or disagreeable, obstinate and prejudicial adherence to the views of a party or school with which one is connected, and so on. Suppose one mentions such things, and then someone says: "There are also tumours on the brain, tuberculosis, jaundice, arthritis and similar things", one would rightly object that these do not belong in the same list as the others. They are not "irrational causes", they are conditions which we know to go with irrational beliefs or attitudes with sufficient regularity for us to call them their causes.

You speak of "irrational causes", and by that you seem to mean "any cause that is not something rational". "Something rational" you explain by example: "such as [you say] argument from observed facts". You contrast the following sentences: (1) "He thinks that dog dangerous because he has often seen it muzzled and he has noticed that messengers always try to avoid going to that house;" (2) "He thinks that dog dangerous because it is black and ever since he was bitten by a black dog in childhood he has always been afraid of black dogs."

> Both sentences [you say] explain *why* the man thinks as he does. But the one explanation substantiates the value of his thought and the other discredits it. The difference is that in the first instance the man's belief is caused by something rational (by argument from observed facts) while in the other it is caused by something irrational (association of ideas).

I am going to argue that your whole thesis is only specious because of the ambiguity of the words "why", "because" and "explanation". That ambiguity is illustrated here. The case of the man who is frightened by black dogs is unclear. Imagine the two following possibilities: (1) He says "That dog's dangerous." He is asked, "How do you know?" He says, "It's black: I was once bitten by a black dog"" To this we reply: "That's not a good ground. We know enough about dogs to know that." (2) He says: "That dog's dangerous." He is asked, "How do you know?" But to this he gives no answer; he shakes his head, trembles and says, "It's dangerous." Then either he, or someone else, says that he behaves like this because he was once bitten by a black dog. Then we can know that we need not pay attention to his belief; it already appeared groundless, from the fact that he could give no grounds; but now we are satisfied it is groundless because we understand it as the expression of a fear produced by circumstances which we know to give no good grounds for fear. It is here quite natural to speak of "irrational causes."

Similarly it is true that the Marxists and the Freudians claim to expose irrational causes for various traditional beliefs. The Freudian says that my belief in God is a projection of my infantile attitude towards my father. The Marxist says that many of my beliefs and reasonings arise from my considering things important that I should not consider important if I were not bourgeois, and neglecting other things which I should not neglect if I were not bourgeois; and that the whole point and significance of certain kinds of thinking is simply--by the very pretence of detachment that they make--to draw people away from relating their thoughts to the class-struggle.

But by your equation of "irrational cause" with "non-rational cause", you are led to imagine that if the naturalist hypothesis (that all human behaviour, including thought, could be accounted for by scientific causal laws) were true, human thought would all have been explained away as invalid; that if human beings could be shown to act according to such laws, their case would have been shown to be universally like the particular case of the man who is actuated by "irrational causes" and whose beliefs are groundless. This seems to

me to be a mistake founded on various confusions you commit about the concepts of "reason", "cause" and "explanation"; and I hope by showing what the confusions are, to show that it *is* a mistake.

First, I want to examine your remark that we must believe in the validity of reason, and that we can see when a hypothesis is inconsistent with a belief in the validity of reason, and refute it by the consideration that it is inconsistent with that belief.

You can talk about the validity of a *piece* of reasoning, and sometimes about the validity of a *kind of* reasoning; but if you say you believe in the validity of reasoning itself, what do you mean? Isn't this question about the validity of reasoning a question about the validity of *valid* reasoning? Suppose that you are asked to explain "valid", how will you do it? The most obvious way would be to show examples of valid and invalid reasoning, to make the objections which, in the examples of invalid reasoning, show that the conclusion does not follow from the premisses; in the cases of valid reasoning, to elucidate the form of the argument: if the piece of reasoning under consideration is elliptical, to add the statements which are required to enforce the conclusion. Whether you would adopt this method or some other (though I do not know of any other), I suppose you think it *somehow* possible to explain to yourself or someone else what "valid" means, what the distinction between "valid" and "invalid" is? Now if the naturalistic hypothesis (that human thought is the product of a chain of natural causes) is proposed to you, you say: "But if this were so, it would destroy the distinction between valid and invalid reasoning." But how? Would it imply that you could no longer give the explanation you gave, point to and explain the examples, say which arguments proposed to you are valid and which invalid in just the same way as you did before the naturalistic hypothesis was supposed? "But," you may say, "though I should of course know which arguments to *call* valid, or which I should have *called* valid, I should not now feel any confidence that they were *really* valid." But what do you mean by "really valid"? What meaning of "valid" has been taken away from you by the naturalistic hypothesis? What *can you* mean by "valid" beyond what would be indicated by the explanation you would give for distinguishing between valid and invalid, and what in the naturalistic hypothesis prevents that explanation from being given and from meaning what it does?

You say that on this hypothesis there would be no difference between the conclusions of the finest scientific reasoning and the thoughts a man has because a bit of bone is pressing on his brain. In one way, this is true.

Suppose that the kind of account which the "naturalist" imagines, were actually given in the two cases. We should have two accounts of processes in the human organism. "Valid", "true", "false" would not come into either of the accounts. That shows, you say, that the conclusions of the scientist would be just as irrational as those of the other man. But that does not follow at all. Whether his conclusions are rational or irrational is settled by considering the chain of reasoning that he gives and whether his conclusions follow from it. When we are giving a causal account of this thought, e.g. an account of the physiological processes which issue in the utterance of his reasoning, we are not considering his utterances from the point of view of evidence, reasoning, valid argument, truth, at all; we are considering them merely as events. Just *because* that is how we are considering them, our description has in itself no bearing on the question of "valid", "invalid", "rational", "irrational", and so on.

Given the scientific explanation of human thought and action which the naturalist hypothesis asserts to be possible, we could, if we had the data that the explanation required, predict what any man was going to say, and what conclusions he was going to form. That would not mean that there was no sense in calling what he did say true or false, rational or irrational.

> But [you say] this imagined explanation would show that what we said was not caused by reason but by non-rational processes. We may give arguments, but, as everything we say will be fully explained by non-rational causes, (1) the idea that conclusions are derived from premisses will be an illusion (hence I say that the explanation impugns the validity of reason) and (2) the idea that we think what we do because of reasoning, i.e. because we have reasoned, *will* be an illusion. Every thought will have been produced by a non-rational chain of causes and therefore not by such rational causes as observation and argument. So no thought will be worth anything.

I want to say that such an argument as this is based on a confusion between the concepts of cause and reason, which arises because of the ambiguity of such expressions as "because" and "explanation".

(1) If I said: "You think this conclusion follows from these premisses, but in fact the assertion of it is a physical event with physical causes just like any other physical event,"

would it not be clear that I was imagining the ground of a conclusion to be a kind of cause of it? Otherwise there would be no incompatibility: "this conclusion follows from these premisses" would be in no way contradicted by "the assertion of this conclusion is a physical event with physical causes like any other physical event". Even though all human activity, including the production of opinions and arguments, were explained naturalistically, that could have no bearing on 'the validity of reason'--i.e. on the question whether a piece of reasoning were valid or not. Here I am speaking of 'reason' in a non-psychological sense, in which 'a reason' is what proves a conclusion. If we have before us a piece of writing which argues for an opinion. we can discuss the question: "Is this good reasoning?" without concerning ourselves with the circumstances of its production at all.

(2) But you may say that you do not wish to call a reason--in this non-psychological sense--the cause of its conclusion; you may agree that the naturalistic hypothesis could not impugn 'the validity of reason' in this sense, but say that it makes reason an ideal which we cannot attain; that it does impugn the validity of all *actual* human reasonings. For granted that the logical derivation of a conclusion from its premisses could not be affected by any hypothesis, yet if *our reasonings* are to be valid *we* must derive the conclusions from the premisses, in actual fact.[183] This introduces a psychological application of the concept of "reason" which is used if we ask the following questions about, e.g., a piece of writing that we are examining: "Granted that this is a piece of reasoning, did the man who wrote it actually *reason?* Was he really persuaded by this reasoning or by something else? Or--another possibility--did he really understand and mean this argument? Or did he perhaps write it down quite mechanically? Here is a statement (which is even in fact correct), but did the man who wrote it himself assert it because of the good grounds which do exist for asserting it?" If we can answer "yes" to such questions as these we call the opinions in question "rational" or the man "rational" for holding them. And if we know that a man's opinions are not rational in this sense, we regard it as accidental if in fact they are worth attending to or true; we shall not expect to find them worth attending to, and if it is a question of information to be accepted on his word, we shall not accept it.

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[183] I think this is the argument of Mr Lewis' reply to me.

You argue that the naturalist hypothesis about human thinking implies that no human thinking is rational in this sense. For if a man produces what purports to be the conclusion of an argument, in order that what he says should be rational he must say it *because* he has reasoned; but the naturalist hypothesis says that he says it *because* of certain natural causes; and if these causes *fully* explain his utterance, if the chain of causes is complete, there is no room for the operation of such a cause as the man's own reasoning. So someone might say: "If I claimed to be able to kill a man by an act of will, and he died, but his death was fully explained by the fact that someone who had sworn to murder him shot him through the heart, that would demolish my claim to have killed him by an act of will."

Your idea appears to be that '*the* explanation' is everywhere the same one definite requirement: as if there were a fixed place for '*the* explanation' so that we can know, when it is filled, that, if it has been correctly filled, the whole subject of 'explaining this fact' has been closed. We understand the requirement antecedently to any knowledge of the kind of investigation that might be made, and, once we see that the requirement has been satisfied, no further question can be asked.

But the concept of 'explanation' has very varied applications, and the expression "full explanation" has reference only to the type of explanation that is in question. I may, for example, ask a man to explain to me his reasons for thinking something. He gives me an explanation. I may say: "That's not a full explanation; there must be more to it than that--for it explains, let us say, why you take a naturalistic view but not why your view is a physical or physiological naturalism; the arguments you have given are consistent with a psychological naturalism: tell me why you reject that." Now if I ask for this sort of investigation I am not making a *causal* enquiry at all: I am asking for grounds, not causes; and you can only have imagined that it was appropriate to speak of "causes" because the word "because" is used. Giving one's reasons for thinking something is like giving one's motives for doing something. You might ask me: "Why did you half-turn towards the door?" and I explain that I thought I saw a friend coming in, and then realized it was someone else. This may be the explanation although I did not at the time *say* to myself "Hello ! There's so-and-so; I'll go and speak to him; oh no, it's someone else." So when I give the explanation it is not by way of observing two events and the causal relation between them.

The naturalistic hypothesis is that causal laws could be discovered which could be successfully applied to all human behaviour, including thought. If such laws were discovered they would not show that a man's reasons were not his reasons; for a man who is explaining his reasons is not giving a causal account at all. "Causes", in the scientific sense in which this word is used when we speak of causal laws, is to be explained in terms of observed regularities: but the declaration of one's reasons or motives is not founded on observation of regularities. 'Reasons' and 'motives' are what is *elicited* from someone whom we ask to explain himself. Of course we may doubt that a man has told, or even made clear to himself, his real reasons and motives; but what we are asking for if we say so is a more searching consideration, not an investigation into such a question as: "Is this really an instance of the causal law which I have applied to it ?"--and that is true even though, as is possible, we doubt him on grounds of empirical generalizations which we have made about people's motives and reasons for the action or opinion in question. Such generalizations are possible, and hence one can imagine a psychological naturalism which believes in the possibility of a complete scientific system of psychological causal laws of human behaviour. It is important to realize that such a notion of psychological causality (which would arise from observing regularities in people's motives and mental processes) should be distinguished from the use of "because" in the *expression* of motives and mental processes.

It appears to me that if a man has reasons, and they are good reasons, and they are genuinely his reasons, for thinking something--then his thought is rational, whatever causal statements we make about him. Even though he give good reasons, however, we may detect in him such passions or such motives of self-interest in saying what he does that we say that it is not really "for these reasons" that he says it, and regard the reasons as a facade that he puts up to obscure his 'real reasons': these 'real reasons' being the kind of thing that I admitted as 'irrational causes'. And we rightly suspect and scrutinize carefully the reasoning that he offers. Or we may think him so dominated by 'irrational causes' that it is not worthwhile to look at his reasoning at all: though the mere fact that he is actuated purely by these motives does not necessarily mean that he will not in fact be able to reason well.

So far I have only talked of a man's reasons in a sense in which: "He thinks so-and-so because of such-and-such a chain of reasoning" is in no way a causal statement. There is

a kind of statement that I have not yet considered, which is in some sense causal. Suppose I ask someone why he believes something, and he begins to produce reasons, I may say: "Sorry, I didn't mean that--I know what reasons there are for believing as you do; what I meant to ask *was* what in actual fact, as a matter of history, led you to this opinion, what *caused you* to adopt it?" This is a quite intelligible question which anyone would know how to answer. It seems to me that you have not distinguished it, as it ought to be distinguished, from the question "What are your reasons?"-- and that it is in virtue of his answer to the latter that a man or his opinions should be called rational, whatever his answer to the former. However, as your argument stands, it says that human thought is discredited unless his answer to the former question ("What, as a matter of history, led you to this belief?") states the *occurrence* of reasoning; and you also argue that on the naturalist hypothesis an answer which does state the occurrence of reasoning cannot be true, because the naturalist hypothesis is that nonrational causes produce his opinions. I should also deny this part of your argument. For though it is natural to use the word "cause" here, the logic of "cause" as used here is different from its logic as used when we speak of causal laws. Suppose someone asks me for such a historical account of the mental processes which actually issued in my belief, and I give it to him. And suppose he then asks: "What reason have you for calling the thing that you mention in answer to this question the *causes* of your belief?" At first I would imagine that he was accusing me of self-deception, saying, "Look into it more thoroughly and you *will* realize that you have not given a truthful account." But suppose he makes it clear that he is not suggesting anything of this kind; he does not doubt my account of my mental processes at all; but, given that they occurred just as I have related them, and that afterwards I held the opinion which I say resulted from them, he asks why I say that it did result from them, that they did produce it? Would this not be an extraordinarily odd question? It makes it seem as if one made here a causal statement analogous to scientific causal statement, which would be justified by--roughly--appeal to observed regularities; but here, though it is natural, given the kind of question "What actually led you to this?" to speak of a "cause", yet the sense of "cause" as used here is not to be explained by reference to observed regularities. That is sufficient to show that this is one more case of the great ambiguity of "explanation", "why", "because," and "cause" itself. And therefore the

discovery of scientific causal laws could not demonstrate the falsity of such assertions as "I thought so-and-so as a *result* of such-and-such consideration".

I do not think that there is sufficiently good reason for maintaining the "naturalist" hypothesis about human behaviour and thought. But someone who does maintain it cannot be refuted as you try to refute him, by saying that it is inconsistent to maintain it and to believe that human reasoning is valid and that human reasoning sometimes produces human opinion.

A causal explanation of a man's thought only reflects on its validity as an indication, if we know that opinions caused in that way are always or usually unreasonable.

Discussion

In his reply Mr C. S. Lewis agreed that the words "cause" and "ground" were far from synonymous but said that the recognition of a ground could be the cause of assent, and that assent was only rational when such was its cause. He denied that such words as "recognition" and "perception" could be properly used of a mental act among whose causes the thing perceived or recognized was not one.

Miss Anscombe said that Mr Lewis had misunderstood her and thus the first part of the discussion was confined to the two speakers who attempted to clarify their positions and their differences. Miss Anscombe said that Mr Lewis was still not distinguishing between "having reasons" and "having reasoned" in the causal sense. Mr Lewis understood the speaker to be making a terachotomy thus: (1) logical reasons; (2) having reasons (*i.e.* psychological); (3) historical causes; (4) scientific causes or observed regularities. The main point in his reply was that an observed regularity was only the symptom of a cause, and not the cause itself, and in reply to an interruption by the Secretary he referred to his notion of cause as "magical". An open discussion followed, in which some members tried to show Miss Anscombe that there was a connection between ground and cause, while others contended against the President that the test for the validity of reason could never in any event be such a thing as the state of the blood stream. The President finally admitted that the word "valid" was an unfortunate one. From the discussion in general it appeared that

Mr Lewis would have to turn his argument into a rigorous analytic one, if his notion of "validity" as the effect of causes were to stand the test of all the questions put to him.

Note by C. S. Lewis

I admit that *valid* was a bad word for what I meant; *veridical* (or *verific* or *veriferous*) would have been better. I also admit that the cause and effect relation between events and the ground and consequent relation between propositions are distinct. Since English uses the word *because* of both, let us here use *Because CE* for the cause and effect relation ("This doll always falls on its feet *because CE* its feet are weighted") and *Because* CC for the ground and consequent relation ("A equals C *because* GC they both equal B"). But the sharper this distinction becomes the more my difficulty increases. If an argument is to be verific the conclusion must be related to the premisses as consequent to ground, *i.e.* the conclusion is there *because* GC certain other propositions are true. On the other hand, our thinking the conclusion is an event and must be related to previous events as effect to cause, i.e. this act of thinking must occur *because CE* previous events have occurred. It would seem, therefore, that we never think the conclusion *because* GC it is the consequent of its grounds but only *because CE* certain previous events have happened. If so, it does not seem that the GC sequence makes us more likely to think the true conclusion than not. And this is very much what I meant by the difficulty in Naturalism.

APPENDIX B

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