ROMANTIC RELIGION IN THE WORK OF OWEN BARFIELD, C. S. LEWIS, CHARLES WILLIAMS, AND J. R. R. TOLKIEN

Thesis for the Degree of Ph. D.

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

Robert J. Reilly

1960

This is to certify that the

thesis entitled

Romantic Religion in the Work of Owen Barfield,
C.S. Lewis, Charles Williams, and J.R.R. Tolkien

presented by

Robert J. Reilly

has been accepted towards fulfillment
of the requirements for

Ph. D. degree in English

Major professor
for Bernard Dobbs

Date 11/21/60

O-169

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By

ROBERT J. REILLY

A THESIS

Submitted to the School for Advanced Graduate Studies
of Michigan State University in partial
fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of English

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It is a pleasure to record here my debts to several people who, in one way or another, helped in the making of this thesis. I am, of course, especially indebted to the director of the thesis, Professor Bernard Duffey, whose kindness, patience, and high sense of scholarship did much to give the thesis what value it has.

I am grateful to Professors David Mead, Arnold Williams, and Hazard Adams who, as members of my committee, read the thesis and made helpful comments on it.

To Professors John A. Yunck, Edward J. Wolff, and C. Carroll Hollis I owe thanks beyond my power to express for encouragement, advice, and endless reading and re-reading of the work in its various states of composition.

Finally, my thanks are due to my typist, Mrs. Inez Hare, whose skill and perseverance brought a long task to its conclusion.

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AN ABSTRACT

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Approved Thomas R. Williams
for Bernard Duffey

ABSTRACT

The argument of the thesis is that four contemporary writers fall naturally into an ideological group, and that analysis of much of their work reveals a literary-religious trend which is part of the intellectual history of the twentieth century. The four men--C. S. Lewis and Charles Williams (Anglicans), J. R. R. Tolkien (Roman Catholic), and Owen Barfield (Anthroposophist)--formed a rough group in life until Williams's death in 1945. Much of their work, both critical and creative, is best seen as an attempt to form a construct which may be called "romantic religion." Romantic religion is an attempt to reach religious truths by means and techniques traditionally called romantic, and an attempt to defend and justify these techniques and attitudes of romanticism by holding that they have religious sanction. This construct, which is a conscious revival of older beliefs, constitutes a middle ground between romanticism and formal religion on which the four men may meet, a middle ground which minimizes doctrinal differences and is the point from which the group defends both formal religion and romanticism against what they hold to be the twentieth-century Zeitgeist: cold classicism, naturalistic science, and rationalistic irreligion.

Owen Barfield is the first man dealt with. His work in linguistics, anthropology, and religion is admittedly much influenced by the work of Rudolf Steiner, the founder of the school of Anthroposophy.

But since he is more concerned with the philosophical aspect of Anthroposophy than he is with its more occult beliefs, it is necessary to see his work (and Steiner's) against the background of Kantian epistemology from which it largely stems. In Barfield's Anthroposophy, Coleridge's doctrine of the Creative Imagination and the Coleridge-Kant epistemology are taken up into occult Christianity and made important religious facts as well as means of arriving at the great truths of that Christianity.

Lewis is much indebted to Barfield, as he has often said. His basic idealism as well as certain theories in linguistics and mythology are in great part taken over from Barfield. He is also a disciple of George Macdonald and an imitator of Macdonald's romances. When these two influences are taken into account, his fictional work is seen as an attempt to romanticize Christianity by placing the general outlines of it in far off places and times and by minimizing its doctrinal content. In the doctrinal books, Lewis has turned to the Kant-Coleridge distinction between the functions of the Practical and Speculative Intellects in order, first, to arrive at the necessity of belief in Christian dogma and, second, to defend it against the charge of absurdity.

Williams is the most explicit romantic religionist of the group. At the heart of his work is the notion which he called "romantic theology," which is a conscious attempt to "theologize" romance, especially the experience we call romantic love, in order to show that the romantic

experience is God-sent and a special means of grace. Though many of Williams's explanations of his romantic theology are illustrated from the work of Dante, and are embellished with certain occult trappings, he is best seen as in the tradition of Wordsworth. Like Wordsworth, he sees in the romantic experience a meaning beyond itself, though Wordsworth's interpretations are naturalistic or Platonic and Williams's are explicitly Christian.

Tolkien's contribution to romantic religion is explicit in his critical work on the fairy story and implicit in his adult fairy story trilogy. He defends the romantic doctrine of the creative imagination on the ground that by means of it the writer creates in essentially the same way as the divine creator: the writer of fairy stories, by means of the creative imagination, prescinds from the real world in order to effect in his readers the same state of soul (qualitatively considered) as that of the person who has reached the Christian heaven. The romantic experience that Tolkien is concerned with is the peculiar thrill felt by the reader at the "good turn" in the fairy story; but his view of the religious validity of this experience helps to explain the other claims for the romantic experience made by Lewis and Williams. The romantic experience is qualitatively the same as Christian beatitude.

The four men do not all revive the same elements of romanticism, but they all contribute to the synthesis called romantic religion, the function of which is combative in the areas of both religion and literature.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

My intention in this study is to begin to untwist one of the more interesting strands which go to make up the tapestry of contemporary literature and thought. The disadvantages of such an attempt are obvious. Johnson dealt quite comfortably with Shakespeare because, as he explained, Shakespeare had been dead a hundred years and more, and had thereby achieved something of the status of a classic. No one had anything to gain either by praising him or damning him, and he himself had passed beyond the time when mere contemporaneity could give his work a spurious popularity or a merely current raciness. Of the men whom I deal with, Barfield, Tolkien and Lewis are still alive and at work, and Williams died only in 1945. None of my subjects, then, has achieved classical status; all of them gain, no doubt, by their modernity; and all thus tempt the critic into the vagaries and blind judgments so common in a contemporary's assessment of a contemporary.

And yet such a study as this needs little defense. Scholarship, after all, has to start somewhere. A certain part of scholarship must in the nature of things commit itself to contemporary matters, for scholarship is dedicated to achieving that kind of truth which accumulates by many hands over many years. It is to some degree a cumulative

thing; modern scholars reach as high as they do partly because they stand on the shoulders of Aristotle, Aquinas, and Dante but also because they stand on those of Locke, Dryden, Marx and the army of others who worked in contemporary matters and who were, more or less greatly, wrong. In short, there is a precedent for being rash and being wrong. Most definitive truth evolves slowly, as in the Hegelian triad, and it follows that some must go first into the fray although (or because) they will likely be carried home on their shields. The scholar who turns his attention to current literature and thought is cannon fodder in the war for scholarly truth, and knows it. But, so far as he is a noble soldier at least, he knows that someone must make a first breach in a given wall, even though later and better men decide that it was really the wrong wall, or that it should have been buttressed rather than breached. At the least it is not a fort of folly that he storms.

In this study, then, I mean to examine certain literary and religious aspects of the work of four contemporary writers in an attempt to write a page in--or a footnote to--the intellectual history of our time. The group of men I deal with is an interesting, even arresting, cross-section of modern religious beliefs. It consists of two Anglicans (Lewis and Williams), a Roman Catholic (Tolkien), and an Anthroposophist (Barfield). Lewis and Williams are well enough known to need no introduction. Tolkien's reputation, however, is more limited. He is known among literary scholars for his work in linguistics and Middle English literature, work that includes important criticism of Beowulf and (with

E. V. Gordon) an edition of Sir Gawain and the Green Knight. He is known beyond scholarly circles for his "fairy story for adults," the trilogy entitled The Lord of the Rings. Owen Barfield, a London barrister by profession, is one of those twentieth-century rarities, a scholar not formally connected with any university. His work is difficult to categorize; he is primarily a linguist, but his interests take him into comparative religion, anthropology, and technical philosophy. He is the least known of the group, though his Poetic Diction has long been known to a rather small body of critics and scholars concerned with poetic theory.

A literary historian looking for obvious affinities among the four men might well focus on Oxford, for in one way or another all have been connected with each other there as students or teachers. It was there that Lewis and Barfield met as students shortly after the first World War; it was there that Tolkien and Lewis met when both taught there; and it was there that Williams came and occasionally lectured when his employer, Oxford University Press, moved there from London during the Battle of Britain. During those last years of the recent world war, the four men and some few others "argued, drank, and talked together,"[1] until Williams's sudden death. Two years later, in 1947, Oxford University Press published a collection of essays honoring Williams, the collection including pieces by the remaining three of the group and a few others.

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[1]Lewis, Preface to Essays Presented to Charles Williams (London, 1947), p. xi.

Thus there is no little biographical justification for thinking of the four men as a group. But that there is also some meeting of minds among the group is clear from their published references to each other. Lewis dedicated his Allegory of Love to Barfield, and Barfield his Poetic Diction to Lewis. Lewis cited Tolkien's trilogy approvingly while it was still in manuscript, and reviewed it enthusiastically on publication. Williams has cited Lewis's work, and Barfield has said that he has only minor objections to Williams's theology, and so on. My reason for grouping the four men together is based on this meeting of minds, and in fact the reason for the grouping is in effect the argument of this study. I mean to show that the work of the four men is best understood when seen as a fairly homogeneous body of both critical and creative literature written for a specific purpose and from a specific point of view. I mean to describe a phenomenon of contemporary literature and religion to which all of the four men in some way contribute. This phenomenon I will call (for want of a better term) romantic religion.

I do not mean by the term only that the four men are romantic writers who have an interest of some sort in religion; such a description would include perhaps every romantic writer one could name. I mean that their work, on analysis, reveals itself as a deliberate and conscious attempt to revive certain well known doctrines and attitudes of romanticism and to justify these doctrines and attitudes by showing that they have not merely literary but religious validity. Further, the end result of their work, when looked at synthetically, is a literary and

religious construct whose purpose is to defend romance by showing it to be religious, and then to defend religion by traditionally romantic means. It is this construct that I mean by the term romantic religion. Thus the romanticism of the four men is both scholarly and combative. It is necessarily scholarly and even antiquarian because of the mere lapse of time between the early nineteenth-century romantics and themselves. It is necessarily combative because their purpose is not literary criticism as such: it is revival and utilization of romantic doctrine for present ideological and religious disputation. The romanticism that they advocate is what Williams called "corrected romanticism," romantic doctrine lifted into the realm of formal doctrinal religion and justified as being a part of that religion.

Specifically, I mean to show that both Barfield and Tolkien revive Coleridge's doctrine of the creative imagination and defend its validity by showing that it leads (for Barfield) to truths about God and man and the relationship between them, and (for Tolkien) to a state of soul essentially the same as that of the soul which has achieved the Christian heaven. I mean to show that Lewis has revived the Kant-Coleridge distinction between the Practical and Speculative Intellect in order to apprehend and then defend the truths of the Christian faith. And I mean to show that Lewis, Williams and Tolkien in various ways affirm that the experiences and emotions which we generally call romantic--<u>sehnsucht</u>, sexual love, <u>faerie</u>--are divinely originated for a religious end.

This revival of specific romantic elements will, I believe, be clear enough in spite of the confusion surrounding the term romanticism, though a writer who deals not only with romanticism but religion as well may fairly be accused of recklessness. In either matter, much less both, a writer may well feel, with Sir Thomas Browne, that he is "not a proper Champion for Truth, nor fit to take up the Gauntlet in the cause of Verity." I do not intend to darken counsel on the subject of romanticism by attempting to define or even describe it. It may be, as Lovejoy thought, that we must attempt a "discrimination of romanticisms" before the word loses reference completely by being taken to mean nearly everything. A defining word that can be applied equally to Satan, Plato, St. Paul and Kant is no doubt very close to meaning nothing.[2] The view of those who would do away with the word altogether is understandable. But it is clear, as Lovejoy admits, that the word is not going to be legislated out of usage, and so we must make do with it. In the following pages I use the word dozens of times, but I believe that I have in no case used it in such a way as to cause confusion. Generally I have used it in the obvious senses in which it is applied to Coleridge and Wordsworth. Thus I call Kant's "transcendental" philosophy romantic; I call Coleridge's doctrine of the Primary and Secondary Imagination romantic; I call Wordsworth's view of Nature romantic. Beyond these rather doctrinaire uses, I occasionally use the word of attitudes and phenomena which most of us would, I

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[2]See A. O. Lovejoy, "On the Discrimination of Romanticisms," Essays in the History of Ideas (New York, 1960), pp. 228-35.

believe, agree to call romantic. Thus I speak of "romantic longing" in connection with Lewis, partly because he himself uses the phrase, partly because the desire for what is over the hills and far away (either in this world or some other) seems to me at least intelligible as it is explained by transcendental philosophy. I call imagined worlds romantic when it is clear that they are imagined not only for satirical or didactic purposes but also for their own sake, because I believe that in such imaginings some sort of agreement with Coleridge's notion of the Secondary Imagination is implicit. In no case do I equate the word romantic with unreason or irrationality, although I believe that in the romantic attitudes of Coleridge, Wordsworth, and the four men to be discussed, reason in the sense of discursive or inferential thinking often plays a secondary part to something else--intuition, desire, religious faith.

Finally, one last word on the subject of romanticism: I do not intend to show (in fact, I could not) that the four men I am concerned with are identical in their romanticism. It would be untrue to characterize them as all equally indebted to Coleridge, or as all equally sure that Wordsworth's belief in Nature is valid. In far better organized religions than the romantic one I mean to describe, some latitude is permissible. By calling the Oxford group romantics, I do not mean to suggest that they are carbon copies of one original, any more than Wordsworth is a carbon copy of Coleridge.

As I have said, my intention is to describe by analysis a phenomenon

which I have called romantic religion. It follows that this study is not a "source" study or an "influence" study, much less a "history of ideas" study. It is the examination of a contemporary phenomenon. There is no doubt that much influence exists among the members of the group; often, as in the case of Lewis's debt to Barfield, it is admitted. However, it is not my primary intention to point out these influences except in a casual way or when a part of one man's thought may be clarified by reference to another's. It is true, of course, that no intellectual group exists isolated in time, that every group and every man has roots; even Descartes used the techniques of his predecessors in order to start out fresh. Nor did the Oxford romantics leap full-blown into being. I will note briefly here some obvious sources and suggest others more conjectural.

Of Barfield I will say nothing now, because the nature of his work has forced me to discuss in the next chapter the philosophical background of the movement called Anthroposophy. Williams presents a problem to the critic concerned with the sources of a man's thought. Lewis has mentioned Williams's vast reading:[3] he was acquainted with the church fathers and with much of the literature of Western mysticism; he had a broad, if unsystematic, knowledge of technical philosophy, ancient, medieval, and modern; he seems to have read all the important critical and creative literature from the time of the English romantics

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[3]Lewis, Preface to Essays Presented, p. xi.

on. There is also the possible influence of certain occult studies, which certainly produced at least the trappings of most of his fiction. And in his publishing position at Amen House he would have had easy access to at least cursory knowledge of ideas and disciplines beyond enumeration. Anyone acquainted with his work can point out certain writers and bodies of ideas which seem to have been special favorites of his: Wordsworth, Dante, the writings of the pseudo-Dionysius, Malory and the Arthurian legend, Milton. He draws on all these and more, but there is no obvious pattern to his choices. As Lewis said, he will not be pigeon-holed. He certainly admired the work of Evelyn Underhill, whose letters he edited. John Heath-Stubbs has pointed out[4] that Miss Underhill's early novel The Pillar of Dust seems to have served as a model for much of his fiction. More important, perhaps, than her fiction is her work in mysticism and the history of worship. Williams's The Descent of the Dove, a "History of the Holy Spirit in the Church," echoes quite closely Miss Underhill's view of the Church as fundamentally a mystical experience translated, and in part distorted, by the necessary institution and organization in which it is embodied. And her work on mysticism shows a broad and tolerant view of medieval occultists, many of whom she holds to have been on the border of genuine mystical experience. This latter view, I believe, Williams must have found more than palatable. Yet, even granting a certain indebtedness

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[4]Charles Williams (London, 1955), p. 13.

to Miss Underhill, there is more to Williams than that. I have suggested in my discussion of his "romantic theology" that he tried to subsume under the heading of the "romantic experience" many seemingly disparate values drawn from his reading in literature, philosophy and religion. Like Coleridge, he was forever aiming at synthesis. My own belief is that, like Coleridge, he requires a Lowes to follow his attempt.

With Lewis there is, first of all, the obvious influence of George Macdonald. In dozens of places Lewis has praised Macdonald, and has even spoken of himself as a kind of disciple. His debt to Macdonald's Unspoken Sermons, he has said, "is almost as great as one man can owe to another...."[5] In The Great Divorce, the hero, venturing into the after-life, meets Macdonald, as Dante met Virgil; and it is Macdonald who explains to him the nature of heaven and hell. And in the later discussion of Lewis it will be clear that he credits the books of Macdonald with bringing about his reconversion to Christianity. Such clear and present influence, one would think, should be easy to describe. In fact, however, it is almost impossible. If one turns from Lewis's praise of Phantastes, for example, to the book itself (which was published in 1858), one can guess readily enough that Lewis was attracted by the Spenserian quality of the story. The hero moves through fairy landscapes much like those of The Faerie Queene; but there

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[5]Preface to George Macdonald, An Anthology (New York, 1947), p. 18.

is no allegory in Phantastes, and though there is a kind of quest, neither the hero nor the reader is quite certain of its real nature. At the end of the book, the hero thinks that he has heard a voice proclaiming to him a great truth, that a great good is coming to him: "Yet I know that good is coming to me--that good is always coming; though few have at all times the simplicity and the courage to believe it. What we call evil, is the only and best shape, which, for the person and his condition at the time, could be assumed by the best good."[6] Perhaps the best way of describing the book (and Macdonald's other novels) is to say that they are fairy romances, without any special doctrine, but with a vague "feel" of holiness to them. For Lewis they seem to have combined in a special way his early tastes for faerie and a desire to bring these tastes into a moral realm. Later, as we shall see, he could attribute to Macdonald's work the qualities to be found in the great myths--the generalized meaning, what Tolkien calls the "inherent morality," and the impact on the reader that takes place on a non-rational level. In his own fiction, particularly in Till We Have Faces, he is trying to recapture that peculiar blend of fairy romance and generalized religious feeling which he found in Macdonald.

In trying to describe the influence one is driven finally to paraphrasing Lewis's description of it, and to concluding that each man takes something different to the books he reads. I believe the nature of the

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[6]Phantastes (London, 1923), p. 237.

influence is best understood by seeing Macdonald as an early advocate of "romantic religion," which, as I hope to show, exists independently of, and as a correlary to, formal and professed religions of men such as the Oxford romantics. And this is also true of the other man on whom Lewis greatly depends, Chesterton. Like Lewis, Chesterton had high praise for Macdonald; and if this study were primarily concerned with sources and influences, a case might be made for a line of inheritance running from Macdonald to Chesterton to Lewis and Tolkien. All of these men meet on that middle ground between faerie and formal religion which is the subject of this study. But a history of romantic religion is beyond the scope of this study, and perhaps of any study. One could not merely begin with Macdonald, for what books Macdonald read are not beyond all conjecture, and behind Macdonald is the whole English romantic movement.

A final word should be said as to the organization of this study. I have begun with Barfield because many of the romantic notions common to the members of the group exist in their most basic and philosophical form in his work. I have treated Lewis next because a great part of his work is best seen in relation to that of Barfield. I have discussed Williams next and concluded with Tolkien because I believe that much of what Lewis and Williams have to say is brought more clearly into focus by Tolkien's view of the religious implications of the fairy story.

CHAPTER II

OWEN BARFIELD AND ANTHROPOSOPHICAL ROMANTICISM

Perhaps most general readers who know Barfield were first led to read him from Lewis's remarks about him in Surprised By Joy and other books. Lewis, in trying to assess his own intellectual development, places Barfield along with Chesterton and Macdonald as among the most important conscious influences upon him. They studied together at Oxford after World War I, and he notes that Barfield "changed me a good deal more than I him. Much of the thought which he afterwards put into Poetic Diction had already become mine before that important little book appeared. It would be strange if it had not. He was of course not so learned as he has since become; but the genius was already there."[1] And Lewis's Allegory of Love is dedicated to Barfield, the "wisest and best of my unofficial teachers." This is indeed high praise from one of the most respected of modern scholars, and perhaps many readers of Lewis turn to Barfield with some anticipation, even (it may be) with a kind of bookish excitement, at the thought of finding the Real Lewis or the Man Behind Lewis, as a generation ago they might have turned with some eagerness to find the Man Behind Kittredge or the Real Lowes.

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[1]Surprised By Joy (London, 1955), pp. 189-90.

What they find, perhaps to their dismay, is an Anthroposophist. Lewis has recorded his shock and sense of personal loss at Barfield's electing to follow the doctrines of Rudolf Steiner. Lewis, when he first knew Barfield, was a defiant, anti-religious rationalist; and Barfield, as far as Lewis was concerned, had defected from the rationalist camp into a religion which contained "gods, spirits, after-life and pre-existence, initiates, occult knowledge, meditation."[2] Lewis later came to accept Anthroposophy when he discovered that it has a "re-assuring Germanic dullness about it which would soon deter those who were looking for thrills."[3]

Anthroposophy began as a rebellion against the Theosophic movement led by Madame Blavatsky. Steiner broke away from the original movement, objecting to the Eastern and passive bias which Madame Blavatsky insisted upon. Theosophical doctrine is too complex to go into here,[4] but it may perhaps be best described as a mystery religion which preached meditation on the One, secret ways of knowledge to the One, reincarnation, and ultimate return to the One. It had probationers, initiates, and adepts, and at least occasionally sanctioned magical practices. Steiner (who died in 1925) did away with the quasi-Buddhist aspects of the movement in his reformation. Meditation was to be retained, but the meditation was not to be so much a willful losing of the self in the One as a

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[2]Surprised By Joy, p. 195.

[3]Surprised By Joy, p. 195.

[4]See Richard Ellmann, Yeats, The Man and the Masks (New York, 1958), pp. 56-69 for a rough summary of Theosophical beliefs. Yeats was a member of Madame Blavatsky's group from 1887 till 1890; his wife joined a Rudolf Steiner group in 1914.

systematic examination of the human mind, for reasons which will soon be apparent. How far Steiner's movement was originally German in outlook is conjectural. An Anthroposophist writer named Ernst Boldt holds that it was entirely so, but Boldt seems to have existed on the lunatic fringe of the movement, and the beliefs of the school are for him interchangeable with his hopes for a rising Germany following World War I. According to him, when Germany has become sufficiently Anthroposophist, she will fulfill her "World-Mission,"[5] will reveal all that is deep in her soul. "And this true Soul of Germany is nothing less than the living Christ, as is witnessed by the genius of German speech, which uses I. CH. ('Jesus Christus') for the first person...thereby appealing to every German to reveal the immense depths and sublimities of the human soul."[6] Boldt continues in this vein, and from his description of the movement one is inclined to react as Lewis originally did: Anthroposophy seems at the least grotesque. Steiner is "that strong 'One from Above' who, according to a prophecy, is to come 'before 1932' and who shall be 'as a wave of spiritual force' to the German people ...."[7] His philosophy is the same as that of Goethe, an "Objective Idealism,"[8] or "scientific Gnosticism."[9] Steiner is "a true Seer" who

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[5]"Introduction," From Luther to Steiner (New York, 1921), p. xix.

[6]From Luther to Steiner, p. xix.

[7]From Luther to Steiner, p. 119.

[8]From Luther to Steiner, p. 74.

[9]From Luther to Steiner, p. 136.

stands "on the very crest of Time's Breakers as the Tide comes rolling in."[10] And in summation Boldt adds, "The methods of knowledge which are calculated to serve our times were prepared in the fourteenth century, for the twentieth century, by Christian Rosenkreuz, and have been brought to perfection in the present day by the Rosicrucian initiate, Rudolf Steiner, in conjunction with modern Natural Science."[11]

Now the absurdity of Boldt's occultism is patent, even monumental. But one crank does not necessarily make a movement. Though, as we shall see, some of Barfield's beliefs sound strangely like Boldt's fulminations, Barfield is more than Boldt writ large; certainly it is difficult to think of Boldt as the wisest and best of Lewis's unofficial teachers. In view of Barfield's admitted debt to Steiner,[12] it is perhaps wise to turn to Steiner himself and try to ascertain what it is exactly that this modern Gnosticism teaches, so far as it affects Barfield and his beliefs. Barfield indicates that he is greatly indebted to Steiner's book The Philosophy of Spiritual Activity; it is in fact the only one he mentions by title, though Steiner's bibliography is incredibly long. Barfield's mention of the book seems significant, since it is Steiner's major attempt to give the school of Anthroposophy a philosophical basis. The book also bears out Lewis's above remark: it has a re-assuring

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[10] From Luther to Steiner, p. 163.

[11] From Luther to Steiner, p. 166.

[12] See "Preface to the First Edition" in the second edition of Poetic Diction, A Study in Meaning and also "Appendix II" of the same edition. See also Saving the Appearances, pp. 140-41.

Germanic dullness about it.

The merely literary man is often out of his depth in technical philosophy and never moreso than in German philosophy, especially German Romantic philosophy. But that is the background out of which philosophical Anthroposophy comes. Steiner, in an appendix to The Philosophy of Spiritual Activity, notes that Eduard von Hartmann has accused him of "having attempted to combine Hegel's Universalistic Panlogism with Hume's Individualistic Phenomenalism...."[13] But, he says, his book "has nothing whatever to do with the two positions...." (p. 216) Steiner should know, of course; yet von Hartmann seems right, at least as regards Hegel. Steiner refers to his philosophy interchangeably as Monism or Objective Idealism: it is monistic in that (as in Hegel) the basic stuff of which the world consists is held to be thought; it is objectively idealistic in the sense that phenomena have an objective existence (as they do not in the radical idealism of Berkeley); it also differs from Kantian idealism in that it holds that real knowledge about what Kant called the noumena of the world is possible. I will try to sketch out briefly the system and its implications so far as they seem to be relevant to the beliefs of Barfield.

We may begin with what philosophers call the problem of the one and the many: supposing God (or some other infinite being), why us also? This problem turns out to be no problem at all in Steiner's system, and to see how he gets rid of the problem may give an insight into the system

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[13]The Philosophy of Spiritual Activity (London, 1949), Appendix I, p. 216. In the following discussion of this book the page references will be found after the quotations in the text.

as a whole. Now the philosophically naive man turns his attention to the world about him and sees himself as distinct from the other phenomena of the world. He sees himself as thinking and perceiving subject, the other phenomena as objects to be perceived or thought about. In short, the common man is a "naive" realist (in the technical sense). But the common man is not aware of the nature of perception itself; he is not aware that what he supposes he perceives as phenomena are really constructs of his mental and imaginative makeup. In the old phrase, a thing is received according to the condition of the receiver. A sound is heard because the hearing organism is so constituted that the sound waves in the air are translated into the phenomenon that we call sound. That which we perceive is only a part of reality; the other part is added by the mind of the perceiver, through cognition. "The percept ...is not something finished and self-contained, but one side only of the total reality. The other side is the concept. The act of cognition is the synthesis of percept and concept. Only the percept and concept together constitute the whole thing." (p. 67) In other words, mind completes and fills out (as well as gives meaning to) the phenomena of the universe.

Now according to Steiner, it is through the very nature of thinking itself that the problem of the one and the many is solved. One who has studied himself and the nature of his thought perceives that the world of phenomena outside him which he sees as object to his own subjectivity is not that at all. It is a world largely brought into

existence through his own thinking, in fact a world which largely exists only in his own thinking. But the nature of thinking is such that it is misleading to speak of thinking as an individual process. So far as man thinks, he becomes less and less an individual and more and more a part of the world process of thought, the ultimate reality. I have said "so far as man thinks"; it would be more accurate to say "so far as man intuits," for the kind of thinking that Steiner is describing seems to be not what we normally call conceptual thinking but rather inference following on concepts that somehow are infused in us or intuited by us. This kind of thinking Steiner finds historically exemplified in such mystics as Meister Eckhart, Boehme, Angelus Silesius, and also in himself. It is as much an experience as it is an intellectual process. But it is through this kind of thinking that the real nature of the world is revealed: a world in which man is seen not as individual and cut off from the rest of the world but truly one with the rest, a part of the unity which may be loosely described as the world's thought of itself. In a man who can think like this, there appears

> a sun which lights up all reality at once. Something makes its appearance in us which links us with the whole world. No longer are we simply isolated, chance human beings, no longer this or that individual. The entire world reveals itself in us. It unveils to us its own coherence; and it unveils to us how we ourselves as individuals are bound up with it. From out of self-knowledge is born knowledge of the world. And our own limited individuality merges itself spiritually into the great interconnected world-whole, because in us something has come to life that reaches out beyond this individuality, that embraces along with it everything of which this individuality forms a part.[14]

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[14] Mystics of the Renaissance (New York, 1911), pp. 27-28.

In short, the problem of the one and the many is no problem. Mere perception and lower levels of cognition postulate the many, just as they postulate man as subject and phenomena as objects. But intuition (or what Steiner, with Coleridge and Kant, calls Reason) discovers that the world and all in it are One, and that the seeming many are essentially spirit, parts of the World-Soul or Logos.

I have made the system seem more tightly knit and perhaps more Hegelian than it really is. There is in it much that is ambiguous and much that is unexplained. For example, when Boehme or Eckhart or Steiner practice intuition or "spiritual perception," (p. 209) what is it actually that they perceive? Does Steiner, let us say, in a moment of inspiration perceive that, so long as he remains inspired and raised to this mystical level of thought or being, he himself becomes a part of the eternal logos? Or does he perceive, what the ordinary man cannot perceive, that <u>all</u> men are parts of this logos? If the latter, then are they always parts, or only when they practice thought? In short, does he perceive a permanent relation between man and world or a relation that is true for man in general only at certain times and for himself only at certain times? The answer is easy (or relatively so) in Hegelian philosophy: the relation is permanent--this is the true nature of the world. How Steiner would answer the question, I do not know.

I have said there is much in the system that is ambiguous. The ambiguities are important; they are recurrent themes in Steiner's work, and we shall see later that they are some of Barfield's preoccupations.

I have called them ambiguities; but perhaps they are not so much ambiguous as merely the kind of implications that may be drawn from Romantic idealism, implications valid within the system but which nevertheless tease the reader out of thought. It may be only that, as was said of Macaulay, everyone reads Hegel but no one believes him, "everyone" being, for the practical purposes of life, a philosophical realist. In any case, the first of the notions that haunt Steiner's work is the notion of unity. We have already seen the philosophical justification of the notion, the fact that all things are essentially the same, that is, thought or spirit. The notion itself, however, takes on interesting shapes. Sometimes it is the union of man and nature, or more accurately a reunion. "...we meet with the basic and primary opposition first in our own consciousness. It is we, ourselves, who break away from the bosom of Nature and contrast ourselves as 'I' with the 'World.'" (p. 17) But thought, as we have noted, perceives that the distinction between subject and object is a distinction that disappears when thought has revealed the real nature of the world.

> We must find the way back to her [nature] again. A simple reflection may point this way out to us. We have, it is true, torn ourselves away from Nature, but we must none the less have taken with us something of her in our own nature. This quality of Nature in us we must seek out, and then we shall restore our connection with her. Dualism neglects to do this. It considers the human interior as a spiritual entity utterly alien to Nature and attempts somehow to hitch it on to Nature. No wonder that it cannot find the coupling link. We can find Nature outside of us only if we have first learnt to know her within us. What is allied to her within us must be our guide to her. This marks out our path of inquiry. We shall attempt no speculations concerning the interaction of Nature and Spirit. We shall rather probe into the depths of our own being, to find there those elements which we saved in our flight from Nature. (p.17)

By "flight from Nature" Steiner presumably means man's evolution up from, or away from, the lower forms of sentient life, since elsewhere he speaks of Monism as supplemental to the evolution postulated by Darwin and indeed refers to the moral aspect of Monism as "Spiritualized Evolutionism applied to moral life." (p. 160) And, as Plato knew, man is discontented until he has achieved such unity. Until then he lives dissatisfied in the world of flux and opinion, harassed by error and by the disturbing transience of things. "Only when we have made the world-content into our thought-content do we again find the unity from which we had separated ourselves." (pp. 12-13) And again, "Thinking gives us the true shape of reality as a self-contained unity, whereas the multiplicity of percepts is but an appearance conditioned by our organization." (p. 200)

Sometimes the notion of unity takes the form of individuals merging with one another on the highest level of knowledge--more accurately, individuals in the act of cognition merging into the infinite world-process:

> On this level there remains no difference between Plato and me; what separated us belongs to a lower level of cognition. We are separated only as individuals; the individual which works within us is one and the same....Paradoxical as it may sound, it is the truth: the idea which Plato conceived and the like idea which I conceive are not two ideas. It is one and the same idea. And there are not two ideas: one in Plato's head and one in mine; but in the higher sense Plato's head and mine interpenetrate each other; all heads interpenetrate which grasp one and the same idea; and this idea is only once there as a single idea. It is there; and the heads all go to one and the same place in order to have this idea in them.[15]

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[15] Mystics of the Renaissance, pp. 36-37.

We are not far here from Plato's world of Ideas; nor are we very far from Jung's race memory, the universal depository of memories, beliefs, and notions; and we are quite close to Yeats's Spiritus Mundi. It is relevant to note here one of Yeats's essays on magic; it was written in 1901, after he had been to school to Madame Blavatsky. He believes

> (1) That the borders of our mind are ever shifting, and that many minds can flow into one another, as it were, and create or reveal a single mind, a single energy.
> (2) That the borders of our memories are as shifting, and that our memories are a part of one great memory, the memory of Nature herself.
> (3) That this great mind and great memory can be evoked by symbols.[16]

We will see much of this notion of unity in Barfield, particularly in what he calls the "ancient unities."

The second notion which is recurrent in Steiner, and of which both Steiner and Barfield make a great deal, is the notion of man as creator rather than perceiver. The notion is one of the earmarks of Idealistic philosophy and especially of Romantic Idealistic philosophy. It is perhaps stated in its most popular form in Kant and in its most radical form in Berkeley. For Berkeley, esse est percipi. Nothing exists except that which is perceived; the world exists because it is perceived by God; indeed it exists as an idea in the mind of God. For Kant (and Steiner and Barfield), the world exists in its present form because it is perceived by beings who are organized in a particular way. The world is what it is because we are what we are; if our perceiving processes were different, the world would be different. Kant's noumena are fundamental to this notion: the noumena are the real phenomena as distinct from the

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[16]Quoted in Edmund Wilson, Axel's Castle (New York, 1931), pp. 47-48.

phenomena which we construct for ourselves through our perceiving processes. In effect, according to Kantian and later Idealism, we (in Wordsworth's phrase) both perceive and half create. In Steiner the creation becomes not merely a matter of perception: since perception yields only a part of reality and cognition the rest, Steiner holds that the object does not strictly come into being until it is filled out by cognition; but, more than this, the object is, as it were, baptized and brought into the realm of spirit. Objects "undergo their rebirth in spirit."[17]

But man does more than bring objects into the realm of spirit. It is almost true that he brings the Divine into the same realm, and that the Divine cannot operate without him.

> Not a mere repetition in thought, but a real part of the world-process, is that which goes on in man's inner life. The world would not be what it is if the factor belonging thereto in the human soul did not play its part. And if one calls the highest which is attainable by man the Divine, then one must say that this Divine is not present as something external, to be repeated pictorially in the human mind, but that this Divine is awakened in man.[18]

And Steiner quotes approvingly the remark of Angelus Silesius: "I know that without me God can live no instant; if I become nothing, He must of necessity give up the ghost."[19]

From the foregoing, the significance of the change in name from theo- to anthroposophy will be clear. There are meditation and study in both movements, but in the newer school the object of the meditation

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[17] Mystics of the Renaissance, p. 49.

[18] Mystics of the Renaissance, p. 43.

[19] Mystics of the Renaissance, p. 43.

and study has become man. It is the study of man, his nature, and his thought, that will reveal the true nature of the world. Man looks within himself to discover the world-process because the world-process is taking place within him, or at least through him. "Know thyself," the ancient oracle advised. Steiner's Mystics of the Renaissance closes with a quotation from The Cherubinean Wanderer: "Friend, is is even enough. In case thou more wilt read, go forth, and thyself become the book, thyself the reading."[20] Boldt's reference to the movement as modern Gnosticism seems not unfair. The school is eclectic; it picks and chooses its elements from any number of philosophies and religions. But it is essentially a mystery religion; it derives (or purports to derive) its important knowledge from a divine afflatus, as did Boehme and Meister Eckhart. Now let us look at the religion as it takes on the techniques of philology, mythology, anthropology, and modern science in the thought of Owen Barfield, the best and wisest of Lewis's unofficial teachers.

Barfield has written numerous articles on literary and linguistic subjects and three full length books. Since the bulk of his work which is relevant to this thesis is contained in the three books, I propose to deal entirely with them. Anyone who knows them will appreciate immediately that this is not a task to be taken lightly. Barfield's mind, according to one of his commentators, is "richly stored, supple in its movements, large in its perspectives and full of original insights."[21] One

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[20] P. 278.

[21] W. Donnelly, "Knowing and Being," Month, CCV (April, 1958), 247.

may agree with the judgment but feel compelled to add that the mind (or at least the expression of it) is often turgid, elliptical, and cryptic. I will deal with the books in the order in which they appeared, not merely as a matter of simplicity, but because there is a definite progression to be seen. The early ideas and theories of History in English Words (1925) and Poetic Diction (1928) are worked into a religious framework in the most recent book, Saving the Appearances (1957).

History in English Words, the most sedate of Barfield's books, introduces two theories which are basic to Barfield's thought, and as such the book deserves some little analysis. The two theories (really they are two aspects of the same idea) are what Barfield calls the "evolution of consciousness" and "internalization." They are both arrived at and demonstrated largely on a philological basis.

The first thing to note about the book is the title itself. It indicates that the book is not an ordinary history of the language text; it is rather an attempt to construct a history of humanity (beginning with pre-history, actually) from the history of the changing meanings of words. There are, according to Barfield, "secrets which are hidden in language"[22] which only an evaluation of the shifting meanings of words can reveal to us. Other kinds of history can give us other kinds of information; geology, for example, can give us a "knowledge of outward, dead things--such as the forgotten seas and the bodily shapes of prehistoric animals and primitive men." (p. 6) But the study of language

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[22]History in English Words (New York, n.d. [1925]), p. 6. In the following discussion the page references will be found in the text.

gives us the inner secrets, for "language has preserved for us the inner, living history of man's soul. It reveals the evolution of consciousness." (p. 6) What the book attempts to do, then, is to formulate a history of the development of the soul of western man, the history being based largely (though not entirely) on evidence gained from philology. For philology, combined with the findings of anthropology, can do more than tell us what the past was; it enable us to "feel how the past is." (p. 13) Language is a window of the soul of man, and as man looks out by means of it, so the philologist looks in.

Abstracting the idea from the documentation in which it is embedded, we see that it comes to something like this: The history of meanings shows an evolution of the human mind from relative unself-consciousness to relatively complete self-consciousness. It shows a progression away from the aboriginal unity (which either existed or which man felt to exist) of man and nature, and toward a consciousness of self as distinct from things. In short, the history of meanings reveals Steiner's "flight from nature." Recognizable consciousness of self arrives (approximately) only with the Reformation. With the arrival of self-consciousness comes the corollary notion that the meaning of things (what might be called the essences of things) are not in the things themselves, as primitive and early man presumably thought, but in the minds of men. The progression towards this belief Barfield calls the "internalization" of meaning. The Romantic poets, especially Wordsworth and Coleridge in England and Goethe in Germany, are the first to sense this process and the meaning of this process; they are the first to use, or at least to use well

and artistically, a means of coming to terms with this process: Imagination.

The first part of the book, entitled "The English Nation," is devoted to an imaginative re-telling of the story of the Aryans, which of course is largely the story of western civilization. The second part, "The Western Outlook," begins the real thesis, and we begin to see the philological evidence for the evolution of consciousness, evidence which indicates that language pictures a "vast, age-long metamorphosis from the kind of outlook which we loosely describe as 'mythological' to the kind which we may describe equally loosely as 'intellectual'...." (p. 74) Approaching the level of the Aryan pre-historical consciousness from the point of view of religious thought, Barfield notes that the words diurnal, diary, and dial derive from the Latin dies, and that journal comes to us through French from the same source. "These syllables," according to Barfield,

> conceal among themselves the central religious conception common to the Aryan nations. As far back as we can trace them, the Sanskrit word 'dyaus,' the Greek 'zeus'...and the Teutonic 'tiú' were all used in contexts where we should use the word sky; but the same words were also used to mean God, the Supreme Being, the Father of all the other gods--Sanskrit 'Dyaus pitar,' Greek 'Zeus pater,' Illyrian 'Deipaturos,' Latin 'Juppiter' (old form 'Diespiter'). We can best understand what this means if we consider how the English word heaven and the French ciel are still used for a similar double purpose, and how it was once not a double purpose at all...if we are to judge from language, we must assume that when our earliest ancestors looked up to the blue vault they felt that they saw not merely a place, whether heavenly or earthly, but the bodily vesture...of a living Being. And this fact is still extant in the formal resemblance between such words as diary and divine. (pp. 74-75)

This is, in part, Barfield's picture of the pre-historic Aryan consciousness.

It is not a consciousness dwelling in some distant age of metaphor, although the way the consciousness operates inevitably suggests metaphor. It is rather a consciousness which has not yet become aware of the distinction (or, more accurately, in Barfield's terms), has not yet made the distinction between literal and figurative. It is a consciousness for which the thought, or perception, of sky is the equivalent of the thought or perception of God; it is a dreaming consciousness which does not make metaphors but which is the substance out of which later metaphors must come. For it is the basis of western language, and embedded in it are the "natural" metaphors of later consciousness--the equation of good with light and evil with dark, of height with power and depth with wretchedness (we must put on the armor of light; facile descensus in Avernus).

Barfield, through the scattered hints and insights of language, traces the evolution away from this sort of consciousness up as far as the pre-Homeric Greeks, where he pauses over the word panic. The word, he says, "marks a discovery in the inner world of consciousness." (p. 72) Before the word itself came into being, the thing which we call panic must have been, not perhaps a different thing, but a thing differently perceived by humanity. He sees in the word a miniature of the whole process from mythological to intellectual thinking:

> The word enables us to realize that the early Greeks could become conscious of this phenomenon, and thus name it, because they felt the presence of an invisible being who swayed the emotions of flocks and herds. And it also reveals how this kind of outlook changed slowly into the abstract idea which the modern individual strives to express when he uses the word panic. (pp. 72-73)

And he goes on to note that with the Romans this consciousness of a real being, a god or presence, becomes much less real; the analytical mind, a product of Aristotle and later Greek philosophy, is reaching toward fruition, and the "mythical world" of the Romans is more like "a world of mental abstractions."[23]

One of the clearest examples of the evolution of consciousness is to be found in the traditions and beliefs of medieval science. Medieval logic, says Barfield, is Aristotelian, but medieval science is based on pre-Aristotelian Greek science. The important point is that medieval science was content to build on Greek foundations because there remained in the middle ages enough of the ancient Greek consciousness to make the Greek medicine seem worth continuing. "In spite of that strong and growing sense of the individual soul, man was not yet felt, either physically or psychically, to be isolated from his surroundings in the way that he is to-day. Conversely, his mind and soul were not felt to be imprisoned within, and dependent upon, his body." (p. 124) Barfield then lists a group of words taken from medieval science, of which I repeat only a few, to refresh the reader's memory: ascendant, atmosphere, complexion, cordial, disaster, disposition and indisposed, influence, temperament and temper. These, he says, "give us more than a glimpse into the relations between body, soul, and cosmos, as they were felt by the

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[23]P. 78. Lewis's discussion of Roman allegory in his Allegory of Love (New York, 1958) is clearly much indebted to Barfield on this point. He cites Poetic Diction at the beginning of his discussion (Chapter II, "Allegory").

medieval scientist." (p. 124) He then reviews the general tenets of medieval science: the body contains four humours (moistures). Diseases (distempers) and character traits were connected with the temperament (mixture). Through the arteries flowed three different kinds of ether (Greek, the upper air) or spirits--the animal, vital, and natural.

> But the stars and the planets were also living bodies; they were composed of that 'fifth essence'...which was likewise latent in all terrestrial things, so that the character and the fate of men were determined by the influence...which came from them. The Earth had its atmosphere (a kind of breath which it exhaled from itself); the Moon...had a special connection with lunacy, and according as the planet Jupiter, or Saturn, or Mercury was predominant or in the ascendant in the general disposition of stars at a man's birth, he would be jovial, saturnine, or mercurial. Finally, things or persons which were susceptible to the same influences, or which influenced each other in this occult way, were said to be in sympathy or sympathetic. (pp. 125-26)

What has happened to the meanings of the terms of medieval science, says Barfield, is evidence of the process (corollary to the evolution of consciousness) which he calls internalization. Man is no longer thought to have any connection with the world beyond himself. Conscious of himself now as distinct from what is not himself, he has retained the former terms by rooting them out of their objective phenomena and transferring them to himself. So he is perhaps saturnine, but no longer "influenced" by anything beyond the confines of his own will and imagination. That transferring, says Barfield, is the penultimate step in the evolution toward intellectual thought.

> When we reflect on the history of such notions as humour, influence, melancholy, temper, and the rest, it seems for the moment as though some invisible sorcerer had been conjuring them all inside ourselves--sucking them away from the planets, away from the outside world, away from our own

> warm flesh and blood, down into the shadowy realm of thoughts and feelings. There they still repose; astrology has changed to astronomy; alchemy to chemistry; today the cold stars glitter unapproachable overhead, and with a naive detachment mind watches matter moving incomprehensibly in the void. At last, after four centuries, thought has shaken herself free. (p. 127)

Barfield then takes the same argument into another area--the rise of astronomy. The three Arabic words azimuth, nadir, and zenith appear in English for the first time towards the end of the fourteenth century (two of them are to be found in Chaucer's Treatise on the Astrolabe). But they appear as a new part of the old context of classical astronomy; for the most part, the astronomers of the Dark Ages had relied on the Greek zodiac, and had mapped out the heavens into twelve signs. But the three Arabic words "express something which the ancients had, apparently, never felt the need of expressing--that is, an abstracted geometrical way of mapping out the visible heavens." (p. 129) The new words express a new concept, and the new concept is one possible only because human consciousness has taken another forward step. "It is probable that, with the use of these words, there came for the first time into the consciousness of man the possibility of seeing himself purely as a solid object situated among solid objects." (p. 129) Anticipating the argument that Plato and other early Greeks formulated geometrical laws, Barfield points out that these "laws" were not so much intellectual generalizations; they were rather felt to be "real activities of the soul--that human soul which...the philosopher could not yet feel to be wholly separate from a larger world Soul or planetary Soul." (p. 130) The rise of astronomy, culminating in the sixteenth and seventeenth

centuries, may be seen, then, as an illustration of that same process of internalization which has already been indicated to be the case with astrology and medicine. The notion that mathematics had its origin in the observing of the movements of the stars may well be true if we can account for its later progress by means of internalization.

> Is it too fanciful to picture to ourselves how, drawn into the minds of a few men, the relative positions and movements of the stars gradually developed a more and more independent life there until, with the rise in Europe first of trigonometry and then of algebra, they detached themselves from the outside world altogether? And then by a few great men like Copernicus, Kepler, Galileo, Newton, these abstract mathematics were re-fitted to the stars which had given them birth, and the result was that cosmogony of infinite spaces and a tiny earth in which our imaginations roam to-day? When the Aryan imagination had at last succeeded in so detaching its 'ideas' about the phenomena of the universe that these could be 'played with,' as mathematicians say, in the form of an equation, then, no doubt, it was a fairly easy matter to turn them inside out. (pp. 130-31)

The preceding arguments lead us to a rough statement of the chronology of the evolution of western consciousness. Modern consciousness began roughly about the time of the Reformation and became fairly widespread only in the seventeenth century. The Reformation, "with its insistence on the inwardness of all true grace," (p. 142) Barfield sees as "another manifestation of that steady shifting inwards of the centre of gravity of human consciousness." (p. 142) But until the days of the revival of learning this progress toward consciousness is an unconscious one. "Up to the seventeenth century the outlook of the European mind upon the world...has yet always felt itself to be at rest, just as men have hitherto believed that the earth on which they trod was a solid

and motionless body." (p. 149-50) But with Bacon we get the first real historical distinction between the ancients and the moderns, and the beginning of historical perspective. The seventeenth century first gives us words that indicate this historical perspective: progressive, antiquated, century, decade, epoch, out-of-date, primeval. Also, as an aftermath of the Reformation, we begin to find words hyphenated with self appearing in the language: self-conceit, self-confidence, self-contempt, self-pity: the centre of gravity has shifted from phenomena to self. The seventeenth century provides us with the most spectacular of proofs that man has arrived at something like a total awareness of self in Descartes, who thinks of himself as starting philosophy anew; nearly all philosophy from his time has been fundamentally the same, beginning with a kind of cogito ergo sum, moving from the mind outward rather than from phenomena to the mind. Locke adopts the word consciousness itself, and gives the newer term self-consciousness its "distinctive modern meaning." (p. 154)

The last argument which we may note as bearing on the evolution of consciousness and the consequent internalization of meanings concerns the changing views of the emotions, or what the medieval writers called "the passions." The philological evidence, says Barfield, shows that even in respect to these passions, which might be supposed to have always been a kind of fortress of subjectivity, the shift from outer to inner has taken place. "The nomenclature of the Middle Ages generally views them from without, hinting always at their results or their moral

significance...." (p. 158) As evidence of this he lists such medieval terms as envy, greedy, happy (i.e., lucky), malice, mercy, peace, pity, remorse, rue, sin. Not until the seventeenth century do we find words that express "that sympathetic or 'introspective' attitude to the feelings," (p. 158) words such as aversion, dissatisfaction, discomposure, "while depression and emotion--further lenient names for human weakness --were used till then of material objects." (p. 158) The eighteenth century gives us words which indicate attempts to "portray character or feeling from within"; (p. 158) apathy, chagrin, ennui, the expression the feelings. The same century transfers words like agitation, constraint, disappointment, embarrassment, and excitement from the outer world to the inner. It also gives us a class of words which depict phenomena not as they are but as they affect us: affecting, amusing, boring, charming, diverting, entrancing, interesting, pathetic. And Barfield concludes the argument:

> These adjectives can be distinguished sharply--indeed they are in a sense the very opposite of those older words, which can also be said...to describe external objects 'from the human point of view.' Thus, when a Roman spoke of events as auspicious or sinister, or when some natural object was said in the Middle Ages to be baleful, or benign, or malign, a herb to possess such and such a virtue, an eye to be evil, or the bones of a saint to be holy, or even, probably, when Gower wrote:
>
> The day was merry and fair enough,
>
> it is true that these things were described from the human point of view, but the activity was felt to emanate from the object itself. When we speak of an object or event as amusing, on the contrary, we know that the process indicated by the word amuse takes place within ourselves; and this is none the less obvious because some of the adjectives recorded above, such as charming,

> enchanting, and fascinating, are the present participles of verbs which had implied genuine, occult activity. (pp. 158-59)

Having established the reality of the evolution of consciousness and the internalization of meanings, Barfield finds that two results follow from these processes. First, the "peculiar freedom" (p. 155) of man is felt to derive largely from within himself; it is a product of those "spontaneous impulses which control human behaviour and destiny." (p. 155) This is seen in the semantic evolution of such words as conscience, disposition, spirit, and temper; in the transferring of words like dissent, gentle, perceive, and religion from the outer world to the inner; and in the Protestant Reformation which, as was noted above, stressed the inwardness of all true grace. Second, the spiritual life which had been assumed to be immanent in phenomena fades: the life "in star and planet, in herb and animal, in the juices and 'humours' of the body, and in the outward ritual of the Church--these grow feebler." (p. 155) There arises the concept of impersonal laws which govern the world: "words like consistency, pressure, tension...are found to describe matter 'objectively' and disinterestedly, and at the same time the earth ceases to be the centre round which the cosmos revolves." (p. 155) The European mind has cut itself loose from its environment (fled from nature); it has become "less and less of the actor, more and more of both the author and the spectator." (p. 155)

Now Barfield sees the Romantic movement as essentially a triumph because, utilizing the end product of the long evolution of consciousness (the end product is, of course, consciousness), they saw the fatality

of a dead world moving in a void, a world drained of its immanent life by the very evolution which enabled them to perceive its deadness. They may not have understood how the world came to be dead, but they saw the necessity of somehow revitalizing it, of bringing it back to some kind of life. There had been some stumbling poetic attempts before them, evidence that the poet at least cannot deal with a world of Hobbes's matter in motion. Both Denham and Milton had taken up the new word conscious and had applied it to inanimate things. Denham had written: "Thence to the coverts and the conscious Groves...."; and Milton: "So all ere day-spring, under conscious Night / Secret they finished ...." And Barfield comments that

> ...we can almost fancy, by their readiness to seize upon the new word, that our poets were beginning, even so soon, to feel the need of restoring 'subjectivity' to external Nature--of 'projecting into' her, as we are now inclined to say--a fanciful substitute for that voluntary life and inner connection with human affairs which Descartes and Hobbes were draining from her in reality. (p. 165)

But it was left to the Romantics and their theories of the power of the Imagination really to resuscitate the lifeless world. Coleridge, in his distinction between the Fancy and the Imagination, is largely responsible for their success; for Coleridge defined Imagination (in Barfield's words) as "the power of creating from within forms which themselves become a part of Nature--'Forms,' as Shelley put it,

> more real than living man,
> Nurslings of immortality."(p. 200)

For Wordsworth and Coleridge, Nature is not only what we perceive but also what we half-create; "the perception of Nature...depends upon what

is brought to it by the observer. Deep must call unto deep." (p. 200) Coleridge had said that Imagination (both the primary and the secondary) was "essentially vital, even as all objects (as objects) are essentially fixed and dead."[24] The world as perceived by the senses and evaluated by the "reason" was indeed dead; but the world as "perceived" by the Imagination was alive, for the Imagination as much created it as perceived it. Imagination, for Coleridge, was "organic." As it was alive itself, so what it bodied forth was also alive. In Kantian terms, it created phenomena, not ex nihilo, but out of the noumena. It gave shape, form, existence itself to the phenomenal world.

> And this re-animation of Nature was possible because the imagination was felt as creative in the full religious sense of the word. It had itself assisted in creating the natural forms which the senses were now contemplating. It had moved upon the face of the waters. For it was 'the repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation'--the Word made human. (p. 201)

The book ends on this curious and rather challenging note. Any explicit conclusion is left for the reader to draw. At the risk of being obvious, I will draw it briefly. Barfield's book culminates with the Romantics because the Romantics were the first to do consciously what ancient and early man had done unconsciously--that is, participate actively in the construction of the very world itself. And conscious participation in the world-process, as Steiner had said in his praise of Angelus Silesius, is at least analogous to divine creation.

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[24] Biographia Literaria, Chapter XIII.

Poetic Diction (1928, new edition 1952) is a gnarled and difficult book. Barfield has added a long preface to the second edition in which he castigates I. A. Richards, the logical positivists, and "scientism" in general, but the preface does little to clarify the argument of the book. And yet, ironically, the book has all the apparatus of clarity: the chapters are very short, and each chapter is subdivided into very brief sections; there are cross-references between the chapters and there are appendices which are meant, presumably, to clear up the difficult points. One is reminded of Chesterton's remark about Arnold and his rather wearisome attempts to be utterly clear: he kept a smile of heartbroken forbearance on his face, as if he were a teacher in an idiot school. One of the reviewers of the book, after admirably circumlocuting its argument, concludes: "It is to be hoped that the reappearance of this book...will revive attention to its thesis. ... What we get is an extremely pregnant idea, whose applications are far-reaching and by no means easy to make. Perhaps one should hope that others will continue to work on the suggestions with which Mr. Barfield provides us. If this is done, the results may well be important, perhaps beyond the field of poetry and criticism."[25]

It is with the applications of this pregnant idea "beyond the field of poetry and criticism" that I am concerned here. There is much about poetry and criticism in the book that seems to me valuable, but I am not concerned with that; I am concerned with the book mainly as it

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[25]Graham Hough, Review of Poetic Diction, New Statesman, CVIL (Aug. 9, 1952), 164.

continues and broadens out the basic ideas of the early book and as it points forward to their religious application in Saving the Appearances. With this limitation, my analysis will make the book seem much simpler and more straightforward than it really is.

The book is subtitled "A Study in Meaning," and perhaps it may be most usefully approached (for my purposes) from the point of view of what Barfield means by "meaning." In order to do this, we must glance at the old controversy about the origin of metaphor, for the two are closely related. Briefly, the problem is this: language is dead metaphor, or as Emerson called it, "fossil poetry." Even the most abstract of our terms, which we use when we do not wish to be "metaphorical," are themselves fundamentally metaphorical. Such is the very term abstract; such are words like compel, transcend, prescind. All language, with the exception of proper names, seems to have once had as its referent something material or some simple human activity of the body. When we use the language of philosophy or aesthetics, we are really using metaphorical language, whether we are aware of it or not. Thus a book like The Meaning of Meaning is "a ghastly tissue of empty abstractions"[26] because its authors fail to realize that their "scientific" terminology (words such as cause, reference, organism, stimulus) is not "miraculously exempt" (p. 134) from the nature of language itself. They make the mistake of supposing that they can speak literally about metaphor, as if

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[26] Poetic Diction, A Study in Meaning (London, 1928), p. 135. I was not aware that a new English edition had been put out until this discussion had been written, and have not thought it worthwhile to change all the page references. In the following discussion, page references (to be found in the text) will be to the first edition.

metaphor were always contrived and invented and literal language were indeed literal; whereas what we generally call metaphor is merely late and obvious metaphor, and what we call literal language is merely early and hidden metaphor.

Linguists have sometimes postulated what they call a "metaphorical period," a pre-historic age in which primitive man became aware of various mental concepts for which he had no name. Needing to call them something, he converted the names of the material things with which he was familiar into convenient metaphors and began to speak of "cultivating" his mind and having his "emotions" moved or "stirred up." But, as we have seen from History in English Words, the history of language shows an evolution of consciousness. Thus, to suppose primitive man discovering a group of concepts for the names of which he must turn to metaphor is to fly in the face of linguistic evidence; it is what Barfield calls "logomorphism," which is "projecting post-logical thoughts back into a pre-logical age." (p. 90) The evolution of consciousness is echoed in the evolution of language and of meaning. Taking the Latin word spiritus (the equivalent of the Greek pneuma), Barfield points out that linguists such as Max Muller would have it originally mean breath or wind, and would then postulate a certain time when it was used, in a consciously metaphorical way, to mean spirit or "the principle of life within man or animal." (p. 80) But, says Barfield,

> ...such an hypothesis is contrary to every indication presented by the study of the history of meaning; which assures us definitely that such a purely material content as 'wind'...and...such a purely abstract content as 'the principle of life within man or animal' are both late arrivals in

> human consciousness. Their abstractness and their simplicity are alike evidence of long ages of intellectual evolution. So far from the psychic meaning of 'spiritus' having arisen because someone had the idea, 'principle of life...' and wanted a word for it, the abstract idea 'principle of life' is itself a product of the old concrete meaning 'spiritus', which contained within itself the germs of both later significations. We must, therefore, imagine a time when 'spiritus' or πνεῦμα , or older words from which these had descended, meant neither breath, nor wind, nor spirit, nor yet all three of these things, but when they simply had their own old peculiar meaning, which has since, in the course of the evolution of consciousness, crystallized into the three meanings specified--and no doubt into others also, for which separate words had already been found by Greek and Roman times. (pp. 80-81)

The natural tendency in language is toward division, toward a splitting up of original singular meaning into later diverse meanings; and the old single meaning points to the level of consciousness which produced it.[27] We have, says Barfield, a possible example of meaning in the transition stage from old to new (that is, from singularity to diversity) in the phrases which associate emotions with certain parts of the body. Nowadays we make a "purely verbal allotment" (p. 80) of emotions to the liver, the bowels and the heart; previously such allotment was more nearly literal than verbal. In the case of the current use of the word heart, "an old single meaning survives as two separate references of the same word--a physical and a psychic." (p. 80) But in our phrase "I have no stomach for that," we have an expression which is

> ...still by no means purely psychic in its content. It describes a very real physical sensation, or rather one which cannot be classified as either physical or psychic. Yet...it is reasonable to suppose that, when a sufficient

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[27]Cf. the earlier discussion of the Aryan "concept" of God-sky in History in English Words, pp. 28-31 of this study.

> number of years has elapsed, the meaning of this word also may have been split by the evolution of our consciousness into two; and the physico-psychic experience in question will have become as incomprehensible to our posterity, as it is incomprehensible to most of us today that anyone should literally feel his 'bowels' moved by compassion. (p. 80)

What looks to us like a metaphor, then (spiritus meaning soul, etc.), is simply a meaning that was "latent in meaning from the beginning." (p. 85) In earlier consciousness, the material things which served as referents for words were not only sensible and material objects; they were not, "as they appear to be at present, isolated, or detached, from thinking and feeling." (p. 85) There could not have existed the subjective-objective antithesis, for the antithesis presupposes self-consciousness. And self-consciousness "is inseparable...from rational or discursive thought operating in abstract ideas." (p. 204) In a pre-logical time, then, a time when meaning originates, man is incapable of feeling himself as distinct and cut off from the rest of the universe; or, in plain terms, he is not thus isolated and cut off. This is the state of man before Steiner's "flight from nature," the pre-conscious stage of man-nature unity.

> ...in order to form a conception of the consciousness of primitive man, we have really...to 'unthink,' not merely our now half-instinctive logical processes, but even the seemingly fundamental distinction between self and world. And with this, the distinction between thinking and perceiving begins to vanish too. For perception, unlike the pure concept, is inconceivable without a distinct perceiving subject on which the percepts, the soul-and-sense-data, can impinge. (p. 206)

How then can we describe the kind of thinking done by primitive man? As "A kind of thinking which is at the same time perceiving, a

picture-thinking, a figurative, or imaginative, consciousness, which we can only grasp today by true analogy with the imagery of our poets, and, to some extent, with our own dreams." (pp. 206-7)

The development of consciousness shows us two opposing principles. The first is the principle according to which single meanings tend to divide; the second is "the nature of language itself at its birth. It is the principle of living unity." (p. 87) The principle of division indicates the differences between things; the second indicates the resemblances. It is this second principle which we find operative in the metaphors of the poets. It enables them

> ...to intuit relationships which their fellows have forgotten--relationships which they must now express as metaphor. Reality, once self-evident, and therefore not conceptually experienced, but which can now only be reached by an effort of the individual mind--this is what is contained in a true poetic metaphor; and every metaphor is 'true' only in so far as it contains such a reality, or hints at it. The world like Dionysus, is torn to pieces by pure intellect; but the poet is Zeus; he has swallowed the heart of the world; and he can reproduce it as a living body. (p. 88)

What the true poet grasps, then, is the ancient unity of thought and perception. And this ancient unity, this pre-conceptual mixture which included both the percept and its significance, is well called "figurative" or "pictorial." For the percept and the meaning were one and the same apprehension; the whole of reality, not only the percept or only the concept, was taken in as a kind of meaning figure. The ancient single meaning of the verb to shine, for example, was "the same definite spiritual reality which was beheld on the one hand in what has since become pure human thinking; and on the other hand, in what has since become

physical light; not an abstract conception, but the echoing footsteps of the goddess Natura--not a metaphor but a living Figure." (pp. 88-89)

In short, ancient man apprehended total reality; or, rather, total reality lived within him and he within it. What existed (and all that existed) was Mind; it existed "as Life, and Meaning, before it became conscious of itself, as knowledge...." (p. 179) What we call thinking "was not merely of Nature, but was Nature herself." (p. 147) We are back to something like Hegel's World-Soul and also something much like Yeats's Spiritus Mundi and Jung's Collective Unconscious, back to "the prophetic soul of the wide world / Brooding on things to come." In the beginning was Thought, says Barfield, though not any individual thinker. In the beginning was Meaning or Life, or, more accurately, Meaning that was alive. But there is, in the beginning, no understanding; there is only a vast unconscious creativity, an infinite poetic, irrational impulse. There is only Thought thinking, knowing no subject or object, working itself out in concrete meaning (which is neither abstract nor particular), manifesting itself in the aboriginal unity of language. The path that the World-Process follows is the path suggested previously as that which language itself follows: division and combination. The Logos, which is both thought and speech, thinks itself out as an eternal process of splitting up and recombining itself. We have referred to these two processes as principles; but this, says Barfield, is inaccurate.

> The Greeks had no such word as 'principle'; they called what I have been speaking of--with that divine concreteness which makes the mere language a fountain of strength for the exhausted modern intelligence--simply ποιεῖν and πάσχειν--Do and Suffer.
>
> But to ordinary abstract thought a principle can

> never be anything more than an idea, induced from observations of what has happened. ... Yet all conclusions of this nature could be no more than subjective shadows of the forces themselves, of the two living realities, which can actually be known, once our intellect has brought us to the point of looking out for them; being themselves neither subjective nor objective, but as concrete and self-sustaining in every way as the Sun and the Moon--which may well be their proper names. (pp. 210-11)

Now the sine qua non of self-consciousness is the rational, discursive intellect, whose natural tendency is to divide, to split up meaning; in so doing, it destroys the ancient unity of reality--it "murders to dissect." And the function of the poetic imagination (which is "organic," creative, unifying) is to try to preserve, or revive, this same ancient unity, to perceive what Baudelaire called the "correspondences" among things. It does this, as we have seen, simply because it is organic and creative, its creation consisting of "the bringing farther into consciousness of something which already exists as unconscious life." (p. 112) In doing so the imagination takes part in the eternal World-Process of progressive creation; it becomes part of the Logos, the continual and creative Incarnation of the Word.

As I said at the beginning of my remarks on Poetic Diction, the book is a difficult one; and perhaps I have done nothing to make it any easier. One question (so far as I can see) is never finally resolved. The Logos manifests itself, or becomes aware of itself, through the process we have traced as the evolution of human consciousness, a necessary part of which is the emerging discursive intellect. Presumably, then, the discursive intellect occupies an important place in the progressive

manifestation. Yet Barfield often speaks of it as a kind of enemy, a "principle" which the principle of imagination and unity is forever combating. "...without the rational principle, neither truth nor knowledge could ever have been, but only Life itself, yet that principle alone cannot add one iota to knowledge." (pp. 143-44) It performs many useful functions, but it cannot "expand consciousness. Only the poetic can do this: only poesy, pouring into language its creative intuitions, can preserve its living meaning and prevent it from crystallizing into a kind of algebra." (p. 144)

Very likely what seems to be anti-rational bias is only overemphasis, for it is difficult to see how a purely natural principle (to grant Barfield his premises) can be blamed for performing its function. What Barfield is trying to emphasize is the fundamental disparity between the discursive intellect and the imagination: the fact that the intellect works of itself and on its own and is always secondary in order of precedence as it were; while the imagination is a participant in the divine act of creation, and is felt to be so by those (like Coleridge and Shelley) who best understand its nature.

Having sketched out and confirmed the basis of Barfield's thought, we may now turn to the last book, Saving the Appearances, in which the earlier notion of the evolution of consciousness (and its attendant theory of the imagination) is taken up into a realm of religion which was only hinted at in the first two books.

Saving the Appearances takes its title from Simplicius's sixth

century commentary on Aristotle's De Caelo. The phrase meant that a hypothesis could explain phenomena but was not on that basis necessarily true: even two contradictory hypotheses could explain the appearances, as did the Ptolemaic and Copernican versions of the movements of the planets. Galileo's trouble with the Church, says Barfield, stemmed from the fact that he and Copernicus and Kepler came to think that the Copernican version not only saved the appearances (that is, satisfactorily explained phenomena) but was on that account true. What the Church feared was not a new theory of celestial movements but "a new theory of the nature of theory; namely, that, if a hypothesis saves all the appearances, it is identical with truth."[28] Barfield's book is an attempt to explain not merely celestial movements or other phenomena but the reality underlying all phenomena. It is literally an attempt to explain the nature of things by an extension of the theories we have already examined in the earlier books.

It is my intention to examine the theories and their consequences, particularly the consequences for religion. But what I have said about the difficulty and complexity of Poetic Diction is a fortiori true of this later book. I have found it impossible to abstract its thesis and present it in anything like intelligible terms, even though the thesis rests largely on ideas already examined. The argument is presented in a way that seems at first perverse and wayward; but careful examination shows that the argument proceeds in what might be called a natural way.

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[28]Saving the Appearances (London, 1957), p. 51. Page references to the book will be in the text.

A river overflowing its banks does not follow a strictly logical course but progresses according to the natural contours of the land. So it is with the book: the long view shows the argument to move ahead in an intelligible way, even though the long view be a long time coming. I propose, then, to try to follow the argument pretty much as it is presented.

The book (the foreword of which thanks Lewis for help and advice) begins with an exposition of Barfield's intention: to look at the world in a new perspective and to see what follows from so doing. The new perspective consists of a "sustained acceptance by the reader of the relation assumed by physical science to subsist between human consciousness on the one hand and, on the other, the familiar world of which that consciousness is aware." (p. 11) Modern physics, especially, has taught us that the actual structure of the universe--what is really "out there" and distinct from us--is nothing like the phenomena which we see or hear or smell or even touch. Realizing this, most post-Kantian philosophers have dealt at length with the extent to which man participates in the constructing of the phenomena which he "perceives." Barfield intends, he says, to keep in mind this psychological relationship between nature and man, and also to point out (what we have already seen) that this relation has not remained static through the centuries but has changed (and will continue to change) as a corollary of the evolution of consciousness. Barfield then describes the overall intention of the book:

> The greater part of this book consists...of a rudimentary attempt to remedy the omission [of the man-nature

> relationship]. But this involves...challenging the assumption [that the relation has remained static] ....The result--and really the substance of the book --is a sort of outline sketch...for a history of human consciousness; particularly the consciousness of western humanity during the last three thousand years or so.
>
> Finally, the consequences which flow from abandoning the assumption are found to be very far-reaching; and the last three chapters are concerned, theologically, with the bearing of 'participation'--viewed now as an historical process--upon the origin, the predicament, and the destiny of man. (p. 13)

The opening chapters of the book deal largely with epistemology. It is necessary to review them because they introduce most of the terminology (much of it new) which is used throughout the book. Barfield uses the example of a rainbow to illustrate the fact that man participates in the creation or evoking of the phenomena that he perceives. The rainbow is not really "there"; no one finds the end of a rainbow; it is simply "the outcome of the sun, the raindrops and your own vision." (p. 15) The analogy between the rainbow and seemingly "real" phenomena is very close. Science tells us that the phenomenal world consists of atoms, protons, and electrons--even that these are perhaps only "notional models or symbols of an unknown supersensible or subsensible base." (p. 17) Now the tree, unlike the rainbow, can be touched, smelt, etc.; but if science is right about the composition of phenomena--if they consist of "particles" (as Barfield calls them)--"then, since the 'particles' are no more like the thing I call a tree than the raindrops are like the thing I call a rainbow, it follows...that--just as the rainbow is the outcome of the raindrops and my vision--so, a tree is the outcome of the particles and my vision and my other sense-perceptions."

(pp. 16-17) The tree that I perceive, then, is what Barfield calls a "representation." Phenomena consist of my sensational and mental construction of the particles or the "unrepresented." (The particles seem close to Kant's noumena, the representation to Kant's phenomena.) The tree that I perceive is not a dream tree or a private hallucination, since both you and I perceive it--that is, you and I construct a similar representation of the unrepresented. Thus phenomenal nature--the nature studied, weighed, measured, and experimented with by scientists --is what Barfield calls a "system of collective representations." (p. 18) We have the same view of the universe because we have arrived at the same (or approximately the same) level of consciousness. "The time comes when one must either accept this as the truth about the world or reject the theories of physics as an elaborate delusion. We cannot have it both ways." (p. 18)

Now a representation consists of the activity of the senses (perception) plus another process. We do not hear a thrush singing, says Barfield, nor do we smell coffee. Our sensation is, respectively, merely of sound or smell. Another activity must take place before we can say that we hear a thrush or smell coffee (or even be aware that we are perceiving these things). It is the activity that identifies, or puts in their proper places, these raw sensations. This activity Barfield calls "figuration."

> On the assumption that the world whose existence is independent of our sensation and perception consists solely of 'particles', two operations are necessary (and whether they are successive or simultaneous is of no consequence), in order to produce the familiar world we know.

> First, the sense-organs must be related to the particles in such a way as to give rise to sensations; and secondly, those mere sensations must be combined and constructed by the percipient mind into the recognizable and nameable objects we call 'things'. It is this work of construction which will here be called figuration. (p. 24)

Barfield next goes on to make a distinction drawn from the work of Steiner. He distinguishes between two kinds of thinking: "alpha-thinking" and "beta-thinking." Alpha-thinking is thinking about phenomena as if they were really objective and independent of our own minds; it is thinking which assumes the naively realistic view of the universe. It is the thinking characteristic of the physical sciences (excepting modern physics). Beta-thinking is thinking about thinking and perception; it is reflective thinking, the result of which is that we become conscious of the fact that phenomena are not independent and totally outside of us. It is not a different kind of thinking from alpha-thinking; the two kinds of thinking are the same, but their subject matters are different. Barfield is concerned with "the interaction between figuration and alpha-thinking," (p. 26) and is thus himself "beta-thinking."

The next step in the theory introduces the most difficult concept of the book, that of "participation." Barfield begins the discussion of participation by citing the anthropological work of Levy-Bruhl and Durkheim among primitive societies. In effect, he uses their work as evidence supporting his earlier assertions about primitive mentality--its lack of conceptual thinking, its relative lack of self-consciousness. This mentality, Levy-Bruhl holds, is "essentially synthetic. ...the

syntheses which compose it do not imply previous analyses of which the result has been registered in definite concepts....the connecting links of the representations are given...in the representations themselves." (pp. 29-30) Levy-Bruhl maintains that such thought has nothing to do with the earlier anthropological theory called animism; the primitive does not associate his beliefs with his phenomena (representations). "The mystic properties with which things are imbued form an integral part of the idea to the primitive who views it as a synthetic whole." (p. 31) The primitive does not "dissociate" himself from phenomena, does not perceive himself as distinct from them. And "as long as this 'dissociation' does not take place, perception remains an undifferentiated whole." (p. 31) Turned around the other way, the lack of "dissociation" may positively be termed participation. For us, the only link between ourselves and the phenomena (except through beta-thinking) is through the senses. For the primitive, however, there is another link, an extra- or super-sensory one, not only between the percipient and the phenomena (representations) but between the representations themselves and between the percipients themselves. Thus the primitive mind achieves a kind of unity or reality (through synthesis) by means of participation or lack of dissociation. Barfield concludes the anthropological evidence for his assumption that the psychological relation between man and nature has not remained static, that the primitive outlook was essentially different from ours:

> It is not only a different alpha-thinking but a different figuration, with which we have to do, and therefore the phenomena are treated as collective representations

> produced by that different figuration. ...the most striking difference between primitive figuration and ours is, that the primitive involves 'participation', that is, an awareness which we no longer have, of an extra-sensory link between the percipient and the representations. This involves, not only that we think differently, but that the phenomena (collective representations) themselves are different. (pp. 33-34)

There is a fundamental difference between not only primitive thinking and our own but between primitive phenomena and our own; and the difference in both cases is due to the fact that the primitive participated in both his thinking and phenomena as an active experience, while our participation in our phenomena is largely unconscious.[29]

From the preceding evidence of primitive mentality it follows (says Barfield) that the general view of pre-history is a myth. We can have no real knowledge, for example, of the evolution of the earth before the arrival of man--and not only of "man," but of relatively modern man. For the evolution of phenomena (including the earth) is correlative to the evolution of human consciousness, since phenomena are no more than representations on the part of that consciousness. So the pre-historic evolution of the earth as described, for example, in Wells's Outline of History "was not merely never seen. It never occurred." (p. 37) Something may have been going on in the "unrepresented," but what it was would depend on the level of consciousness which perceived (and thus constructed) it. In so far as we really think we know what was

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[29]Cf. Robert Redfield, The Primitive World and Its Transformation (Ithaca, N.Y., 1957), especially Chapter IV, "Primitive World View and Civilization." Redfield quotes D. D. Lee as saying that, for the primitive, "man is in nature already, and we cannot speak properly of man and nature." (p. 85) Cf. also H. and H. A. Frankfort, et. al., Before Philosophy: The Intellectual Adventure of Ancient Man (Baltimore, 1954).

going on in pre-historic times, we are simply projecting our own collective representations into "the dark backward and abysm of time"; we are creating what Bacon called "idols of the study."

Having come thus far in the argument, Barfield stops and points out the possible alternatives if his view is not accepted. We can adopt the "super-naive realism" (p. 38) of Dr. Johnson; we can kick our stone and say, "Nature is nature, and the earth is the earth, and always has been since it all began." (p. 38) But this involves rejecting the findings of science. Or we can do what Orwell called "double-think": we can ignore the findings of physics except when we are engaged in a physics problem; we can pretend that the discoveries of physics have no relation to the subject matters of other sciences such as botany, zoology, and geology. Or finally we can adopt the view of radical idealism: that the representations which we call phenomena "are sustained by God in the absence of human beings." (p. 38) The last alternative involves believing that God has chosen our own particular set of collective representations out of all the possible others of ancient and medieval consciousness. None of the alternatives is attractive to Barfield.

He returns to the argument, then, and resumes the discussion of the real evolution (of consciousness) contrasted to the false, as in Wells. Evolution as we ordinarily understand the term, says Barfield, is an evolution of idols of the study. The theory reached its peak in the nineteenth century because the original participation of the primitive had been lost and because the participation of man in his perception was not realized sufficiently (though Kant had taught it). Thus

phenomena were held to have an independent and objective existence which they do not really have. "But a representation, which is collectively mistaken for an ultimate, ought not to be called a representation. It is an idol. Thus the phenomena themselves are idols, when they are imagined as enjoying that independence of human perception which can in fact only pertain to the unrepresented." (p. 62) (Here the subtitle of the book may be mentioned: "A Study in Idolatry.") And the Darwinian evolution of idols is not only wrong itself but begets wrong in other fields--in etymology, mythology, anthropology. The doctrine of animism is a direct result of the failure to perceive that the only meaningful evolution can be the evolution of phenomena following on the evolution of consciousness. The early anthropologists accepted Darwinian evolution as a framework within which all their results must fit. Thus they postulated a primitive man who was simply a modern man "with his mind tabula rasa," (p. 66) faced with phenomena (collective representations) the same as our own.

> The development of human consciousness was thus presented as a history of alpha-thinking beginning from zero and applied always to the same phenomena, at first in the form of erroneous beliefs about them and, as time went on, in the form of more and more correct and scientific beliefs. In short, the evolution of human consciousness was reduced to a bare history of ideas. (p. 66)

When we understand the true evolution, however, as distinct from the evolution of idols, history takes for us a different and a truer shape. The evolution of consciousness is correlative with the rise of conceptual reasoning (as we saw earlier) and with the decline of "original" participation. We have seen that participation lasted into the

late middle ages. Indeed, says Barfield, "The whole basis of epistemology from Aristotle to Aquinas assumed participation, and the problem was merely the precise manner in which that participation operated." (p. 97) As Aristotle is more subjective in his thought than Plato, further along in the process of internalization, so Aquinas is more subjective than Aristotle; yet even in the rise of subjectivity which goes with increased self-consciousness we can see that for Aquinas, as for Aristotle, the principle of original participation is assumed. "The nous of which Aristotle spoke and thought was clearly less subjective than Aquinas's intellectus; and when he deals with the problem of perception, he polarizes not merely the mind, but the world itself, without explanation or apology, into the two verbs...poiein and paschein: 'to do' and 'to suffer'...these two words alone are as untranslatable as the mentality which they reveal is remote from our own." (p. 100) And the whole of Aquinas's work is shot through with the same assumption; for Aquinas the assumption is so obvious that only once does he bother to explain it, and then by analogy: "Suppose we say that air participates the light of the sun, because it does not receive it in that clarity in which it is in the sun." (p. 90, quoted from De Hebdomadibus, cap. 2) Aquinas assumed participation as much in logic as in the ladder of being itself:

> At one end of the scale the subject participates its predicate; at the other end, a formal or hierarchical participation per similitudinem was the foundation of the whole structure of the universe; for all creatures were in a greater or lesser degree images or representations, or 'names' of God, and their likeness or unlikeness did not merely measure, but was the nearer or more distant emanation of His Being and Goodness in them. (p. 90)

We should read the history of western consciousness, then, as the gradual decline of original participation, the gradual increase of self-consciousness and awareness of self as distinct from phenomena which has (unfortunately, Barfield thinks) culminated in idolatry (the granting of objective existence to our collective representations). The glaring and wonderful exception to this historical trend is the case of Israel, which must be noted because Israel's religion is in many ways analogous to Barfield's final religious conclusion.

The Israelites in Egypt received from Moses "the unheard of injunction" (p. 109) "not to make unto thee any graven image or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth." They were enjoined not to make images when the people of every nation around them practised the prevailing original participation. And "Participation and the experience of phenomena as representations go hand in hand;...the experience of representations, as such, is closely linked with the making of images." (p. 109) For in original participation the link between self and phenomena is experienced, not arrived at (as in our case) by alpha-thinking. "Original participation is...the sense that there stands behind the phenomena, and on the other side of them from man, a represented, which is of the same nature as man. It was against this that Israel's face was set."[30]

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[30]P. 109. The Frankforts say that for the primitive, the object perceived "is experienced as life confronting life." Before Philosophy, p. 14.

Participation thus begins to die for Israel as the result of a moral injunction, while for western man in general it dies only as a natural process. The Jewish progress away from participation Barfield traces by the Jewish reference to the name of God Himself. The Old Testament tells us that the Jews, before they left Egypt, were told by Moses the real name of their God. The name, says Barfield, was thought to be "too holy to be communicable." (p. 112) It may be found written in the Psalms, for instance, but by the third century B.C. it was never read aloud; other words such as "Adonai" or "Elohim" were substituted. "The Name itself was pronounced only by the priests in the Temple when blessing the people or by the High Priest on the Day of Atonement. Other precautions and uses emphasized and preserved its ineffable quality." (p. 112) The Name is written in four consonants and is taken from a verb which means both "to be" and "to breathe."

> The Hebrew word for 'Jew' is derived from the same verb; so that a devout Jew could not name his race without recalling, nor affirm his own existence without tending to utter, the Tetragrammaton. Written...without vowels, when any true child of Israel perused the unspoken Name, יהוה, must have seemed to come whispering up, as it were, from the depths of his own being![31]

This Jewish "ingathering withdrawal from participation" (p. 114) Barfield sees illustrated in two encounters with God recorded in the Old Testament. The first shows God as still thought to be "outer" and somehow

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[31]As I. CH., according to Boldt, came out of the German soul--one of the strange echoes already mentioned. The difference, however, if it is of degree, is of great degree.

in or behind the phenomena; the second shows Him to be considered within. The Lord appeared to Moses from the midst of a burning bush; but "by the time of Elijah the withdrawal...was already far advanced...." (p. 113) Barfield then quotes the famous verses which catalogue the natural beauties which do not contain God: He was not in the wind, nor in the earthquake, nor in the fire--"and after the fire a still small voice."

> ...He had now only one Name--I AM--and that was participated by every being who had eyes that saw and ears that heard and who spoke through his throat. But it was incommunicable, because its participation by the particular self which is at this moment uttering it was an inseparable part of its meaning. Everyone can call his idol 'God', and many do; but no being who speaks through his throat can call a wholly other and outer Being 'I'. (p. 114)

And Rabbi Maimonides, about 1190, repeated "the mystery of the Divine Name. It was 'that name in which there is no participation between the Creator and any thing else.'" (p. 114)

Now if the rise of self-consciousness and the decline of original participation (aided by God, in the case of the Jews) have led to the state of things that Barfield calls idolatry, what hope is there for the future? Idolatry is clearly wrong: aside from being forbidden to the chosen people, it does not square with the nature of things. But what is to be done about it? The answer to this question is the crux of the argument.

There have occurred, according to Barfield, certain "symptoms of iconoclasm," the major one of which (as we saw in History in English Words) was the Romantic movement. The Romantic movement was possible

because, as consciousness evolved toward self-consciousness and thus gave rise to "phenomena on the one side and consciousness on the other," (p. 126) the thing that we call memory came into being.

> As consciousness develops into self-consciousness, the remembered phenomena become detached or liberated from their originals and so, as images, are in some measure at man's disposal. The more thoroughly participation has been eliminated, the more they are at the disposal of his imagination to employ as it chooses. If it chooses to impart its own meaning, it is doing, pro tanto, with the remembered phenomena what their Creator once did with the phenomena themselves. Thus there is a real analogy between metaphorical usage and original participation; but it is one which can only be acknowledged if the crude conception of an evolution of idols...is finally abandoned, or at all events is enlightened by one more in line with the old teaching of the Logos. There is a valid analogy if, but only if, we admit that, in the course of the earth's history, something like a Divine Word has been gradually clothing itself with the humanity it first gradually created --so that what was first spoken by God may eventually be respoken by man. (pp. 126-27)

The process of internalization has taken the meanings of the phenomena inside man, and meaning has now become available for his own "creative 'speech'--using 'speech' now in the wide sense of Aquinas's 'word'." (p. 127) The decline of participation in the west has had as its complement a "growing awareness...of this capacity of man for creative speech." (p. 127) The more man comes to believe that phenomena are wholly distinct from himself and have no immanent life, the more he comes to see that he can manipulate his memory-images of them in any way that he chooses. For the artist, so long as Nature contained immanent life akin to that of the artist himself, it was enough to imitate Nature because "the life or spirit in the object lived on in his imitation,

if it was a faithful one." (p. 128) The artefact was more than imitation because the artist and the object imitated shared the same immanent life of the universe. But with the decline of participation, imitation of Nature became purely mechanical, to be replaced ultimately by photography. Thus men, sensing the loss of life in phenomena, began to formulate doctrines of "creative" art, in which the artist (in whom there was still life) infused life into the objects which he imitated from dead Nature. Barfield traces the beginnings of these doctrines of creative art back as far as Chrysostom in the first century, and through Philostratus in the second and Plotinus in the third. The doctrines continued up through Scaliger and Sidney in the sixteenth century, and reached their climax in Coleridge in the nineteenth.

But the romantic theory of the imagination went a step beyond its forebears. Properly speaking, the theory as it is stated by Sidney means little more than that the artist manipulates the images of things for his own moral ends. Literature can teach where Nature cannot, because literature uses the images of Nature purposefully. It is in this sense that, as Sidney says, "the truest poetry is the most feigning." And it is in this sense only that the Renaissance Neo-Platonists spoke of man as a creator. But Coleridge's doctrine of the Primary and Secondary Imagination radically changed the older view. For Coleridge affirmed that the artist does not manipulate dead things outside of himself, but live things which he himself has first partly created by means of the Primary Imagination. Thus the artist was doubly a creator, both in the making of his objects and in the manipulating of them for his

own purposes. Now all of this Coleridge knew as doctrine; but it was Wordsworth who experienced the truth of the doctrine. Coleridge knew that Nature is alive because his philosophy told him that he himself put life into it. But Wordsworth felt the life in Nature, felt that somehow the life immanent in himself was also immanent in Nature. He tried to explain it by theories verging on pantheism, and pantheism, Barfield says, is a "nostalgic hankering after original participation." (p. 130)

The distinction between the creativity of the Primary Imagination and the manipulation of the Secondary may be seen in the division of labor between Coleridge and Wordsworth in the Lyrical Ballads. (This illustration is not Barfield's, but it will perhaps show what he means.) In the well-known section from Chapter XIV of the Biographia Literaria, Coleridge describes the two kinds of poetry to be included in the Lyrical Ballads. Wordsworth was to write poetry that would have "the power of exciting the sympathy of the reader by a faithful adherence to the truth of nature," while Coleridge was to write poetry that had "the power of giving the interest of novelty by the modifying colors of imagination." Coleridge's work would be the work primarily of the Secondary Imagination; though he knew of the immanent life in Nature, he did not feel it, and thus he would be reduced to manipulating the images of what he felt to be things merely dead and objective. Thus he would "make up" the "incidents and agents" and feign that they were "supernatural"; his aim was, like Sidney's, no more than to show his readers "the dramatic truth of such emotions, as would naturally

accompany such situations, supposing them real." But Wordsworth, who felt common life in himself and nature, would minimize the inventiveness of the Secondary Imagination, because it would be sufficient for him merely to "imitate nature." He would write of subjects from "ordinary life," for something of the life of Nature would linger on in his poems. Wordsworth would not have to concern himself with the workings of the Secondary Imagination so long as he experienced the workings of the Primary Imagination. He would be practising original participation.

Thus the romantics were symptoms of iconoclasm in the sense that Coleridge knew and Wordsworth felt that Nature was not an "idol," not something fixed and dead but alive. Wordsworth, the pantheist, supposed what primitive man supposed, that God is immanent in all things, and thus Wordsworth misinterpreted his experience. Coleridge, saved from pantheism by his knowledge of Kantian philosophy, knew that the life in Nature is the life that we give it through the Primary Imagination. Coleridge knew that man stands in what Barfield calls a "directionally creator" relationship (p. 132) to Nature; man creates what he sees and then manipulates it. But what Coleridge did not know is the true nature of man the creator. Thus "the true...impulse underlying the Romantic movement has never grown to maturity; and, after adolescence, the alternative to maturity is puerility." (pp. 130-31) The romantic movement might well have born great fruit if Coleridge had known the kind of being he was as well as he knew the way that his mind operated. For what stands in this "directionally creator" relationship to Nature "is not my poor temporal personality, but the Divine Name in the unfathomable

depths behind it." (p. 132) What stands in this relationship is the Logos, the World-Process, working its way through and out of my unconsciousness mind or the collective unconscious mind of the world.

And here, having reminded ourselves of the nature of man (in Barfield's view), we may also remind ourselves of the nature of Nature. In speaking of Wordsworth as one who experienced the immanent life in Nature we may have allowed ourselves to slip back into the position of naive realism. But such a position, we recall, is radically wrong. The Nature that we have been talking about exists in a world of thought. Barfield finds it ironic that modern man, prone to see the phenomenal world as objective and "out there," should have become so fond of Jung's theory of the collective unconscious. Our "literal minded generation," he says, "began to accept the actuality of a 'collective unconscious' before it could even admit the possibility of a 'collective conscious'--in the shape of the phenomenal world." (p. 135) For the phenomena are "collective representations," as has already been established. Thus of the hypothetical evolution that we are so fond of positing of the phenomenal world--our talk of "pre-historic" phenomena--the most that we can accurately say is that the phenomena that we posit for those times are "potential phenomena." (p. 135) But we must keep in mind that "the phenomenal world arises from the relation between a conscious and an unconscious and that evolution is the story of the changes that relation has undergone and is undergoing." (p. 136) So it follows that it is at the least "highly fanciful...to think of any unperceived process in terms of potential phenomena, unless we also assume an unconscious, ready to light up into

actual phenomena at any moment of the process." (p. 135) The concept of the potentially phenomenal as extant in the collective unconscious is the answer to the difficulty, now that the old act-potency relationship of Aristotle and Aquinas (arrived at through original participation) has faded away. As was the case with participation itself for Aristotle and Aquinas, so "potential" meant something much more than the possibilis of Aquinas, though Aquinas still meant much more than our mere "possible." We have difficulty in "grasping process as such" because we are "hamstrung by the lack of just such a concept of the potentially phenomenal and the actually phenomenal." (p. 136) For us, "to ask whether a thing 'is' or 'is not' is...to ask whether it is or is not a phenomenon...." (p. 136) And this is to be expected so long as we remain idolaters; but once we admit the possibility of the unconscious, we have a basis for reaffirming the actus-potentia distinction; it need no longer be for us, as it was for Bacon (who did so much to help turn the representations into idols) a frigida distinctio. (p. 136)

Now in so far as we realize conceptually (by beta-thinking) that we participate in our phenomena "with the unconscious part of ourselves," (p. 137) we perceive as a fact what may be called "final" participation as distinct from original participation. That is, we apprehend by conceptual thinking what primitive, ancient and (to some extent) medieval man felt as an actual experience. But this mere intellectual awareness has no epistemological significance; our representations are none the different for our being aware that we in effect create them. There can only be epistemological significance "to the extent that final participation is

consciously experienced. Perhaps...we may say that final participation must itself be raised from potentiality to act." (p. 137) But to so raise our final participation is only possible through sustained effort on our part: "...it is a matter, not of theorizing, but of imagination in the genial or creative sense. A systematic approach towards final participation may therefore be expected to be an attempt to use imagination systematically." (p. 137)

A few, says Barfield, have already tried this systematic use of the imagination. Goethe and Steiner were its most successful practitioners. In Goethe's Metamorphosis of Plants, "there is the germ of a systematic investigation of phenomena by way of participation." (pp. 136-37) He attempted to study potential as well as actual phenomena, which is possible because the phenomena are a mental construct. His work was (and is) regarded as unscientific because it was not purely empirical; but this is only another way of saying that Goethe refused to treat the phenomena (representations) as idols. He attempted to use the imagination systematically, and

> ...as imagination reaches the point of enhancing figuration itself, hitherto unperceived parts of the whole field of the phenomenon necessarily become perceptible. Moreover, this conscious participation enhances perception not only of present phenomena but also of the memory-images derived from them. All this Goethe could not prevail on his contemporaries to admit. Idolatry was too all-powerful and there were then no premonitory signs, as there are today, of its collapse. No one...had heard of 'the unconscious.'" (p. 137)

Goethe practised final participation without fully realizing what it was that he was doing; Steiner, one of today's "premonitory signs," worked

out the metaphysic of it "fully and lucidly" (p. 139) in The Philosophy of Spiritual Activity.

> Steiner showed that imagination, and the final participation that it leads to, involve, unlike hypothetical thinking, the whole man--thought, feeling, will, and character --and his own revelations were clearly drawn from those further stages of participation--Inspiration and Intuition --to which the systematic use of imagination may lead. (p. 141)

The only example that Barfield cites of Steiner's systematic use of the imagination is the work being done by The Society for Cancer Research in Arlesheim, Switzerland, a society founded by Steiner. Like Goethe, Steiner advocated the study of the potential phenomena as well as the actual. Since cancer is "a process of generation," (p. 140) it provides a basis for experiment in the stage of its potential being. What Steiner was trying to do was to arrest the disease in its potential stage before it actuated itself in physical symptoms. "...the method involves investigation of a part of the field of the whole phenomenon named blood which, for a non-participating consciousness, is excluded from it, not by empirical proof but rather...by definition." (p. 140) I do not know how to paraphrase this except by saying that by "studying the potential phenomenon," Barfield means that the idea "cancer" is not yet fully actuated in the divine Unconscious; since the Unconscious only becomes conscious in the consciousness of man, it follows that by investigating the potential as well as the actual (phenomenal) existence of cancer we will actually be helping to formulate the final idea of cancer and thus helping ourselves to control it.

If the appearances (phenomena, representations) are a product of

human consciousness, and if that consciousness evolves, then the future of the appearances depends upon the direction that the evolution takes, for there is no reason to suppose that the evolution has reached its termination. We may have a further evolution toward idolatry. Or we may have an evolution toward the final participation practised by Steiner and Goethe, which is "based on the acceptance...of the fact that man himself now stands in a 'directionally creator relation' to the appearances." (p. 144) Barfield of course elects the latter:

> The plain fact is, that all the unity and coherence of nature depends on participation of one kind or the other. If therefore man succeeds in eliminating all original participation, without substituting any other, he will have done nothing less than to eliminate all meaning and all coherence from the cosmos. (p. 144)

Such schools of philosophy as the logical positivists have already tried to eliminate meaning from the language, and meaning is "a valid relation to nature." (p. 144) And science in general, having lost any sense of original participation, "is losing its grip on any principle of unity pervading nature as a whole...." (p. 145) Science, lacking any "unity of knowledge," (p. 145) is becoming increasingly fragmented and increasingly more specialized. This sort of thing can ultimately lead mankind only to a state of "idiocy"--"a state of affairs, in which fewer and fewer representations will be collective, and more and more will be private, with the result that there will in the end be no means of communication between one intelligence and another." (p. 145)

But the electing of the second course is not without its dangers. Imagination is not necessarily good of itself; it may be used for gigantic

good or gigantic evil. It may be a long while before imagination is so systematically practised that the phenomena are altered by the imagination, though Barfield holds that it is later in the evolution of consciousness than we think. But taking the long view, the world of the future might be "a chaotically empty or a fantastically hideous world." (p. 146) He cites the case of the "formally representational arts": so far as they are merely fads, they are unimportant.

> But in so far as they are genuine, they are genuine because the artist has in some way or other experienced the world he represents. And in so far as they are appreciated, they are appreciated by those who are themselves willing to make a move towards seeing the world in that way, and ultimately therefore, seeing that kind of world. We should remember this, when we see pictures of a dog with six legs emerging from a vegetable marrow or a woman with a motorbicycle substituted for her left breast. (p. 146)

So final participation, "which is the proper goal of the imagination," (p. 147) must be used in the future not only to gain knowledge but to save the appearances themselves "from chaos and inanity." (p. 146) We must, through imagination, "experience the representations as idols, and then also...perform the act of figuration consciously, so as to experience them as participated...." (p. 147) The appearances are our responsibility; the world is emerging from original to final participation whether we will it so or not, and the shape of things to come is our moral responsibility.

But we must understand the nature of man and the nature of the world before the magnitude of our undertaking can be comprehended. Original participation began as "the unconscious identity of man with his

Creator." (p. 169) That this state of things was not to remain is clear from God's commandment to the Jews to forsake idolatry, the normal fruits of original participation. We must understand that Christ (if we accept His own claims) "came to make possible in the course of time the transition of all men from original to final participation...." (pp. 170-71) For this final end the physical participation in the Eucharist may be regarded as preparation and adumbration. We have been uttered by the Word and feel "the seed of the Word stirring within us, as imagination." (p. 179) The Incarnation has not been turned off like a water tap; it continues, "for Christ is the cosmic wisdom on its way from original to final participation." (p. 184) And final participation, as the Jews learned but forgot (causing Christ to shed tears over Jerusalem), is the state "whereby man's Creator speaks from within man himself...." (p. 184) Thus is the Word continually made flesh. And thus men are not hollow idols (any more than their phenomena are); they are "the theatre on which participation has died to rise again...." (p. 185)

> If, in Christ, we participate finally the Spirit we once participated originally; if, in so doing, we participate one another--so that 'men' once more become also 'man'; if, in original participation, we were dreamers and unfree, and if Christ is a Being who can be participated only in vigilance and freedom, then what will chiefly be remembered about the scientific revolution will be the way in which it scoured the appearances clean of the last traces of spirit, freeing us <u>from</u> original, and <u>for</u> final, participation. And if what is produced thereby was, as I have suggested, a world of idols, yet, as Augustine of old could contemplate the greatest of evils and exclaim <u>Felix peccatum</u>! so we, looking steadily on that world, and accepting the burden of existential responsibility which final participation lays upon us, may yet be moved to add:
>
> <u>Felix</u> <u>eidolon</u>!

> 'Peor and Baalim Forsake their temples dim...' the other name for original participation...is, after all, paganism. (p. 186)

So concludes the argument which began in 1925 and ended (if it has ended) in 1958. At the risk of laboring the obvious, we may recapitulate it briefly, though if the exposition has failed to make it clear, certainly the recapitulation will not. Combining the viewpoints and evidence from the three books, then, we may say something like this. Linguistic and anthropological evidence shows that there has been over centuries (and probably over millenia) an evolution of human consciousness. The rational and discursive intellect is a late arrival in human consciousness; indeed, the rational intellect and self-consciousness are nearly interchangeable. In the pre-historical and historical eras preceding the arrival of human consciousness, then, man (so far as he may be called man, lacking rationality) practised a kind of imaginative and pictorial thinking, a thinking that was really perception with the meanings of things inherent in the actual percept.

If we accept the universe as being fundamentally Hegelian, and hold that all that exists is the Absolute Thought thinking itself out in progressive creation of a spiritual world, we may equate the Absolute with the findings of later men such as Jung and say that the Absolute and the Collective Unconscious or Pre-Conscious are one. We may even say, in a religious sense, that the Absolute and the Collective Unconscious are both of them only dim and partial adumbrations of the Christian Logos, the Divine and Creative Word. No matter what we call it, it seems to follow that the previously established evolution of human consciousness is

to be regarded as a part of the process of the uttering of the Word or the thinking out of the Absolute. The evolution of consciousness shows the rise of the apprehension of subject as distinct from object, of man as distinct from phenomena. And this is only another way of saying that the Absolute is thinking itself out in these terms. Both man and phenomena are thoughts of the Absolute.

In the beginning, all was unity. There was only the Absolute, unaware of itself, holding within itself all things in potentia. Because the Absolute is Mind, what it contains potentially is pure, undividuated meaning, the meaning (of which it is not conscious) of all the later individual concepts of things that are to come. It is pregnant with the Ideas of the world and of man, and will, through the ages, "incarnate" them, will think them out in a mode that intermediate human consciousness will perceive as matter.

In the early stages of this process, the Idea of Man and the Idea of Phenomena will hardly be separate from the Absolute; the Absolute will hardly be aware that It is thinking them. Thus early pre-historic man and phenomena will exist in a kind of shadow world; they will be in the process of becoming, almost (we might say) between potency and act. It follows that they will not be wholly separate from the Absolute itself and so not wholly distinct from each other. So, in this morning of the world, man will (in Barfield's phrase) participate in phenomena; more accurately, both man and phenomena will participate in the Absolute, in the sense that they exist as Ideas conceived but not yet fully spoken and so not fully formed. The evolution of human consciousness shows the

Absolute thinking the Idea of Man through, getting things clear (as it were) in its own mind, shaping the meaning of man out of its Unconscious, realizing the possibility of Man and ultimately becoming conscious of Itself in Man.

When the idea of man has become sufficiently distinct from the Absolute so that it may fairly be called a recognizable, distinct Idea, then man no longer participates in the Absolute. It is at this point that he becomes conscious of himself as distinct from the Absolute and distinct as well from the other Ideas of the Absolute (such as phenomena); thus he no longer participates, as he had done, in the phenomena. But to say that man has become conscious of himself is also to say that the Absolute has arrived, through man, at consciousness, that consciousness has come into being. This is roughly the stage of the process at which man and the Absolute now rest. But, as has already been indicated, there is no reason to suppose that the process has stopped.

So far the construct has been purely metaphysical; but there is a religious outlook latent in it (as might be guessed from the fact that Absolute and Logos are convertable terms). Or, rather, it is capable of a religious application. It is this religious application that is the end of Barfield's argument.

Only one step needs to be taken--and emphasized--in order to convert the largely Hegelian position described above into a religious framework, and it is the step--or leap--which both Steiner and Barfield take. The growing awareness of the Absolute (that is, the process by which the Absolute gradually discovers what It is) must be localized in the growing

self-consciousness of man. The Absolute will then realize Itself in man --not in all men, but in those who have ears to hear and who use them; in men who see the desirability of systematically using the Imagination, of practising what Barfield calls final participation. This is indeed to die as Man and rise as God, "death to be wished."

Thus from one point of view, we might say that what Barfield has done is to baptize German Romantic Idealism. The evolving World-Process of Hegel becomes the slow uttering of the Word. As the World-Process is becoming, over millenia, aware of itself, so the Word, over millenia continues to utter Itself in man and through man. And participation, which for Kant is merely an answer to the old dilemma of idealistic epistemology (How does spirit know matter?), becomes, in Barfield, the basis for a relationship between the human and the Divine.

From another and perhaps more fruitful point of view, Barfield has not only baptized but brought up to date the doctrine of the creative imagination which is implicit in German idealism and which Coleridge and Emerson and others discovered long before him. The primary imagination, said Coleridge, is "...the living Power and prime Agent of all human Perception, and...a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite I AM."[32] And he went on to add that the secondary imagination created poetry as the primary imagination created the phenomenal world. So it is for Barfield. But for Barfield (it will be recalled) the romantic impulse evident in the theory of the creative

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[32] Biographia Literaria, Chapter XIII.

imagination did not move forward to its real religious fruition because Coleridge, dependent as he was on Kantian philosophy, knew that the Primary Imagination was creative but did not know to what extent its creativity reached. He did not know that the noumena had their only existence as potential existence in the Unconscious; or as we have already seen, he did not understand the true nature of man. But Barfield, seeing the culmination of the evolution of consciousness in memory and imagination, takes the theory of the creative imagination up to the heights of theology. He takes the notion (from Steiner) out of the same philosophy (German Idealism) that Coleridge took it; he buttresses it with philological, anthropological, and modern scientific evidence, and he strips away from it any vestiges of analogy. It is through the systematic use of this creative or "genial" imagination that man perceives the plain fact that he can participate again in the Word. Further, it is through the creative imagination (which is now taken as an established and scientific fact) that man's moral task of saving the appearances must be accomplished. He must save them by altering them; quite plainly, he must change the world, mould it more nearly in accord with his (and the Word's) heart's desire. For the systematic use of the imagination leads, as Steiner taught, to Inspiration and Intuition; through the imagination, then, man's purposes may become one with the purposes of the Word in Whom man participates. Omnia per ipsum facta sunt, et sine ipso factum est nihil quod factum est; in ipso vita erat, et vita erat lux hominum. St. John, of course, added that the light shone in the shadows but that the shadows

grasped it not. It is not too much to say that Barfield's creative imagination will not only enable the shadows to grasp the light; there will be, as in the physical reality which the image mirrors, no shadows left; all will be light. *Quotquot autem receperunt eum, dedit eis potestatem filios Dei fieri.*

I said in Chapter I that the phenomenon I meant to examine was romantic religion, and that the religion was inseparable from the romanticism. That this is true of Barfield is abundantly clear. One of Lewis's characters,[33] speaking of the relations between men and angels, says, "It's all in St. Paul." So here we might say, Barfield's religion is all in St. John. But for Barfield St. John can only be reached through a means that has always been held to be romantic, the way of the creative imagination. Barfield is not simply Coleridge *redivivus*; *because* he is that, he is also *filius Dei*.

So far I have commented only on what might be called the doctrinaire romanticism explicit in Barfield's work. But the word *romanticism* surely implies attitude as much as it does doctrine. Poetry that we call romantic nearly always deals, in some way or other, with a world beyond or behind the phenomenal world that we know. It may be the dream world of Xanadu, or the mountains where Prometheus atoned, or the world where Keats lived when he was not "on the cold hill's side." It may be the world beyond, or within, the Cumberland hills that haunted

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[33] Dr. Dimble in *That Hideous Strength*.

Wordsworth like a passion and where he felt "fallings from me, vanishings." It may be as obvious as Yeats's land of heart's desire, or as obscure as Blake's Jerusalem. But whatever the vision, the poet generally regards his world with an attitude that may be called "romantic awe." In this respect, it surely is no coincidence that so many romantics are philosophical idealists and hold with Plato, who

> thought nature but a spume that plays
> Upon a ghostly paradigm of things....[34]

And when the world created by the romantic is a world which he feels to be genuinely holy or heavenly, as in parts of Wordsworth's Prelude or in Shelley's Prometheus Unbound, the normal romantic awe becomes religious awe, an apprehension of the numinous. It is what Wordsworth feels when he can "see into the life of things," and what Shelley feels when he envisions man "pinnacled dim in the intense inane." And, as Barfield's prose amply illustrates, it is what he feels at the world which he has envisioned. And well he might be awed at the world, for it is indeed a brave new world in which God contemplates Himself and His creation within the temple of the consciousness of man.

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[34]Yeats, "Among School Children."

CHAPTER III

C. S. LEWIS AND THE BAPTISM OF THE IMAGINATION

From the smoky latter day transcendentalism of Barfield we turn to the graceful and lucid work of one of the most respected of contemporary literary scholars. It is to go from Blake to the fine middle style of Addison, to a study of which, according to Johnson, a man should give over his days and nights. Lewis's work--doctrinal, fictional, critical--is characterized by a feeling for the fine phrase, and by judicious quotation so appropriate that it seems to have grown naturally out of the sentence. Style, said Newman, is a thinking out into language; it is the shadow of the man. Lewis's work, like that of Johnson or Newman himself, frequently has a charm and attraction that derive from his style: partly from the idea's being actuated in language and thus becoming lucidly external, partly from the shadow of the man himself, who is suggested in the easy courtesy and urbanity of the prose. It follows that one of the things that a man must be wary of with Lewis is that a given argument or theory may assume a weight and validity more as a result of its phrasing than of its own merit. Perhaps many have thought more kindly of the Fall of man as an explanatory hypothesis since Newman looked about him and concluded that, if there was a God, then man had been involved in "some terrible aboriginal calamity." And perhaps many have

thought less kindly of Shakespeare's dash through the fifth act of Measure for Measure since Johnson's complaint that a cynical villain is "dismissed to happiness" because of it. It may be that ideas are more safely expressed by, not poor writers, but ones who are deliberately colorless, like Aristotle or Aquinas. But then Aristotle and Aquinas were not only not stylists; they were not romantics either. It is the purpose of this chapter, having pointed out the possible seduction of Lewis's prose, to show that the work of Lewis shows him, like Barfield, to be a romantic in the realm of religion.

I have called the chapter "The Baptism of the Imagination" (the metaphor is Lewis's) because I mean to show the progress of a certain sort of romantic imagination from irreligion into Christianity, and show further that the characteristic work produced by the baptized romantic imagination is baptized romance. It is not that the early imagination changes in the course of the progress; it is rather taken up into, subsumed by, religion. Lewis's metaphor puts it neatly: it is baptized; it remains essentially the same but, like the baptized soul, it begins to live in a new sphere in addition to the old. For my purpose the fictional works are of prime importance, since they show most clearly the romantic attitude toward religion, in fact, the romantic use of religion. But I hope also to show that this romanticized religion is not unconnected with Lewis's popularization of Christianity. It follows that such purely literary works as The Allegory of Love and English Literature in the Sixteenth Century I must ignore as irrelevant masterworks.

The progress mentioned above began in Lewis's childhood. He is by his own admission a congenital romantic of a certain sort; from the moment that he could choose his own books he was listening for "the horns of elfland."[1] So far as he can recall, his early experiences of beauty were "already incurably romantic, not formal." (p. 14) The very Irish countryside contributed to the romanticism:

> And every day there were what we called 'the Green Hills'; that is, the low line of the Castlereagh Hills which we saw from the nursery windows. They were not very far off but they were, to children, quite unattainable. They taught me longing--Sehnsucht; made me for good or ill, and before I was six years old, a votary of the Blue Flower. (p. 14)

Looking back on his boyhood, he distinguishes three separate experiences in which the longing made itself known. The first was a "memory of a memory." (p. 22) He stood in the garden one summer morning and suddenly recalled an earlier summer morning when his brother had brought his toy garden into the nursery. An indescribable emotion came over him, a wave of desire for something which he could not even conceive. In a moment it was past, leaving behind it only a "longing for the longing." (p. 22) It was over in a moment, but "in a certain sense everything else that had ever happened to me was insignificant in comparison." (p. 22) The second experience occurred as a result of reading a children's book, Beatrix Potter's Squirrel Nutkin. "It troubled me with what I can only describe as the Idea of Autumn. It sounds fantastic to say that one can become enamoured of a season, but that is something

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[1]Surprised By Joy (London, 1955), p. 12. The next several references are to this book; the page numbers will be indicated in the text.

like what happened; and, as before, the experience was one of intense desire." (p. 23) He returned to the book often, not because there was a possibility of gratifying the desire--he did not know what he desired --but to re-awake the desire itself. The third experience came through poetry, from Longfellow's translation of Tegner's Drapa. He read the lines

> I heard a voice that cried,
> Balder the beautiful
> Is dead, is dead-----

and immediately the longing possessed him again:

> I knew nothing about Balder; but instantly I was uplifted into huge regions of northern sky, I desired with almost sickening intensity something never to be described (except that it is cold, spacious, severe, pale, and remote) and then, as in the other examples, found myself at the very same moment already falling out of that desire and wishing I were back in it. (p. 23)

Analyzing the three experiences, Lewis finds their common quality. It is an "unsatisfied desire which is itself more desirable than any other satisfaction." (pp. 23-24) This quality he calls Joy, which is not to be confused with either happiness or pleasure. It has only one characteristic in common with them: "the fact that anyone who has experienced it will want it again....I doubt whether anyone who has tasted it would ever...exchange it for all the pleasures in the world." (p. 24) Nor is it to be confused with esthetic pleasure; it is sui generis, having what nothing else has, "the stab, the pang, the inconsolable longing." (p. 74) It cannot even be said to be really a possession; it is a reminder of what one does not have, "a desire for something

longer ago or further away or still 'about to be'." (p. 79)

He found Joy again, in his later youth, in Wagner and in the Norse and Teutonic myths, discovering in these what he had found earlier in Tegner's Drapa, the "Northerness," the vision of spaciousness, severity, even bleakness. Compared to the Joy of Northerness, the religion which he professed seemed weak and pallid. His inherited Anglicanism was merely formal, while the Northerness offered him scope for "something very like adoration, some kind of quite disinterested self-abandonment to an object which securely claimed this by simply being the object it was." (p. 78) He found it again in William Morris, in The Well at the World's End, Jason, The Earthly Paradise. But it was becoming rarer as the years went on, and finally it began to take the form of a memory of the experience, "joy in memory yet." He had to be content with the memory of what had been even in the beginning only a reminder.

It was then, at the age of sixteen, that he first read George Macdonald. The night that he read Phantastes marked the beginning of his reconversion to real, in place of merely accepted, Christianity. What he found in the book was romance of the Morris and early Yeats sort combined with religion; never had "the wind of Joy" (p. 170) blown so strongly through a work before:

> I had already been waist deep in Romanticism; and likely enough....to flounder into its darker and more evil forms, slithering down the deep descent that leads from the love of strangeness to that of eccentricity and thence to that of perversity. Now Phantastes was romantic enough in all

> conscience; but there was a difference. Nothing was at that time further from my thoughts than Christianity and I therefore had no notion what this difference really was. I was only aware that if this new world was strange, it was also homely and humble; that if this was a dream, it was a dream in which one at least felt strangely vigilant; that the whole book had about it a sort of cool, morning innocence....What it actually did to me was to convert, even to baptize...my imagination.[2]

At the time the baptism extended only to the imagination, not to the intellect or to the conscience. Later, when the final conversion to Christianity had been effected, he could return to Macdonald and see much that he had not seen the first time; but what he had seen the first time was a great deal. He had seen that romance and religion could be combined, and that when they were so the feeling of Joy was at its strongest. The later stages of his conversion enabled him to see more clearly the real character of Joy, this feeling that came to him most strongly on reading Christianized romance. "The form of the desired is in the desire. It is the object that makes the desire harsh or sweet, coarse or choice, 'high' or 'low'. It is the object that makes the desire itself desirable or hateful." (p. 208) He had not, he discovered, really desired Joy itself; he had desired the object of which Joy itself was the desire and which had given Joy the form it took. But the object had no connection with any state of his own mind or body; a process of elimination had shown him this. Therefore the object of Joy was something wholly other from himself; and this conclusion brought him

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[2]Preface to George Macdonald, An Anthology (New York, 1947), pp. 20-21.

"already into the region of awe." (p. 208) He was not yet a Christian, but the recognition of a wholly other had made him religious,

> ...for I thus understood that in deepest solitude there is a road right out of the self, a commerce with something which, by refusing to identify itself with any object of the senses, or anything whereof we have biological or social need, or anything imagined, or any state of our own minds, proclaims itself sheerly objective. Far more objective than bodies, for it is not, like them, clothed in our senses; the naked Other, imageless (though our imagination salutes it with a hundred images), unknown, undefined, desired. (pp. 208-9)

The baptism of the imagination has raised sehnsucht to religious awe; it only remained to determine whether any present religion was the "true" religion. And here we may revert to The Pilgrim's Regress, where the progress from romanticism to religion already described is shown to have a universal as well as a personal significance.

The book, which is "An Allegorical Apology for Christianity, Reason and Romanticism," tells the story of a boy, John, whose early religious training serves merely to frighten him by pressing upon him religious duties which he cannot perform. Occurring at the same time as his religious training, but wholly unconnected with it, are "fits of strange Desire, which haunt him from his earliest years, for something that cannot be named; something which he can describe only as 'Not this,' 'Far farther,' or 'Yonder'."[3] As he grows into youth, the desire begins to assume the form of an image of an island which is "partly in the west,

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[3]The Pilgrim's Regress (New York, 1935), p. 11. In the following discussion page references to this book will be found in the text.

partly in the past."[4] He gives up his religion with relief, though he retains to some degree his moral ideals, and goes in search of the island. He is in the condition that Plato described:

> This every soul seeketh and for the sake of this doth all her actions, having an inkling that it is; but what it is she cannot sufficiently discern, and she knoweth not her way, and concerning this she hath no constant assurance as she hath of other things. (p. 11)

He travels westward, away from the eastern mountains and the dimly discernible spires of the Landlord's castle (the Church). He stays for a while in the shire of Aesthetics, where thrilling romantic poetry promises that it will show him the object of his desire. It fails to do so; he discovers in it "the disguised erotic element" (p. 31) which purports to be something more. "He piques himself on seeing through adolescent illusions (as he now calls them) and adopts cynical modernity." (p. 31)

He moves on to the shire of Zeitgeistheim, where he examines current literature and the Freudian rationale from which it mostly proceeds. He comes to think that the Desire he feels is merely "a mask for lust, and that all systems save materialism are wish-fulfillment dreams." (p. 51) But he is not content in Zeitgeistheim; it occurs to him that Christianity cannot be a wish-fulfillment dream, for who would wish a system involving the dreadful punishments which Christianity threatens? He leaves Zeitgeistheim, returns to the main road, and continues westward.

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[4]Lewis, "Psycho-Analysis and Literary Criticism," Essays and Studies, XXVII (1942), p. 7.

He reaches the Grand Canyon and turns northward into the rarified intellectual climate of the Pale Men--Anglo-Catholicism (Eliot), Humanism (Babbitt), and Classicism (Santayana). These three are brothers, sons of old Mr. Enlightenment; they present a united front against a common enemy--the masses. But they are all intelligence; there is no room in their systems for the emotion which accompanies his Desire--which is his Desire. He leaves them and moves even further north, into the land of Fascism and Marxian Communism; he discovers that their glorious promises are only a "heroic facade," and that they really are "a genuine recrudescence of primeval cruelty and a rejection, along with the humane, of the human itself." (p. 115)

He moves southward along the canyon, through and out of the land of "'broad-church' modernist Christianity," (p. 137) into the shire of Hegeliana (which is just north of the shire called Anthroposophia and a good deal north of the vast region called Palus Theosophica). Here he discovers room for his Desire and also for his moral obligations. But he also discovers that idealism never stands alone in practice. "The Hegelians of the right draw their real strength from Christianity, those of the left from Communism." (p. 137) He tries to become a philosophical monist, but finds that he cannot maintain the theoretical distinction between the Hegelian Absolute and the Christian God. In spite of himself he begins to pray, and in this he is assisted by Divine Grace. As a result, he can no longer doubt "that his Desire, and his moral conscience, are both the voice of God." (p. 173)

So John, like Lewis himself, has been brought by his Desire to the ante-chamber of religion. To explain the next step in the journey, and to point out that the journey assumes an importance beyond the conversion of one man, it is necessary to turn for a moment to Barfield. For the next step--a very large one--is one which Lewis learned from Barfield's doctrine of the universe as the slow speaking out of the Divine Logos. (John did not object to Hegel; in fact, he became a Hegelian Christian.)

Until he met Barfield, Lewis had been a philosophical realist: he had held that "rock-bottom reality" consisted of "the universe revealed by the senses."[5] But at the same time he had "continued to make for certain phenomena of consciousness all the claims that really went with a theistic or idealistic view."[6] He had held that the mind was capable of achieving logical, moral and esthetic truth if it abided by certain rules of thought. Barfield convinced him that such a view was illogical.

> If thought were a completely subjective event, these claims for it would have to be abandoned. If one kept (as rock-bottom reality) the universe of the senses, aided by instruments and co-ordinated so as to form 'science', then one would have to go much further...and adopt a Behaviouristic theory of logic, ethics, and aesthetics. But such a theory was...unbelievable to me. ...I was therefore compelled to give up realism. ... Unless I were to accept an unbelievable alternative, I must admit that mind was no late-come epiphenomenon; that the whole universe was, in the last resort, mental; that our logic was participation in a cosmic Logos.[7]

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[5] Joy, p. 196.

[6] Joy.

[7] Joy, p. 197.

Lewis felt forced to accept, then, the general world-view of Barfield which has been examined at length in the preceding chapter. Now the Barfield evolution of consciousness (or evolution of God in man) throws a new and strange light on the subject of myth. We recall that current meanings of words are products of the active principle of division operating in human consciousness (as rational thought) and therefore operating in language itself. If we could trace the plurality of meanings (both literal and metaphorical) in a given word, we would, presumably, be moving back to a time when the word meant all its present meanings and more; we would be moving backwards toward that other great principle operating both in human consciousness and language which Barfield calls living unity.[8] Now what one finds in the classical myths, according to Barfield, are any number of these old single meanings before the divisive and analytical process has begun to work on them, meanings which are "delicately mummified"[9] for our present inspection. They explain (or contain), often enough, what we have come to call the "natural" metaphors, the relation between sleep and death and winter or the reverse of these, waking, birth, summer. If we could trace back such a natural metaphor as the one just mentioned, we should find an ancient single meaning from which all later meanings have descended.

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[8]Lewis accepts this process explicitly. An appendix to his Allegory of Love refers the reader to Poetic Diction for further explanation. The process is also assumed in Lewis's "Bluspels and Flalansferes: A Semantic Nightmare," in Rehabilitations and Other Essays (London, 1939).

[9]Poetic Diction, p. 91.

> ...in the beautiful myth of Demeter and Persephone we find precisely such a meaning. In the myth of Demeter the ideas of waking and sleeping, of summer and winter, of life and death, of mortality and immortality are all lost in one pervasive meaning. ... Mythology is the ghost of concrete meaning.[10]

Now Lewis, as well as accepting Barfield's evolving spiritual universe, learned from him "a more respectful, if not more delighted, attitude toward Pagan myth."[11] It is not hard to see why his attitude should be respectful. For if myth is the ghost of concrete meaning, it follows that myth is, in a way, true. It is true so far as it is the correct embodiment of the consciousness which evolved it (or as Barfield would say, perceived it). Like everything else in the world which is in the last resort mental, it is something which has been uttered by the Logos, and which therefore has presumptive relevance to that world. The relevance is explainable if we assume that myth prefigures later truth, adumbrates later truths arrived at through conceptual thought or, in the case of Christianity, through revelation. The process might be compared (though Lewis does not so compare it) to what biblical scholars call accommodation, the theory that God reveals His word to man in the way that man at that particular stage of civilization is best fitted to receive it. Accepting this view, then, Lewis asks, "Where has religion reached its true maturity? Where, if anywhere, have the hints of all Paganism been fulfilled?"[12]

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[10] Poetic Diction, pp. 91-92.

[11] Joy, p. 221.

[12] Joy.

Christianity is thus seen as the culmination of a long religious evolution; as the Old Testament prefigures the New, so all the dying gods which Frazer and others recorded, far from being proof that Christianity is only another such pagan myth, are really glad tidings of great joy, messages sent on beforehand to make straight the path of the real dying God. Regarded in this way, as Chesterton pointed out, pagan myths "make dust and nonsense of comparative religion."[13] This is the lesson that John learns from Father History; but what is more important for our present purpose is that he also learns the historical function of both his Desire and his author's Joy.

Father History explains to John that the Landlord has sent both "rules" and "pictures" to the tenants of his land, though he has not sent them together. The rules were sent to the Shepherd people (the Jews); the pictures have been sent to all the other tenants at various times. At one time, presumably, there was no conflict between the rules and the pictures, but now, because of the machinations of the Enemy, there is. (At the risk of being tiresome I point out that the pictures symbolize the imagination and the rules, the moral injunctions of God or conscience.) The best thing, says Father History, is to live with Mother Kirk from infancy "with a third thing which is neither the Rules nor the pictures and which was brought into the country by the Landlord's Son." (p. 194) But this happens very rarely:

> Even where Mother Kirk is nominally the ruler men can grow old without knowing how to read the Rules. Her empire is

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[13]The Everlasting Man (New York, 1955), p. 266.

> always crumbling. But it never quite crumbles: for as often as men become Pagans again, the Landlord again sends them pictures and stirs up sweet desire and so leads them back to Mother Kirk even as he led the actual Pagans long ago. There is, indeed, no other way. (p. 194)

Contrary to the usual belief that the Landlord never spoke to the Pagans, he "succeeded in getting a lot of messages through," (p. 195) in spite of the enemy's attempts to hinder him by passing about any number of false stories about him. The messages he got through were mostly pictures; in fact, one of the pictures was John's picture of his island. The Pagans made copies of their pictures, tried to get satisfaction from what was meant only to arouse desire. They made up stories about their pictures and then pretended their stories were true; they tried to satisfy the desire in lechery or in magic. But the Landlord did not allow them to stray too far.

> Just when their own stories seemed to have completely overgrown the original messages and hidden them beyond recovery, suddenly the Landlord would send them a new message and all their stories would look stale. Or just when they seemed to be growing really contented with lust or mystery-mongering, a new message would arrive and the old desire, the real one, would sting them again, and they would say 'Once more it has escaped us.' (p. 195)

The Shepherds had the rules and the Pagans had the pictures; but neither was complete without the other, "nor could either be healed until the Landlord's Son came into the country." (p. 198) (The imagination is faulty till it is baptized.) John objects that many have said that the pictures were dangerous and could lead one to evil. Father History replies that this is true, but that for a pagan there is no

other way. And most men, he adds, are pagans at heart; they will mostly want to stop with the desire that the pictures awake in them (remain simply romantic). But though the pictures are dangerous, they contain the only possibility of conversion for those who receive them. It follows that "those who preach down the desire under whatever pretext--Stoic, Ascetic, Rigorist, Realist, Classicist--are on the Enemy's side whether they know it or not." (pp. 199-200)

Over the centuries the desire-arousing pictures have taken various forms; but always they have awakened in men the special desire for something above or beyond the world in which they live. In the early Middle Ages, for example, which began in the decadent lusts of dying paganism, the Landlord sent a picture, not of a woman, but of a Lady. Men thrilled to the picture and turned from her to the women around them and saw them too in the new light of Ladyhood. Of course, the Enemy managed to garble the message somewhat, in the form of courtly love, but one of the tenants preserved the picture, the new form of the desire, carried it "right up to its natural conclusion and found what he had really been wanting. He wrote it all down in what he called a Comedy." (p. 200) Later, in the land of Mr. Enlightenment, when people were being forced into new cities and when Mammon was inventing the assembly line, the Landlord sent them a picture of the actual countryside. In this Romantic revelation, men looked at the picture, then looked at the real countryside and saw it differently.

> And a new idea was born in their minds, and they saw something--the old something, the Island West of the world, the

> Lady, the heart's desire--as it were hiding, yet not quite hidden, like something ever more about to be, in every wood and stream and under every field. And because they saw this, the land seemed to be coming to life, and all the old stories of the Pagans came back to their minds and meant more than the Pagans themselves ever knew: and because women were also in the landscape, the old Idea of the Lady came back too. For this is part of the Landlord's skill, that when one message had died he brings it to life again in the heart of the next. (pp. 201-202)

John's last fear is that his island may not have come from the Landlord, since it seems all at odds with the Rules which the Landlord has promulgated. Father History replies that John has proved that the picture came from the Landlord merely by living. Angular (Eliot, Anglo-Catholicism) would say that it did not; but Angular had not lived with it. He had only thought about it; but John's life has proved the origin because John has sought the object of desire in everything in this world and has found that "this desire is the perilous siege in which only One can sit." (p. 204)

I have said that The Pilgrim's Regress raised Joy to a universal level. In a later edition of the book, Lewis added marginal comments to help the allegory along. One reads: "There was a really Divine Element in John's Romanticism" (3rd ed., p. 151); and another, "Even Pagan mythology contained a Divine call." (p. 153) We may now fairly expand this to read that many things, romantic longing and pagan myth included among them, are sent by God to arouse in man that Desire for the wholly other which is Himself. Sehnsucht, the mountains of the moon, Das Ferne--all this is God-directed, a pulley (to use Herbert's phrase)

meant to haul man into Christian heaven. "Man's most persistent dream," the momentary and fleeting anguish of knowing somehow that something is missing, is but an art of the Almighty, a devious means for accomplishing His ends, necessarily devious, since the Fall has made His ends different from ours. Hulme, Lewis notes, has defined romanticism as spilt religion. Lewis accepts the description. "And I agree that he who has religion ought not to spill it. But does it follow that he who finds it spilled should avert his eyes? How if there is a man to whom those bright drops on the floor are the beginning of a trail which... will lead him in the end to taste the cup itself?"[14]

We may now turn to the creative work which a baptized romantic imagination will produce, the work of a man who considers romanticism to be religion purposefully spilled by the creator. Knowing as we do the influence on Lewis of both Macdonald and Barfield, we should not be surprised to find that the baptized imagination expresses itself most characteristically in the creation of myth, or, frequently, in giving traditional myth new depth and meaning. Romantic imagination baptized will remain romantic; and what is so romantic as myth? Myth is not only the ghost of concrete meaning; it is also strange and wonderful (rather than probable), its settings in the far off, the long ago--its very origins lost in a nebulous and opaque past. It is no accident that Shelley should turn to myth, nor that Keats should spend his brief life

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[14]Preface to the 3rd edition (Grand Rapids, Mich., 1958), p. 11.

trying to bring the Greek myths back to life in his poetry. It is no coincidence that Yeats, like Blake, should invent his own mythology and so prescind from flat conceptual statement. The "esemplastic" imagination turns naturally to myth. It is true, of course, that Joyce and the "classical" Eliot also utilize myth; but in their work myth assumes partly an ironic function, partly a structural one. The Fisher King in "The Waste Land" is merely an objective correlative meant to convey a sense of desolation and barreness; of itself it does not "mean" any more than the quotation from Wagner's Tristan and Isolde or the paraphrase of Shakespeare's description of Cleopatra. The Ulysses myth in Joyce's novel serves largely as a structure for the wanderings of Stephen Daedalus, or at the most an ironic contrast between past and present (parallel to the ironic contrast between the outer travels of Ulysses and the inner ones of Stephen) of the sort to be found in Eliot's contrast between Sweeney and Agamemnon in "Sweeney Among the Nightingales." Myth, for Joyce and Eliot, is merely a way of saying something utterly other than the myth itself; it serves as a metaphor, or as an adjunct. But the romantic imagination takes myth seriously. For Shelley the truth which he is trying to convey is not separable from his myth of Prometheus, any more than for Melville the truth he is concerned with is separable from the myth of the Titans which concludes Pierre. The romantic marries his meaning to the myth, as in Faulkner; Eliot and Joyce's meanings are merely acquainted with it. Yeats does not merely use Spiritus Mundi in "The Second Coming": the myth is the

meaning ("How can we tell the dancer from the dance?"). When the romantic is a Christian, the myth becomes, not merely a vehicle for conveying a detachable truth which could as well be said another way but rather a myth married to Christian meaning. It is with this kind of Christian myth that I mean to deal mostly in the following pages, for it is in Christian myth that the union of romance and religion is most obvious.

Lewis has had much to say about myth. We have already seen that he considers Christianity the culmination of the fragmentary truths inherent in the pagan myths: that "the myth must have become fact; the Word, flesh; God, Man."[15] He has even created a "myth" to explain what happened to man at the Fall; it is, he says, "an account of what may have been the historical fact," and it is "not to be confused with 'myth' in Dr. Niebuhr's sense (i.e., a symbolical representation of non-historical truth)."[16] Elsewhere, he works out a kind of progressive scale of truth from mythical to historical, though the scale is "tentative and liable to any amount of correction."[17] According to this scale, "the truth first appears in mythical form [Here he presumably means mythical in the sense of "a symbolical representation of non-historical truth."] and then by a long process of condensing or focussing finally becomes incarnate as History."[18] Thus there is a progress

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[15] Joy, p. 222.

[16] The Problem of Pain (New York, 1946), p. 64.

[17] Miracles (New York, 1947), p. 161.

[18] Miracles.

from pagan myth to the Old Testament and a further progress from the Old Testament to the New, the last parts of the Old being scarcely less historical than the events recorded in the New. Such a progress

> involves the belief that Myth in general is not merely misunderstood history (as Euhemerus thought) nor diabolical illusion (as some of the Fathers thought) nor priestly lying (as the philosophers of the Enlightenment thought) but, at its best, a real though unfocussed gleam of divine truth falling on human imagination.[19]

He adds that the Hebrews, like the pagans, had a mythology; but, because they were the chosen people, "so their mythology was the chosen mythology--the mythology chosen by God to be the vehicle of the earliest sacred truths...."[20] Here again, though Lewis does not mention "accommodation," it looks very much as if what he is saying is that God grants man as much truth as man can at the moment assimilate in the form most intelligible to him. The Hebrews were not yet able to comprehend full truth about God, what we should call final, literal truth; thus they were given a mythical explanation, as we tell children that the gifts come from Santa Claus because they are unable to realize the concept that love is correlative with giving. Lewis, it will be clear, is looking at Barfield's evolution of consciousness from the point of view of God, which is a difficult feat when we consider that, for Barfield, the evolution of consciousness <u>is</u> God. Barfield would say that the Meaning which the Logos was uttering had not yet arrived at the stage of conceptual thought in human consciousness, and so became

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[19] <u>Miracles</u>.

[20] <u>Miracles</u>.

extant as myth. But Lewis, though he has accepted the Barfield view by his own admission, continues to refer to God as transcendent rather than immanent. (It seems a curious contradiction. God, for Lewis, is the Wholly Other; yet the world is in the last resort mental, and our logic is a participation in the Divine Logos. Perhaps the contradiction is not as basic as it seems to me; perhaps the Hegelian-Christian God can in some way be said to be both immanent and transcendent, as in the Christian mystery of the Incarnation. In any case, I am not aware that Lewis anywhere resolves the question.)[21]

At any rate, the view that truth evolves slowly from mythical (that is, symbolical) to historical is understandable. In this view, as we have seen, the Incarnation becomes myth made fact; Christianity becomes historical truth, and all pagan fables and philosophies are seen to be more or less true guesses of the shape of things to come. Vergil's "Messianic Eclogue" becomes a true guess; the Manichean and Platonic guess about the evil of matter, a false guess. "Plato might despise the flesh," Chesterton observed, "but God had not despised it."[22] And Yeats echoes the change:

> Odor of blood when Christ was slain
> Makes all Platonic tolerance vain,
> And vain all Doric discipline.[23]

But Lewis sometimes seems to depart from this view, perhaps because it

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[21]Kathleen Nott thinks that Lewis's monism is superficial, that he is often "troubled...by the old difficulty of Cartesian dualism." The Emperor's Clothes (Bloomington, Ind., 1958), p. 259.

[22]St. Thomas Aquinas (New York, 1933), p. 139.

[23]Second of "Two Songs For A Play."

assigns to myth a function which is now past and assumes therefore that myth can be dispensed with. It is difficult to maintain "a respectful attitude" toward pagan myth if it amounts to little more than a fine primer, useful for the boy but superceded for the man. Thus he remarks that "our mythology may be much nearer to literal truth than we suppose."[24] And John, having on the advice of Mother Kirk taken a headlong dive into the pool and come up beyond the land of Peccatum Adae, is taught "many mysteries in the earth," and he passes "through many elements, dying many deaths." (p. 218) According to the scale discussed above, he should be dealing now (in the Church) with fact, not myth. But this seems not to be the case. Wisdom tells him that what he is experiencing must be figurative; and the marginal note reads: "He comes where Philosophy said no man could come." (3rd ed., p. 171) But a voice behind him replies:

> Child, if you will, it is mythology. It is but truth, not fact: an image, not the very real. But then it is My mythology. The words of Wisdom are also myth and metaphor: but since they do not know themselves for what they are, in them the hidden myth is master, where it should be servant: and it is but of man's inventing. But this is My inventing, this is the veil under which I have chosen to appear even from the first until now. For this end I made your senses and for this end your imagination, that you might see My face and live. What would you have? Have you not heard among the Pagans the story of Semele? Or was there any age in any land when men did not know that corn and wine were the blood and body of a dying and yet living God? (pp. 219-20)

It is easy enough, of course, to speak loosely of Christianity as

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[24] Problem of Pain, p. 124.

the "true" myth, the real story as distinct from all the pagan rumors. But if truth (like Tennyson's freedom) slowly broadens down from precedent to precedent and becomes in the end historical fact, then to call Christianity myth is only to muddle matters. I take the above passage to mean that Christianity (for John hears this after he has returned to the Church) is a further and higher "accommodation"; or, to put it differently, I take it to mean that Christianity is not Truth but only relative truth, more nearly true than pagan myth and Old Testament prefiguration, but still mythical, still metaphorical. But Christ was not a myth either in Lewis's scale or in his Christianity; He was not a prefiguration, not a symbol, but the end and fulfillment of all prefigurations and symbols, the myth made incarnate in fact. And a fact is not a myth, even in a universe which is in the last resort mental.[25] I do not mean to carp. Lewis's remarks on the subject of myth were made over a period of years; as he has said, his views are subject to revision, and obviously a man may change his mind. All that I mean to point out before I deal with his fictionalized mythology is that he has no settled view of mythology as it is related to historical Christianity.

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[25]Cf. M. C. D'Arcy: "Independently...of Christianity human societies have been able to separate what is genuine from what is counterfeit, and the good numen is not just a projection of the unconscious but a happy, if confused, glimpse of truth. But in Christianity the truth is free from subjective fancyings; it comes down from above and exercises the severest control of symbol and image and fantasy; it can be as cold as ice and as inflexible as the historical fact on which it rests, and it beats down upon the soul with all the alien power of an existent truth which is not a dream." The Mind and Heart of Love (New York, 1956), p. 170.

He advances the notion, for example (in the trilogy), that all myth may exist as fact somewhere in the universe. The theory may be merely fanciful, or it may be an ad hoc argument for the sake of his planetary novels. In any case, it is further evidence that his view of myth and mythology is indeed "tentative."

But if his mythology is unsystematic, his purpose in using it as embodiment of Christian truth is clear enough. His novels may be best described as he described Macdonald's work: "fantasy that hovers between the allegorical and the mythopoeic."[26] And this kind of fantasy has an impressive effect on the reader, one that a religious writer may well utilize. "It gets under our skin, hits us at a level deeper than our thoughts or even our passions, troubles oldest certainties till all questions are re-opened, and in general shocks us more fully awake than we are for most of our lives."[27] In the novels, then, we see a professed Christian turning to romantic fantasy and myth with a serious purpose, uniting (as I hope to show) the religion with the myth so that the eternal good news of Christianity comes to the reader with an imaginative shock, comes to him, in fact, as romance. Lewis's remark on Christian literature is here appropriate, though he would be the last to claim such praise for his own work.

> When Christian work is done on a serious subject there is no gravity and no sublimity it cannot attain. But they will belong to the theme. That is why they will be real

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[26]Preface to George Macdonald, An Anthology, p. 14.

[27]Preface to George Macdonald, An Anthology, pp. 16-17.

> and lasting--mighty nouns with which literature, an adjectival thing, is here united, far over-topping the fussy and ridiculous claims of literature that tries to be important simply as literature.[28]

We may begin with Till We Have Faces, which is last in the order of publication but first in the sense that it deals with the end of paganism and is in fact a kind of preamble to Lewis's mythical version of Christianity. The book is "A Myth Retold," that of Cupid and Psyche. The only extant source of the original myth is the second century The Transformations of Lucius Apuleius of Madaura or, as it has come to be known, The Golden Ass of Apuleius. In Apuleius's book, the story is told by an old woman to a young girl being held prisoner in a cave by a band of brigands. It is often taken as an "allegory of the progress of the rational soul towards intellectual love,"[29] though in The Golden Ass it seems to have only a tenuous connection with Apuleius's conversion to a mystery religion. Listening to it in his asinine form, he remarks merely that it is a "beautiful story."[30]

Briefly, the story of the myth as it appears in Apuleius is as follows. Cupid has the west wind carry off Psyche, the youngest of a certain king's three daughters, to a secluded place. There he visits her bed only by darkness so that she never sees his face. Under the urging of her jealous sisters, she lights a lamp one night as he sleeps,

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[28]"Christianity and Literature" in Rehabilitations, p. 196.

[29]Robert Graves, Introduction to The Golden Ass of Apuleius (New York, 1954), p. xvi.

[30]Graves translation, p. 130.

a drop of hot oil splashes on his shoulder, and he vanishes. Venus, vexed that her son should marry a human, apprehends Psyche, flogs her, and sets her various tasks to do. She must sort out a huge quantity of different kinds of seeds; in this an army of ants helps her. She must then fetch Venus a hank of wool from the sides of the golden sheep of the gods. She contemplates suicide but is dissuaded by a reed, which also tells her to wait till the sheep are asleep and then pluck the wool. She follows its advice. Venus then orders her to climb the mountain Aroanius and bring back a jar of water from a stream at the place where the stream begins from the rock. She cannot cross the River Styx and pass the dragons to reach the stream, but an eagle takes her jar and fills it for her. Enraged, Venus orders her to descend into the underworld of Tartarus, go the palace of Pluto, and bring back a box containing a small bit of the beauty of Queen Proserpine. A tower dissuades her again from suicide and tells her to go to the city of Taenarus, where she will find an entrance to the underworld. She must carry with her two pieces of barley bread soaked in honey water and two coins in her mouth. She is to pass by a lame ass and its lame driver when the driver asks for her help. When she reaches the river of the dead, she is to let Charon take a coin from her mouth as his fee. On the ferry she will look into the water and see the corpse of an old man which will raise his hand imploringly, but she must feel no pity for him. Again ashore, she will meet three women weaving cloth who will ask for help, but she is forbidden to touch the cloth. All of these

apparitions, says the tower, are traps set by Venus to make her relinquish her barley bread, the loss of which will keep her forever in the underworld. The bread she must feed to Cerberus, one piece as she enters Pluto's palace and one as she leaves. While she is there she will be offered sumptuous fare, but she must decline it, sit on the ground and eat only bread. On the way back she must give her second coin to Charon; and she must not open the box containing divine beauty. All this is fulfilled; but when she returns to the upper world she cannot resist opening the box, whereupon she falls into a deep sleep. She is rescued by Cupid, who pleads their marital cause before Jupiter. They are married with all godly ceremony and Psyche bears Cupid a daughter named Pleasure (Voluptas).

Now Lewis's retelling of this myth is anything but simple, and as a result the book has been much misunderstood. Lewis has remarked that he "felt quite free to go behind Apuleius,"[31] because he considers that Apuleius is the transmitter of the story and not its inventor. Apuleius's story "in relation to my work...is a 'source', not an 'influence' or a 'model'." (p. 313) Of course, what is "behind" Apuleius is not a version of the myth at all but only the material (what Barfield would call the "undifferentiated meaning") out of which Apuleius's late version has been fashioned. What Lewis is trying to do in the book is to

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[31] Till We Have Faces (New York, 1956), p. 313. In the following discussion page references to this book will be in the text.

recreate the ancient consciousness which saw a part of reality in terms of the myth; and such a consciousness is a good deal older and more naive than the consciousness of the man who wrote it down in the second century after Christ. Or, to revert to Barfield once more, the mind perceiving reality in terms of myth is not nearly so conscious of itself. What we have in the novel is a picture of man just beginning the last phase of Steiner's "flight from nature," attaining to self-consciousness and thereby acquiring the corollary of self-consciousness, the conceptual intellect. When once it is recalled that primitive man did not, for centuries, see himself as distinct from nature, and therefore was not rational and therefore was not Man in the usual sense of the word, then much of what seems puzzling about the story becomes clear.

The story is told in the form of a complaint to the gods by Psyche's oldest sister, Orual. She has written down her version of the Psyche story as a vindication of herself and an accusation against the gods. The three daughters of the king of Glome (which is vaguely to the east and north of Greece and, in time, somewhere between Aristotle and the historical Incarnation) are tutored by a captured Greek rationalist named the Fox. The kingdom worships a goddess called Ungit under the appearance of a great shapeless mass of stone in a misshapen stone temple. But the Fox has taught Orual and Psyche (the third sister, Redival, is too stupid to care) to treat Ungit in the new Greek rationalist fashion, to debunk her in fact. The Fox equates Ungit with the

Greek Aphrodite: both are merely lies of poets. The land becomes barren, and the high priest of Ungit tells the king that a sacrifice is required. Because of Psyche's beauty and goodness, rumor has gone about that she can cure ills by touch, can impart beauty to others, can, in short, dispense favors like a goddess. The priest fixes on Psyche for her supposed blasphemy and demands that she be given to the god of the Grey Mountain, who is also called the Shadowbrute.

All the Fox's rational admonishment cannot persuade the king to save Psyche, for the king believes the priest when the priest tells him that "the Brute is, in a mystery, Ungit herself or Ungit's son, the god of the Mountain; or both." (p. 48) The victim must be tied to a tree atop the mountain and left for the Brute. To the Fox's assertion that the priest is calling Psyche the best and the worst of the land at the same time, and so contradicting himself, the priest replies that he has dealt with the gods for three generations and knows that

> ...they dazzle our eyes and flow in and out of one another like eddies on a river, and nothing that is said clearly can be said truly about them. Holy places are dark places. It is life and strength, not knowledge and words, that we get in them. Holy wisdom is not clear and thin like water, but thick and dark like blood. Why should the Accursed not be both the best and the worst? (p. 49)

Psyche herself partly believes the Fox, partly the priest. She concludes finally that the Fox has not all the truth, that there is much in what the priest says. She then reveals to Orual that, as long as she can remember, she has had a longing for death. In fact, what she felt was something very close to the <u>sehnsucht</u>, the vision of the

island, already discussed. She would look across the valley at the mountain:

> And because it was so beautiful, it set me longing, always longing. Somewhere else there must be more of it. Everything seemed to be saying, Psyche come! But I couldn't (not yet) come and I didn't know where I was to come to. It almost hurt me. I felt like a bird in a cage when the other birds are flying home. (p. 74)

Ultimately she convinces herself that she has always longed for the god of the mountain, and goes happily to the sacrifice.

Weeks later Orual and Bardia (the commander of the palace guard) journey up the Grey Mountain to see if there are any remains to be buried. They are dismayed to find Psyche alive and looking like a goddess. She tells Orual her story. She was lifted out of her chains by West-wind--not an _it_, _he_. Looking on him, she was ashamed of being a mortal. He carried her to the god's palace, where spirits bathed and fed her. Later the god came to her in the darkness. As she tells Orual this, she leads her into the palace. But Orual cannot see the palace, only trees; she cannot taste the wine Psyche gives her, only water. She thinks Psyche either hoaxed by some lecherous monster or simply mad. Psyche in turn is heartbroken that Orual cannot see what she herself sees; there is "a rasping together of two worlds, like the two bits of a broken bone." (p. 120)

Camped across the stream from Psyche's palace, Orual sees (or thinks she sees) the palace for a moment, but it fades into swirls of fog. Bardia voices what would be the belief of all Glome when she asks him what he thinks has happened:

> The god and the Shadowbrute were all one. She had been given to it. We had got our rain and water....The gods, for their share, had got her away to their secret places where something, so foul it would not show itself, some holy and sickening thing, ghostly or demonlike or bestial--or all three (there's no telling, with gods)--enjoyed her at its will. (p. 137)

Orual goes back to Glome and hears the whole thing explained away by the Fox. She prays to the gods de profundis, but receives no answer. She returns to the mountain and threatens to commit suicide unless Psyche will light the lamp and look on her lover. Psyche sadly agrees, asserting that Orual's love differs little from hatred.

Orual crouches beside the stream that night, looking into the blackness. A light glints; there is a shout of golden sound, then the noise of Psyche's sobs. Amid thunder and lightning the bright man-like figure of the god stands before Orual, and she feels that she has always known that Psyche's lover was a god, that she has been wilfully and hatefully blind. The god speaks to her:

> Now Psyche goes out in exile. Now she must hunger and thirst and tread hard roads. Those against whom I cannot fight must do their will upon her. You, woman, shall know yourself and your work. You also shall be Psyche. (pp. 173-74)

In time, Orual becomes queen of Glome. Ten or fifteen years later she takes a trip to neighboring Essuria, where she comes on a little roadside temple. The priest tells her that it is a temple of the new goddess Istra (Psyche). When she questions him about Istra, he tells her the whole story of Cupid and Psyche much as it appears in Apuleius: both sisters went to the palace, both saw it, both were

jealous. It is then that Orual determines to write her book, her accusation against the gods; for she of all people knows that the story the gods have implanted in human imagination is false.

> I say the gods deal very unrightly with us. For they will neither...go away and leave us to live our own short days to ourselves, nor will they show themselves openly and tell us what they would have us do. For that too would be endurable. But to hint and hover, to draw near us in dreams and oracles, or in a waking vision that vanishes as soon as seen, to be dead silent when we question them and then glide back and whisper (words we cannot understand) in our ears when we most wish to be free of them, and to show to one what they hide from another; what is all this but cat-and-mouse play...? Why must holy places be dark places? (p. 249)

In spite of her hatred of the gods, Orual cannot fail to perceive that the simple people of Glome derive comfort from Ungit. Soon both her waking and sleeping consciousness become obsessed with Ungit: in what seems to be a dream she replies to her dead father's question, "I am Ungit." (p. 276) After that she can no longer tell dream from reality, and in fact is half-convinced that there is no essential difference. She goes to a riverbank, intending to drown herself, but a god's voice tells her that she cannot escape Ungit by going to the deadlands; Ungit is there also. "Die before you die," he tells her; "there is no chance after." (p. 279) She concludes that the god means something like the Eleusinian mysteries in which an initiate is said to die in evil in order to live in good. And then she remembers her Socrates, his saying "that true wisdom is the skill and practice of death." (p. 281) She sets out to lead the true Socratic, examined life, but fails miserably.

Then in another dream she sees the golden-fleeced sheep of the gods. As she goes forward to pluck their wool they turn and trample her. When she recovers, she sees another woman calmly picking the shreds of wool from the thickets which the rams have rushed past in their onslaught on Orual. Orual now despairs "of ever ceasing to be Ungit." (p. 284) She comforts herself with the thought that at least she has loved Psyche truly; but then, in a vision, she finds herself walking over desert sands, carrying an empty bowl. In this vision she is Ungit's prisoner and must bring back the water of death from the spring that rises in the deadlands. An eagle from the gods comes to her, but on finding that she is Orual refuses to help her. She discovers that the bowl has become her book, her complaint against the gods. She is taken to a vast cave and placed on a promontory before the endless masses of the dead. Her complaint is to be heard.

She is stripped naked. "The old crone with her Ungit face stood naked before those countless gazers. No thread to cover me, no bowl in my hand to hold the water of death; only my book." (p. 289) Orual reads out her harangue: the gods have stolen Psyche from her, have made Psyche different from what she was and from what Orual wanted her to be. "We want to be our own," (p. 291) she tells them. As she reads she becomes aware that she is confessing her real selfishness and cruel love, that she is at last speaking in her real voice. The judge asks if she has been answered. She replies that she has been: "The complaint was the answer." (p. 294) She has said what has been buried in her soul

for years but which she has never been able to say, the word that has revealed her to herself as a responsible being. "I saw well why the gods do not speak to us openly, nor let us answer. Till that word can be dug out of us, why should they hear the babble that we think we mean? How can they meet us face to face till we have faces?" (p. 294)

The shade of the Fox reveals that his easy Greek rationalism is too shallow to hold the truth about the gods. He has taught her to think of the gods as lies of poets and false images; he should have taught her that they are "too true an image of the demon within." (p. 295) He has learned since death that the way to the gods is not through rationalism but through something much more like the Ungit worship. "The Priest knew at least that there must be sacrifices. They will have sacrifice--will have man." (p. 295) The Fox takes Orual to a chamber where the walls are covered with paintings that come alive and move. She sees Psyche at the riverbank, contemplating suicide; she sees Psyche, helped by ants, sorting out the seeds; she sees Psyche taking the rams' wool at her leisure as the rams trample down an intruder. She sees Psyche in the desert with herself as Psyche's shadow; the eagle comes and fills Psyche's bowl for her with the water of death. The Fox tells her that much of Psyche's anguish she has herself born. "We're all limbs and parts of one Whole," says the Fox. "Hence, of each other. Men, and gods, flow in and out and mingle." (pp. 300-301) Orual bore the anguish, but Psyche achieved the tasks.

They look at the last picture. It is of Psyche descending to the

deadlands to perform the last of Ungit's tasks. Orual asks if there is a real Ungit. The Fox replies:

> All, even Psyche, are born into the house of Ungit. All must get free from her. Or say that Ungit in each must bear Ungit's son and die in childbed--or change. And now Psyche must go down into the deadlands to get beauty in a casket from the Queen of the Deadlands, from death herself; and bring it back to give to Ungit so that Ungit will become beautiful. (p. 301)

But Psyche must speak to no one on her journey or all is lost. First she meets a crowd of people from Glome who ask her to be their princess and oracle; she continues on without speaking. She meets the Fox, who tries to rationalize her out of her task; she ignores him. Finally she meets Orual, who tries to persuade her to come back to their old world; Psyche is much moved but goes on, unspeaking. All things in these pictures are true, the Fox tells Orual; she and the Fox really have done those things.

> She had no more dangerous enemies than us. And in that far distant day when the gods become wholly beautiful, or we at last are shown how beautiful they always were, this will happen more and more. For mortals...will become more and more jealous. And mother and wife and child and friend will all be in league to keep a soul from being united with the Divine Nature. (p. 304)

When Orual asks how the gods will become beautiful, the Fox replies that he knows little of it, even though he is dead; but he does know that the age in which they live "will one day be the distant past. And the Divine Nature can change the past. Nothing is yet in its true form." (p. 305)

Psyche returns with the casket and gives it to Orual, to make

Ungit beautiful. Orual sees that Psyche is radiant, like a goddess; but then she concludes that she has simply never seen a real woman before. The god comes to judge Orual; she stands hand in hand with Psyche beside a pool in a pillared court.

> I was being unmade. I was no one...rather, Psyche herself was, in a manner, no one. I loved her as I would once have thought it impossible to love, would have died any death for her. And yet, it was not, not now, she that really counted. Or if she counted...it was for another's sake. The earth and stars and stars and sun, all that was or will be, existed for his sake. And he was coming. The most dreadful, the most beautiful, the only dread and beauty there is, was coming. (p. 307)

She looks down into the water at her feet; she cannot tell which reflection is hers and which Psyche's: both are beautiful. The voice of the god says again, "You also are Psyche." (p. 308) Orual wakes from her vision to find herself in her garden, her book open before her. Her book concludes with her death:

> I know now, Lord, why you utter no answer. You are yourself the answer. Before your face questions die away. What other answer would suffice? Only words, words; to be led out to battle against other words. Long did I hate you, long did I fear you. I might-- (p. 308)

The book, as I have said, has been much misunderstood. One critic has called it religious allegory which is "plain to read," religious allegory "in which the great gulf between faith and skepticism yawns wide, in which rationalism is shown to be blind when it stands on the threshold of revelation...."[32] And another critic comments, "This is not

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[32]B. R. Redman, "Love Was the Weapon," SRL, XXXX (Jan. 12, 1957), 15.

allegory; call it symbolism and forsake quibbling."[33] The truth is rather that the book is exactly what the title says it is, a myth retold; and a myth retold remains a myth, not an allegory, not symbolism; it remains the kind of truth "which must be grasped with the imagination, not with the intellect."[34] Lewis has, as he says, gone behind the story as Apuleius recorded it; he has gone behind Apuleius' neat allegory, which is a late and rational redaction of the myth, to deal with Barfield's concrete meaning, of which the myth itself is merely the ghost. The story is a myth retold, but it is not the Apuleius story retold; we may say, in fact, in terms of the origin of the Cupid-Psyche myth, that Lewis's version comes first and is a source for Apuleius's version. For Lewis's version is an attempt to present the almost unindividuated meaning itself out of which myth, allegory and symbol may later be extracted. It is an attempt to present pure aboriginal meaning in which, as potency, all later meanings reside. If this is the case, it follows that the Lewis story ought to have the density and opacity of Barfield's ancient unity of meaning; and in fact it has these qualities: they comprise the critics' difficulties of interpretation.

The major obstacle that the reader encounters in the book is the temptation to accept the characters of the book as "real" characters,

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[33] T. F. Curley, "Myth into Novel," Commonweal, LXV (Feb. 8, 1957), 495.

[34] Regress, preface to 3rd edition, p. 13.

people who have a life of their own on the story level although they may "stand for" something else on another level. In short, the temptation is to read the book as an allegory of the sort to be found in The Faerie Queene, in which Archimago, for example, has a story life and a symbolic meaning as well. But Psyche and Orual become one, or are discovered to have been one all along: this is incomprehensible on the story level unless we assume that Psyche was literally taken up by West-wind and that Orual, in the end, is simply suffering from anile hallucinations. The truth is that Orual and Psyche are not "real" persons but rather adumbrations of real persons. They have a modicum of individuality and objectivity, but they have not become fixed and permanent. They hover between symbolic existence and fictional reality because the world they live in hovers between potential and actual existence. It is a dream and nightmare world, an early phase of a world which is in the last resort mental. Men and gods mingle and flow in and out of each other, as the Fox says. Nothing is fixed yet, nothing has assumed its final form. The matter of the myth is the last fluctuation of a world which has been in a state of flux since the beginning and is only to assume its final shape at some time soon after the story itself takes place.

None of the people in the story, then, has received the stamp of finality; none may truly be said to be Men. As Barfield said of the ancients who practised original participation, they are all of them dreamers and unfree. They are (and also stand for) the penultimate stage

in the evolution of man. "We're all limbs and parts of one Whole," says the Fox; in Barfield's terms, what the Fox means is that all are aspects of the Idea of Man being progressively thought out be the Logos. All the characters in the book are subject to a revision of the pattern; they are malleable, they have not hardened yet; they are, as the title suggests, without individuality, without faces, the molten lead not yet poured into the mould. All the elements have been collected but are not as yet fused by the final creative act of the Word. In this sense, Psyche stands for, or is, the last creative touch of digitus Dei, the last ingredient necessary in the makeup of Man. All else has been present for centuries: rationality (the Greek rationalism of the Fox transferred to the passionate and naturally loving nature of Orual), the capacity to apprehend the numinous (shown in the priest and people of Glome), the very felt need of religion. The only thing lacking is what Psyche has always felt: the longing, the desire for what she can only call death, the wanting to be both with God and in another world. It is no accident that the closer toward union that Psyche and Orual come, the more dissatisfied Orual is with pagan polytheism and the more she feels that her faults lie not in her stars but in herself. Her complaint is against the gods; when she mingles with Psyche, Ungit becomes beautiful--the nightmare gods become "you" and "Lord." Man is finally created when human consciousness is capable of not only human love, rationality, apprehension of the numinous and need of religious solace, but when it is capable of an intense

otherworldly religious desire which can only be comforted in monotheism.[35]

There is in the book what Barfield calls the "pervasive meaning" of myth. The meaning is one which fuses death and birth and life, the twilight of the gods and the birth of God: Orual, the level of consciousness which perceives the fragmentary truth of God as Ungit, and perceives that man makes his own gods, must die so that the Ungit in man's consciousness may die and so become beautiful in the concept of One God. We might say that the pervasive meaning is growth: continuous life sloughing off old forms and attaining to new ones. The process of growth is occurring in the consciousness of western man, and the process culminates in the union of ancient religious feeling with the concept of a single, transcendent and loving God.

Now if my imagination has grasped the myth rightly, or approximately so, certain interesting implications follow. I have said that the time of the story is roughly between Aristotle (whose Metaphysics Orual studies with the Fox) and the historical Incarnation. If this is the case, and if the myth suggests (as I think it does) that man is

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[35]Orual and Psyche are also understandable as rough equivalents of the two principles of existence in the human make-up which D'Arcy calls animus and anima: animus, the egotistical, intellectual drive analogous to Aristotle's and Aquinas's "act"; and anima, the self-effacing, non-intellectual, passive desire analogous to "potency." These two drives are reminiscent of Barfield's terms Do and Suffer (poiein and paschein), those "principles" of Aristotle's nous whose proper names (we recall) may well be Sun and Moon.

not really man until a certain religious consciousness has been reached, then man arrived at his final stage of evolution (and became really man) only at about the time of Christ. Or if that is too sweeping, then at least western man arrived at manhood at about that historical period. Before that time what we think of as western man was really what we should call western pre-man, or, as the myth suggests, a shadow and dream of western Man-to-come (in Barfield's terms, the slow clarification of the Idea Man in the Logos). From this point of view, the ancients are relegated indeed to a Limbo, are indeed little more than the shades in Homer's Hades, little bats' voices twittering and squeaking in the shadows of the underworld, potency in the mind of the world on its way to becoming act. Their existence was one of seed or sapling, an existence not so much extinguished as fused with the later, and final, stage of growth. Further, from this point of view, the Incarnation (and consequent return of the possibility of salvation) occurred as soon as it could, as soon as man was created, or re-created, after the Fall. There is no necessity of making the effects of the Incarnation retroactive to include the ancient pagans (which is Barfield's objection to Williams's theology), for the ancient pagans of a mental world are Man's youth subsumed in the grown Man. Lewis's myth of the Fall is relevant here. According to the myth (in the sense of what may have been historical fact), man, as a result of the Fall, lost "status as a species. What man lost by the Fall was his original specific nature."[36] He had been

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[36] Problem of Pain, p. 70.

originally "all consciousness";[37] all of his physical functions were under the direction of his will, as were his appetites. With the Fall, "rational consciousness became what it now is--a fitful spotlight resting on a small part of the cerebral motions."[38] If I read the myth of the later book rightly, and if I may presume to stretch Lewis's tentative theories of mythology, then what may have happened at the Fall was that man lost all consciousness, so became no longer man, and then was (so to say) re-created over aeons as consciousness returned slowly by stages of evolution. This view postulates a hiatus between the Fall and the Incarnation if we regard both events as historical occurrences, as Lewis presumably does; there must have been an indeterminate time when man, morally speaking, did not exist, the time coming to an end at the Incarnation. But a lapse of mere "profane time"[39] is of relatively little importance in an ultimately mental world.[40] And the necessity and the effects of the Incarnation remain the same; as soon as man is re-created he is in the state of original sin and needs

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[37]Problem of Pain, p. 65.

[38]Problem of Pain, p. 71

[39]The term is Mercia Eliade's coinage; see Cosmos and History (New York, 1959), p. 35.

[40]Charles Williams often toys with this idea, as in his remark about the end of the Grail Quest. Joseph of Arimathie says mass in Sarras; then a bishop, surrounded by angels, says a Mass of Our Lady --a bishop who may be Christ. Williams comments that even Malory's version suggests "that at that moment something like the Creation and the Redemption exist at once." "Malory and the Grail Legend," Image of the City and Other Essays (London, 1958), pp. 193-94.

redemption. Orual stumbles onto her own responsibility, the fact that she has sinned--and immediately arrives at the awareness of a single, awing God.

In any case, the myth is, as I have said, the preamble to Lewis's mythopoeic Christianity. I have said that the pervasive meaning that informs the myth is growth, which means both decay and birth. An air of Die Gotterdamerung hangs over the whole story. The rising rationalism, the coming of the conceptual intellect of which the Fox is symbolic (or which the Fox is a part of) is driving the gods into the limbo of abstractions where they will have their only existence for the Roman empire to come.[41] And parallel with the death of the gods is the changing concept of religious sacrifice: both the death and the change point toward something new, something about to be. The gods, says the Fox, will have sacrifice, will have man--in the wisdom of death perceiving that even pagan polytheism is closer to the truth than mere rationalism. Psyche and Orual share the burden of arriving at the new stage of humanity; they are phantoms who sacrifice (or as Williams would say, substitute) for each other. The consciousness of man is shaping itself toward, becoming capable of perceiving, the great and unique sacrifice that is to come to it, the Incarnation. In this sense the myth is a rumor; it is "a symbolical representation of non-historical

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[41]Lewis discusses this in detail in the chapter on allegory in Allegory of Love, the chapter already referred to as being indebted to Barfield.

truth." It is truth on its way from symbolic to historical: truth that will soon become fact at Bethlehem in "the uncontrollable mystery on the bestial floor."

From the preamble we may turn to the current stage of Christianity as it appears to the mythopoeic imagination, to what Lewis refers to as his "planetary romances." They owe much to the science fiction of Wells and his followers; they also owe much to the urbane and allusive school of thrillers or "entertainments" headed by Michael Innes. But they may most profitably be seen as attempts to do what Macdonald had done, to Christianize romance. They are attempts to throw over esoteric landscapes the holy light of Joy. The overall "conceit" of the trilogy is of battle; the books present a crucial moment in the life of humanity, part of a scene from the cosmic play that Aquinas called a purposeful drama. At the risk of tedium I give the stories in some detail since, for my purposes, not only the bare plot but the settings and (above all) Lewis's attitude toward both settings and characters are of prime importance.

The first book of the trilogy, Out of the Silent Planet, begins when Elwin Ransom, a Cambridge philologist on a walking tour of the Midlands, accidentally comes on an old farm house which has been converted into some sort of laboratory by a famous physicist named Weston and his partner Devine. Devine discovers that no one knows Ransom's whereabouts, that no one will be surprised if he does not turn up at a given time, that he has for family only a married sister in India.

Ransom is then drugged and awakes aboard a space ship bound for the planet Malacandra, a planet which Weston refuses to further identify except to say that he and Devine have been there before. Ransom has been brought along on orders that Weston and Devine have received on Malacandra. All that Weston will divulge is that he is working for the good of the human race, not that of the individual, and he holds that Ransom should willingly sacrifice himself (as he himself would) if the necessity arises. Ransom replies hotly that to work for the race instead of the individual is "raving lunacy."[42]

In spite of having been kidnapped, Ransom feels thrilled and exhilarated as the ship soars through the sun-drenched heavens, through the space which he had always supposed vaguely to be dark and cold. Now, he reflects,

> the very name 'Space' seemed a blasphemous libel for this empyrean ocean of radiance in which they swam. He could not call it 'dead'; he felt life pouring into him from it every moment. How indeed should it be otherwise, since out of this ocean the worlds and all their life had come? He had thought it barren: he now saw that it was the womb of worlds, whose blazing and innumerable offspring looked down nightly even upon the earth with so many eyes--and here, with how many more! No: Space was the wrong name. Older thinkers had been wiser when they named it simply the heavens. (p. 29)

But one day toward the end of the month-long trip he overhears a conversation between Devine and Weston which leads him to believe he is

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[42]Out of the Silent Planet (New York, 1943), p. 23. Further page references to this book will be in the text.

going to be handed over to Malacandrian creatures called sorns as a sacrifice. His imagination full of Wellsian monsters, he hides a kitchen knife from his captors and plans to make a run for it when they land, preferring, if necessary, suicide to immolation.

They arrive on Malacandra, and Ransom finds it to be "a bright, pale world--a water-colour world out of a child's paint-box," (p. 40) with air cold and thin as on an English winter morning. They encamp beside a small lake and presently he sees six "long, streaky, white reflections motionless in the running water." (p. 44) He looks up to the things themselves--which he is sure are the sorns--and sees "spindly and flimsy things, twice or three times the height of a man." (p. 44) Weston and Devine begin to drag him into the water toward the sorns, but a great fish comes streaking toward the trio and in the confusion Ransom breaks loose and flees into the forest.

Running himself into near exhaustion, he finally slows to a walk and begins to observe the character of the country he is passing through. The ridges and gullies are very steep, the hummocks of earth are very narrow, small at the base and narrow at the top. He recalls that the waves on the lake had the same shape, and, looking up at the leaves, he sees "the same theme of perpendicularity--the same rush to the sky ...." (p. 47) He concludes that he is in a world that is lighter than earth, where "nature was set free to follow her skyward impulse on a superterrestrial scale." (p. 47) Even the mountains that he sees in the distance seem to rise to needle-sharp points. He sleeps that night

in the forest; next day he sights a sorn and flees headlong again. He comes to the edge of a vast lake and throws himself down on its edge to drink. Suddenly, ten yards away from him, there is a disturbance in the water,

> and a round, shining, black thing like a cannon-ball came into sight. Then he saw eyes and mouth--a puffing mouth bearded with bubbles. More of the thing came up out of the water. It was gleaming black. Finally it splashed and wallowed to the shore and rose, steaming, on its hind legs--six or seven feet high and too thin for its height, like everything else in Malacandra. It had a coat of thick black hair, lucid as seal-skin, very short legs with webbed feet, a broad beaver-like or fish-like tail, strong fore-limbs with webbed claws or fingers....It was something like a penguin, something like an otter, something like a seal; the slenderness and flexibility of the body suggested a giant stoat. (p. 54)

The animal begins to make noises, and Ransom realizes that it is speaking. For a moment he forgets to be afraid and speculates wildly on the discovery of non-human speech. "The very form of language itself, the principle behind all possible languages, might fall into his hands." (p. 55) The creature sees him and they make tentative overtures to each other. The creature is called, Ransom discovers, a hross. They become friendly and Ransom learns a few basic Malacandrian words: handra (earth), handramit (a crevice in the earth). The hross gives him food. Ransom discovers that he panics when he tries to think of the hross as a man but can accept him quite easily as a beautiful animal with all the qualities that make animals attractive and, additionally, "as though Paradise had never been lost and earliest dreams were true, the charm of speech and reason." (p. 59)

They get into the hross's boat and paddle across the lake to the hross's home, a great handramit near the equator of the planet. Ransom lives among the hrossa (plural) for several weeks, learning the Malacandrian language. He discovers that the hrossa eat only fish and vegetables, that they farm in some sort of communal system, that they have evening songfests and are accomplished in oral poetry. As his command of the language increases, he tells them that he comes from earth. One evening they point out the earth and tell him that it is called Thulcandra, which means "the silent world or planet." When he asks why it has this name, they cannot tell him; but, they say, the seroni (umlauted plural of sorn) would know. He tells them of the "bent" men who brought him to Malacandra and they advise him to go to Oyarsa, who will protect him. He questions them about Oyarsa and discovers that Oyarsa "(1) lived at Meldilorn; (2) knew everything and ruled everyone; (3) had always been there; and (4) was not a hross, nor one of the seroni." (p. 70) He asks them if Oyarsa made the world. They answer that Maledil the Young made the world and is still the ruler of it. When he asks where Maledil lives, they reply that he lives with the "Old One." (p. 70)

Upon further questioning it becomes clear that Maledil is "a spirit without body, parts or passions." (p. 70) He is not a hnau; hrossa are hnau, as are men, seroni and pfifltriggi (the frog-like rational creatures who are the Malacandrian artists, goldsmiths and artisans). When Ransom asks which of the three species rules, the hrossa

say simply that Oyarsa rules. He asks if Oyarsa is hnau. The question puzzles them. If he is hnau, then he is a different kind of hnau, for he does not die and has no young. They advise him again to ask the seroni, who know nothing about fishing or boating and who cannot make poetry but who are clever at astronomy and at interpreting the words of Oyarsa.

He discovers that there are also on Malacandra beings called eldila, messengers from Oyarsa who are nearly invisible to him, mere glints of light. As Ransom and the hrossa are preparing for a great fish hunt (they are going to try to kill the deadly hnakra), an eldil comes to their boat and tells them that Ransom must be taken to Oyarsa. First they kill the hnakra in a fight in which Ransom plays a mildly heroic part. Afterwards they celebrate their victory ashore, and the fight and celebration mark a point in Ransom's otherworldly education.

> It did not now seem strange to him to be clasped to a breast of wet fur....He was one with them. That difficulty which they, accustomed to more than one rational species, had perhaps never felt, was now overcome. They were all hnau. (p. 85)

But in the midst of their joy a rifle bullet drops Hyoi (Ransom's original friend among the hrossa) and he dies in Ransom's arms. Realizing that they have been sighted by Weston and Devine, Ransom receives hurried instructions on how to get to Oyarsa and immediately sets out. He must leave the handramit and begin the ascent of the mountains, reach the harandra (high land) and find the temple of Augray, who will help

him on his way.

He labors up the mountain into a region of intense cold and atmospheric rarity. The Malacandrian atmosphere lies almost completely in the handramits; the surface of the planet contains almost no air. At nightfall he comes finally to a fire-lit cavern and finds that he has delivered himself up to his most dreaded fear--the sorn. But the sorn reveals himself to be friendly (in fact, Ransom's fear of the seroni turns out to have been completely unfounded); he feeds Ransom and gives him oxygen from a device planned by the seroni but constructed by the pfifltriggi. As they sit in the warm cavern that night, the sorn explains to Ransom many things about Oyarsa and the eldila that the hrossa could only guess at. Oyarsa is the greatest of the eldila and was put on Malacandra to rule it when the planet was made. Eldila, says the sorn, though nearly invisible to Ransom, have bodies, but he does not explain their bodies in terms of terrestrial solids, liquids, and gases.

> Body is movement. If it is at one speed, you smell something; if at another, you hear a sound; if at another, you see a sight; if at another, you neither hear nor see nor smell, nor know the body in any way. (pp. 100-101)

The faster the movement, he tells Ransom, the more nearly a thing is in two places at once. If the speed were increased tremendously, finally the thing would be in all places at once. That is "the thing at the top of all bodies--so fast that it is at rest, so truly body that it has ceased being body at all." (p. 101) The swiftest thing that touches

our senses, says the sorn, is light. But we "do not truly see light, we only see slower things lit by it, so that for us light is on the edge--the last thing we know before things become too swift for us." (p. 101) Eldilic bodies are movements swift as light--that is, what light is for us. What is light for an eldil is a movement so swift that for us it is nothing at all. What we call light

> is for him a thing like water, a visible thing, a thing he can touch and bathe in....And what we call firm things--flesh and earth--seem to him thinner, and harder to see, than our light, and more like clouds, and nearly nothing. To us the eldil is a thin, half-real body that can go through walls and rocks: to himself he goes through them because he is solid and firm and they are like cloud. And what is true light to him and fills the heaven, so that he will plunge into the rays of the sun to refresh himself from it, is to us the black nothing in the sky at night.[43]

Ransom, reflecting on all this, recalls "the recurrent human tradition of bright, elusive people sometimes appearing on earth--albs, devas and the like...." (p. 102) They may have been eldila; the anthropologists may be all wrong; the world may be much different than we have thought.

The next day Augray takes Ransom on his shoulders and they journey over the cold harandras toward Meldilorn. They spend the night at a sorn cavern, where Ransom (like Gulliver) is questioned much about the earth. He discovers that earth is called Thulcandra (the silent planet)

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[43]P. 101. In The Great Divorce, the people in heaven are called "the solid people." Those on earth or in hell are shadowy and nebulous. The implication is that God, as in a Blake painting, is the most solid and particular of all.

because it has no Oyarsa to communicate with the Oyeresu of the other planets. Next day they travel on, finally descend from the harandra toward a new handramit where, like a jewel set in a silver sea, the island of Meldilorn rises delicately out of a circular lake--"a sapphire twelve miles in diameter set in a border of purple forest." (p. 113)

> Amidst the lake there rose like a low and gently sloping pyramid, or like a woman's breast, an island of pale red, smooth to the summit, and on the summit a grove of such trees as man had never seen. Their smooth columns had the gentle swell of the noblest beech-trees: but they were taller than a cathedral spire on earch, and at their tops, they broke rather into flower than foliage; into golden flower bright as tulips, still as rock, and huge as summer cloud. Flowers indeed they were, not trees, and far down among their roots he caught a pale hint of slab-like architecture....he had not looked for anything quite so classic, so virginal, as this bright grove--lying so still, so secret in its coloured valley, soaring with inimitable grace so many hundred feet into the wintry sunlight. (p. 113)

Ransom examines the island while he awaits his summons from Oyarsa. He finds that Oyarsa is served by all three Malacandrian species, according to the capacities of each. He finds, cut into huge stones, the story of Malacandrian mythology. Each of the planets is represented as a ball with a flaming angel-like figure atop it. He discovers that Malacandra is Mars, and that Malacandrian mythology, like earth's, represents the planet Venus as female. On the ball which must be the earth there is no figure, only an irregularly shaped cleft, as if the artist (or a later editor, perhaps) had erased something. A pfifltrig hops out from behind a slab and on orders of Oyarsa asks Ransom to pose for him while he cuts into the rock a picture of man for

Malacandrian posterity. Ransom perceives at first only that the carving makes man ugly; then, with a start, he realizes that the pfifltrig is trying to idealize him.

Next day an eldil summons Ransom to Oyarsa. He walks up an avenue, formed by monolithic stones and lined on both sides by crowds of all three species of Malacandrians, to the crown of the island. He perceives, by the almost invisible glints of light, that the place is full of eldila. Presently Oyarsa comes, as Ransom can tell, partly by the look on the faces of the crowd, partly from "the merest whisper of light--no, less than that, the smallest diminution of shadow." (p. 128) The multitude is hushed.

> Like a silence spreading over a room full of people, like an infinitesimal coolness on a sultry day, like a passing memory of some long-forgotten sound or scent, like all that is stillest and smallest and most hard to seize in nature, Oyarsa passed between his subjects and drew near and came to rest, not ten yards away from Ransom in the centre of Meldilorn. Ransom felt a tingling of his blood and a pricking on his fingers as if lightning were near him; and his heart and body seemed to him to be made of water. (pp. 128-29)

Oyarsa speaks to Ransom in a voice "'with no blood in it. Light is instead of blood for them.'" (p. 129) He reassures him; Ransom should not fear Oyarsa simply because they are not similar beings: "We are both copies of Maledil." (p. 129) Ransom is astounded to learn from Oyarsa that what Ransom had supposed to be a fortuitous kidnapping by Weston and Devine was really something more. Weston and Devine has assumed that what was wanted was a sacrifice for the seroni, had in fact somehow garbled the message from Oyarsa that the seroni had transmitted.

They had picked Ransom because he happened by, and in so doing had unwittingly fulfilled, if not Oyarsa's orders, at least Maledil's wish.[44] Oyarsa reveals that his servants informed him of the presence of the space ship as soon as it left the earth's atmosphere--not before, because "Thulcandra is the world we do not know. It alone is outside the heaven, and no message comes from it." (p. 130)

The real reason why the earth is called the silent planet then becomes clear to Ransom. The Oyarsa of earth, "brighter and greater" (p. 130) than that of Malacandra, was once free, like the Oyeresu of other planets. But he became bent and consequently was bound by Maledil to earth to prevent his spreading further evil. All this was long before any human life on earth.

> It was in his mind to spoil other worlds besides his own. He smote your moon with his left hand and with his right he brought the cold death on my harandra before its time; if by my arm Maledil had not opened the handramits and let out the hot springs, my world would have been unpeopled. We did not leave him so at large for long. There was great war, and we drove him back out of the heavens and bound him in the air of his own world as Maledil taught us. There doubtless he lies to this hour, and we know no more of that planet; it is silent. We think that Maledil would not give it up utterly to the Bent One, and there are stories among us that He has taken strange counsel and dared terrible things, wrestling with the Bent One in Thulcandra. (pp. 130-31)

He goes on to tell Ransom of Weston and Devine's first trip to Malacandra, that Devine had applied himself to sifting the sun's blood (gold) out of

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[44]At least I assume this to be the case. It is not wholly clear in what sense Ransom himself was sent for, though in the later books there is no doubt that it is Ransom himself who has been selected to perform a mission for God.

the streams. Ransom is beginning to tell Oyarsa of Weston's purpose on the planet--to make further room for the human race against such time as the earth is over-populated or destroyed--when their discussion is interrupted by the arrival of a party of hrossa bearing the corpses of three other hrossa. With them, as prisoners, are Weston and Devine.

Oyarsa orders a funeral chant to be sung over the dead hrossa (whom Devine and Weston have killed) before he "unbodies" them. As the hrossa sing, Ransom begins to understand not only the art of the hrossa but that which the art embodies.

> Now first he saw that its rhythms were based on a different blood from ours, on a heart that beat more quickly, and a fiercer internal heat. Through his knowledge of the creatures and his love for them he began, ever so little, to hear it with their ears. A sense of great masses moving at visionary speeds, of giants dancing, of eternal sorrows eternally consoled, of he knew not what and yet what he had always known, awoke in him with the very first bars of the deep-mouthed dirge, and bowed down his spirit as if the gate of heaven had opened before him. (p. 142)

When the song is ended Oyarsa sends a pfifltrig to touch each corpse with a small crystal object. In a moment there is a blinding glare of light, a gust of wind, and the biers are empty. "So will Maledil scatter all worlds," says Oyarsa, "when the first and feeble is worn." (p. 143)

Oyarsa then questions Weston, with Ransom acting as interpreter. Weston's argument is roughly that superior races have rights over inferior ones, and that the superior ones may be distinguished from others by their cultural advancement. Such rights include the elimination of

the inferior races if it should happen that the superior need their land or goods. Life, he says, has pressed forward and reached her present peak in civilized man; Weston is her representative and as such is empowered to make for the human (civilized) race the interplanetary leap which will put Life beyond the reach of Death forever. It is his (and Life's) intention to move from planet to planet, exterminating all forms of inferior life and preparing the way for the eventual coming of civilized humanity. He works for posterity, though he is not sure what "strange form and yet unguessed mentality" (p. 147) posterity will assume. Ransom finds the high flown abstractions difficult to translate. Says Weston:

> I may fail....But while I live I will not, with such a key in my hand, consent to close the gates of the future on my race. What lies in that future, beyond our present ken, passes imagination to conceive: it is enough for me that there is a Beyond. (p. 148)

And Ransom translates:

> He is saying...that he will not stop trying to do all this unless you kill him. And he says that though he doesn't know what will happen to the creatures sprung from us, he wants it to happen very much. (p. 148)

Oyarsa concludes that the aberrations of Weston's argument are the work of the Bent One, who is determined to establish a beach-head of evil in worlds other than his own.

Oyarsa orders Weston and Devine to attempt the space flight back to earth, in spite of the fact that the flight is almost impossible because Mars and earth are not in opposition. Ransom decides to accompany them, though he is at liberty to remain on Malacandra if he chooses.

Oyarsa wishes Ransom well and tells him that the ship has been supplied for ninety days of flight, that at the end of that time the ship will become unbodied. The eldila of deep heaven will be near the ship in its flight and will not let Weston and Devine kill Ransom to conserve supplies. Oyarsa adds a last warning and exhortation to Ransom about his companions.

> They may yet do much evil in, and beyond, your world ....I begin to see that there are eldila who go down into your air, into the very stronghold of the Bent One; your world is not so fast shut as was thought in these parts of heaven. Watch those two bent ones. Be courageous. Fight them. And when you have need, some of our people will help you. Maledil will show them to you. It may even be that you and I shall meet again while you are still in the body; for it is not without the wisdom of Maledil that we have met now....It seems to me that this is the beginning of more comings and goings between the heavens and the worlds and between one world and another....The year we are now in...has long been prophesied as a year of stirrings and high changes and the siege of Thulcandra may be near its end. Great things are on foot. (p. 155)

The flight begins and Ransom, looking down on the vast handramits which had been engineered by the Malacandrians before the dawn of human history, reflects that such things will seem like mythology to him if he ever gets back to earth. And it "occurred to him that the distinction between history and mythology might be itself meaningless outside the Earth." (p. 157) After nearly unendurable hardships on the flight, they make a safe return to earth. Weston and Devine slip away while Ransom is asleep. He wakes to the sound of English rain, slogs through the country side for a half hour, turns to see a flash of light and a gust of wind as the ship becomes unbodied.

The story proper ends here and is revealed to have been told by Ransom to Lewis (who wrote it down) when the two scholars happened to correspond about the twelfth-century Platonists. Lewis had written to ask Ransom's views of the word Oyarses, which he had come across in Bernardus Silvestris in connection with a heavenly voyage. Lewis suggested that the word ought to be Ousiarche (οὐσιαρχα) but wanted to know if Ransom agreed. The result of the correspondence was that the two met, exchanged information about the medieval Platonists, gathered a great many facts about Mars and about the physicist who has been called Weston. They decided to publish the story as fiction because it would not be believed as fact and would only result in a libel action from Weston and Devine. They concluded that the medieval Platonists were living in the same celestial year as our own (that it began in the twelfth century), and that the force which Weston represented "will play a very important part in the events of the next few centuries, and, unless we prevent them, a very disastrous one." (pp. 166-67)

In the second novel, Perelandra, Ransom is ordered by eldila to go to Perelandra (Venus) to counteract (in some way not yet known to him) the machinations of the Bent One. Ransom tells Lewis, who helps send him off, that he believes the "cosmic war"[45] is going into a new phase and that mortals may soon be called on to fight the powers of

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[45]Perelandra (New York, 1944), p. 18. Page references will be in the text.

darkness not only spiritually but in other ways as well. He thinks that he has been chosen for the mission because he has learned Hressa-Hlab," which he supposed to be merely the Malacandrian language but now knows to be "Old Solar, Hlab-Eribol-ef-Cordi." (p. 19) This is the original language of the universe, lost so completely on earth since the Dark One took over that no human speech derives from it.

His coffin-like ship plunges into a coppery sea on Perelandra and dissolves, leaving him swimming easily in the warm waters.

> The water gleamed, the sky burned with gold, but all was rich and dim....The very names of green and gold...are too harsh for the tenderness, the muted iridescence, of that warm, maternal, delicately gorgeous world. It was mild to look upon as evening, warm like summer noon, gentle and winning like early dawn. (p. 31)

As he floats over the sea, he feels what he can only describe as "excessive pleasure." (p. 33) He is surprised that he feels no guilt: "There was an exuberance or prodigality of sweetness about the mere act of living which our race finds it difficult not to associate with forbidden and extravagant actions." (p. 33) Surviving a violent storm, he clambers onto one of many thin, flexible mats of vegetation which he comes to think of as floating islands. He eats of a balloon-like fruit so marvelous that it is "like the discovery of a totally new genus of pleasures" (p. 38) and decides this early in his mission that there is that pleasure in Perelandra that "might overload the human brain." (p. 38)

Next day Ransom sees birds and fish in droves moving toward another floating island. What he first takes to be a hump on the back of

one of the dolphin-like fish turns out to be a human form. As his island drifts closer to the other, the form (having alighted from the fish's back) waves greetings; he sees that the person is green against the orange of the island.

> For one second the alien eyes looked at his full of love and welcome. Then the whole face changed: a shock as of disappointment and astonishment passed over it. Ransom realised...that he had been mistaken for someone else....And the green man was not a man at all, but a woman. (p. 51)

Ransom speaks to her in Old Solar, tells her that he comes in peace. Her reply disconcerts him: "What is 'peace'?" (p. 54) Ransom realizes after some conversation that whatever knowledge she possesses has been infused in her by Maledil rather than arrived at by conceptual thought. But she begins to grow "older" from the moment that she listens to him; she begins (as Barfield would say) to become conscious of herself as distinct from phenomena. She perceives that "a day has one appearance as it comes to you, and another when you are in it, and a third when it has gone past. Like the waves." (p. 47) She has never done this before, this "stepping out of life into the Alongside and looking at oneself as if one were not alive." (p. 58)

Ransom is surprised that she has a human form: rationality had been embodied in non-human creatures in Malacandra. She replies that Malacandra is an older world than Perelandra or earth; in the younger planets rationality takes (and will take) human form because Maledil the Young "took himself this form, the form of your race and mine." (p. 59) Beings such as hrossa and seroni may linger on in ancient

worlds, but "Among times there is a time that turns a corner and everything this side of it is new." (p. 60) She is the only woman on Perelandra; she is the Queen, the Mother. Somewhere on one of the islands is the King, the Father, her husband-to-be, the only male.

When Ransom happens to mention death, she can hardly comprehend that it may be seen as evil: whatever comes must come from Maledil and thus be good. Ransom reminds her that she was disappointed because he was not the King, thus showing her that not all events are welcome. The concept comes to her with a shock and Ransom is at once uneasy at what he has done. Her "purity and peace were not...settled and inevitable like the purity and peace of an animal." They are "alive and therefore breakable, a balance maintained by a mind and therefore... able to be lost." (p. 66) In a sentence that might have been taken from Barfield she tells Ransom, "I have been so young till this moment that all my life now seems to have been a kind of sleep." (p. 66)

Next day Ransom sights what the Lady calls the Fixed Land, a solid island which she and the King may visit during daylight but on which they have been forbidden to live. They mount the great fish and to to the island to climb its peak and search the sea for the King. They fail to sight him but do see Weston's space ship floating offshore. Weston comes ashore and speaks to the Lady in fluent Old Solar. When the Lady leaves to look further for the King, Weston stays with Ransom. He tells Ransom that he no longer works merely for the human race; he has become an emergent evolutionist. All things are one, he says, all

is "blind, inarticulate purposiveness" (p. 91) moving ever forward, a vast cosmic process forging ahead toward the state of pure spirit. He claims that there are no essential differences between his philosophy and Christianity. The cosmic process is alive, not a person but a Force which selects its instruments. It has selected him, made him a great scientist for a purpose, guided him, infused in him his knowledge of Old Solar. "It is through me," says Weston, "that spirit itself is at this moment pushing on to its goal." (p. 94)

Ransom warns him that Spirit is not necessarily good, that it may be dangerous to deal with spirit, that the Devil is spirit. But Weston professes to believe that belief in the Devil is merely an outmoded view of the Life Force. They argue, and finally Weston, in a burst of rhetoric, identifies himself with the Life Force: "I <u>am</u> the Universe. I, Weston, am your God and your Devil. I call that Force into me completely." (p. 97) As soon as he has said this, he goes into convulsions, screams "Ransom, Ransom! For Christ's sake don't let them--" (p. 97) He falls howling and writhing to the ground.

Next day Weston has disappeared. Ransom, mounting a fish which seems to have been sent to him, sets out in pursuit. He looks beneath the surface of the water and sees "veritable mermen or mermaids." (p. 103) They are fish incredibly resembling humans:

> They were...like human faces asleep, or faces in which humanity slept while some other life, neither bestial nor diabolic, but merely elvish, out of our orbit, was irrelevantly awake. He remembered his old suspicion

> that what was myth in one world might always be fact in some other. (pp. 103-104)

That night the fish lands him on one of the islands; he sleeps, wakes in darkness to hear Weston's voice tempting the Lady to break Maledil's law not to live on the Fixed Land. It is good for her to think about breaking the law, he tells her; it is noble and poetic. She ought not to wait and ask the King; the King would be happier if she were old enough to think the thing through herself. The colloquy ends. Next morning Ransom sees neither Weston nor the Lady but comes upon a trail of mutilated frog-like animals and follows it till he comes on Weston, who is composedly tearing another one apart. Ransom perceives that he is really looking at a dead man, that something is merely using Weston's body. When he moves toward the thing he finds himself fainting and unable to rise. Either the Bent One or one of his followers has used Weston as a bridge to the unfallen world of Perelandra. Shaken, Ransom follows the thing and discovers it again tempting the Lady.

Ransom notes immediately that, in the Lady's face, "the hint of something precarious had increased." (p. 115) Weston (the Un-man) is telling her the wonders of courage: Maledil wants her to achieve independence, so she must muster the courage to do what He really wants; she must disobey Him and thus show Him that His creature has matured. The law about the Fixed Land is not a good law or it would have obtained on other planets as well as Perelandra. Maledil wants His creatures to become old enough to realize that the law is one of

"mere commandment." (p. 120) He desires the law to be broken, but He cannot say so, for that would obviate the creaturely independence and wisdom which He desires. Ransom breaks in to say that the law may exist simply to allow the creatures to practise sheer obedience, for in other things they obey but also understand why they obey. He tells her the story of the earthly Fall. The Un-man answers that it was through the Fall that Maledil was brought into the world and made man, to the infinite benefit of that world. Confronted with the paradox of the fortunate fall, Ransom is momentarily at a loss. Then he replies:

> Of course good came of it....Whatever you do, He will make good of it. But not the good He had prepared for you if you had obeyed Him. That is lost forever. The first King and the first Mother of our world did the forbidden thing; and He brought good of it in the end. But what they did was not good; and what they lost we have not seen. And there were some to whom no good came nor ever will come. (p. 125)

And he asks the Un-man what good came to him from the Incarnation. The Un-man howls in agony of loss.

The Un-man continues the assault by telling the Lady scores of stories in which women braved all worldly scorn and hate in order to do some grand and needed and forbidden act for their children, husbands, or society. He creates an image of noble, selfless, suffering woman. The battle continues day and night, Ransom sometimes falling asleep from exhaustion, the Un-man needing no sleep. The Un-man makes it seem cowardice for her to consult the King: she must do the forbidden thing alone so that all benefits are his, all risks hers. After the

Un-man has dressed her in lovely birds' plumage and given her a mirror, so that she is beginning to think of herself as a sort of tragedy queen, Ransom concludes (with Maledil's help) that it is a physical as well as an oral struggle that he is called on to carry out. At first the idea seems grotesque.

> It would degrade the spiritual warfare to the condition of mere mythology. But...Ransom had been perceiving that the triple distinction of truth from myth and of both from fact was purely terrestrial--was part and parcel of that unhappy division between soul and body which resulted from the Fall. Even on earth the sacraments existed as a permanent reminder that the division was neither wholesome nor final. The Incarnation had been the beginning of its disappearance. In perelandra it would have no meaning at all. Whatever happened here would be of such a nature that earthmen would call it mythological. All this he had thought before. Now he knew it. (p. 149)

And the voice of Maledil seems to tell him that there is reason for his being named Ransom: Maledil's name is also Ransom.

The fight is long and bloody. Ransom defeats the enemy once, is tricked by its reassuming Weston's personality, and finally kills it in the depths of an underwater cave. Wounded in the heel, he undergoes many adventures with gigantic earth-beetles and finally escapes to the light outside. He encounters the Oyeresu of Mars and Venus, who have prepared a new ship for his return to earth. They tell him that today is the beginning of the new world of Perelandra, the reign of the King and Queen, which he has helped to bring about. All the beasts of Perelandra gather with Ransom and the Oyeresu for the ceremony.

The Oyarsa of Perelandra relinquishes her planetary power to them: "Hail and be glad, oh man and woman, Oyarsa-Perelendri, the Adam,

the Crown, Tor and Tinidril, Baru and Baru'ah, Ask and Embla, Yatsur and Yatsurah, dear to Maledil. Blessed be He!" (p. 220) Maledil, through the instrument of Ransom, has wakened the King and Queen to knowledge of good and evil, and in this consummation the Dark One has also been unwittingly of use. Ransom is honored by all, and much is revealed to him by the King and the Oyeresu. When Perelandra has circled the Field of Arbol ten thousand times, when Perelandra is full of new life and new beings engendered by Tor and Tinidril, then the atmosphere surrounding the planet will be lifted and the Deep Heavens will become visible. There will be a great war, the siege of Thulcandra will be lifted, and all the evil of the earth dispersed. Then the Great Dance, in which all creation rejoices in and with the Creator, will truly begin. Ransom is given an overpowering vision of the Great Dance:

> It seemed to be woven out of the intertwining undulation of many cords or bands of light, leaping over and under one another and mutually embraced in arabesques and flower-like subtleties. Each figure as he looked at it became the master-figure or focus of the whole spectacle, by means of which his eye disentangled all else and brought it into unity--only to be itself entangled when he looked to what he had taken for mere marginal decorations and found that there also the same hegemony was claimed, and the claim made good, yet the former pattern not thereby dispossessed but finding in its new subordination a significance greater than that which it had abdicated. (p. 234)

He sees brightnesses which are the "peoples, institutions, climates of opinion, civilisations, arts, sciences." (p. 234) He sees the cords of light which are individuals and those which are universal truths and

ideas. The whole solid figure of dancing and intermingling lights merges with a vaster four-dimensional pattern which in turn is only the boundary of other patterns in other worlds. Finally,

> as the movement grew yet swifter, the interweaving yet more ecstatic, the relevance of all to all yet more intense, as dimension was added to dimension...then, at the very zenith of complexity, complexity was eaten up and faded, as a thin white cloud fades into the hard blue burning of the sky, and a simplicity beyond all comprehension, ancient and young as spring, illimitable, pellucid, drew him with cords of infinite desire into its own stillness. He went up into such a quietness, a privacy, and a freshness that at the very moment when he stood farthest from our ordinary mode of being he had the sense of stripping off encumbrances and awaking from trance, and coming to himself. (p. 235)

When Ransom recovers, he finds that the vision has lasted for a year. The King and Queen then put him in his ship ("Some natural tears they dropped, but wiped them soon"); they cover his face with scarlet flower petals to shield his eyes from the sun, and he returns to earth. On arrival he is radiantly healthy except for his heel, which refuses to mend.

In <u>That Hideous Strength</u> (longer and more complicated than the first two novels) the phase of war predicted comes about. Ransom's widowed sister in India, a Mrs. Fisher-King, became acquainted with a great native Christian mystic named the Sura. Before his death the Sura became convinced that the vital battle of the war would be fought in England. Mrs. Fisher-King left her wealth to her brother on condition that he take the name Fisher-King and gather about him a company alert for signs of the enemy and prepared to defeat it. He has done this, and

the company's headquarters are not far from a small university (Edgestow), which is on the edge of a small wooded land called Bragdon Wood.

The National Institute of Co-ordinated Experiments (N.I.C.E.) has made attempts to buy the wood from the poor university in order to set up a laboratory there. With the rather unwilling help of Jane Studdock (a natural medium), Ransom discovers what the N.I.C.E. is and what it wants with Bragdon Wood. N.I.C.E., ostensibly led by two scientists named Frost and Withers, is really an instrument of the Dark Eldil of earth. Physical science, having drifted without direction for so long and having grown indifferent to objective truth, has become an easy prey to the manipulation of the evil one. N.I.C.E., the ultimate in brutal experimental science, wishes to settle in Bragdon Wood because it has discovered, through its real master's eldilic knowledge, that there is buried under the soil of the wood the body of Merlin, miraculously undecayed. If N.I.C.E., "the new goetia,"[46] finds him, it will revive him and he will cast his lot with the forces of evil; thus will be effected a union between the vast power of the physical sciences and the natural magic of a former age. And then

> ...Hell would be at last incarnate. Bad men, while still in the body, still crawling on this little globe, would enter that state which, heretofore, they had entered only after death, would have the diuturnity and

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[46] That Hideous Strength (New York, 1946), p. 336. Page references to the book will be in the text.

> power of evil spirits. Nature, all over the globe of Tellus, would become their slave; and of that dominion no end, before the end of time itself, could be certainly foreseen. (p. 235)

Ransom is now identified by his company with the Pendragon of Logres; his company and the house they live in "are all that's left of the Logres: all the rest has become merely Britain." (p. 224) His strategy is simply to discover Merlin before the enemy can. With this in mind he and the company discuss at length the character of Merlin and his power; fortunately, along with the extraordinary power of Jane Studdock, they have a fund of scholarly knowledge of the Arthurian history, and the Pendragon is still occasionally given military information by the eldila of Mars and Venus. They conclude that a historical Merlin once worked in Bragdon Wood, though they are not really sure what kind of power he wielded. Ransom thinks that "Merlin's art was the last survivor of something older and different--something brought to Western Europe after the fall of Numinor and going back to an era in which the general relations of mind and matter on this planet had been other than those we know." (p. 232) What Merlin practised was "the last vestiges of Atlantean magic." (p. 232) (In the enemy camp, Frost and Wither, discussing the same question, agree that Merlin was the last of some power that survived into the fifth century, a power "that comes down from long before the Great Disaster, even from before primitive Druidism: something that takes us back to Numinor, to preglacial periods.") (p. 310)

Acting on information received from Jane Studdock's dreams, Ransom sends one of the company out into the night to meet Merlin. But first he has him rehearse in the "Great Tongue" what he will say. The messenger speaks "in great syllables of words that sounded like castles," (p. 265) the ancient language spoken "before the Fall and beyond the Moon." (p. 265) For this is "Language herself, as she first sprang at Maledil's bidding out of the molten quicksilver of the star called Mercury on Earth, but Viritrilbia in Deep Heaven." (pp. 265-66) Merlin bursts into the house and immediately challenges Ransom to a duel of occult knowledge, the loser to become the other's servant. He asks what Numinor is; Ransom replies that it is "the True West." (p. 320) He asks whom Ransom serves; the reply is "the Oyeresu." (p. 320) Merlin then asks, "Who is called Sulva? What road does she walk? Why is the womb barren on one side? Where are the cold marriages?" (p. 321) Ransom replies that Sulva is the Moon, that she walks in the lowest sphere, that "half of her orb is turned towards us and shares our curse." (p. 321) It is on this side of her that the marriages are cold. Merlin asks where the ring of Arthur the King is. Ransom replies that the ring is "on Arthur's finger where he sits in the House of Kings in the cup-shaped land of Abhalljin, beyond the seas of Lur in Perelandra." (p. 321) Arthur, says Ransom, is of the company of those who did not die but who were taken up in the body--those such as Enoch, Elias, Moses, and Melchisidec. Merlin asks his last question: "Who shall be Pendragon in the time when Saturn descends from his sphere?

In what world did he learn war?" "In the sphere of Venus I learned war," said Ransom. "In this age Lurga shall descend. I am the Pendragon." (p. 322) Merlin acknowledges defeat and sovereignty.

Ransom takes Merlin to an upper room of the house, and there they await the coming of the Oyeresu of Mars, Venus, Mercury, Saturn, and Jupiter. The Oyeresu come, nearly unmaking both men with their power, and they transfuse a modicum of this power to Merlin. Merlin goes to Belbury, the N.I.C.E. headquarters, brings about confusion of tongues to confound that hideous strength, and causes gigantic earthquakes and floods to destroy it utterly. The world saved for the moment, the company has leisure for discussion. It is revealed that the Arthurian legend is mostly true history, that there has been in England since Arthur's time a secret Logres and "an unbroken succession of Pendragons." (p. 442) Ransom is the seventy-eighth in the line of Arthur, Uther, and Cassibelaun. As Arthur was taken up to Perelandra in the body, so will Ransom be, and Perelandra is now identified with St. Paul's Third Heaven. When Ransom is taken up, a new Pendragon will be appointed, for Logres must remain intact against Britain; the war is not yet over, nor will it be for ten thousand years. But an important engagement has been won.

That the trilogy has its faults no one will deny. All in all, perhaps the first book is the most satisfactory of the three, the second the most beautiful. Most of the faults of the trilogy occur in the second and third books, and they occur for the very reason which it

is the purpose of this chapter to point out. The trilogy seems to have grown under Lewis's hand, as is illustrated by certain minor defects. At the end of the first book the hero has been given the name "Ransom" as a fictional device, just as "Weston" is a pseudonym for a supposedly real scientist who would sue if his real name were used. But in Perelandra it is revealed to the hero that he has been picked from all eternity to do battle with the evil one on Venus; that is why his name is Ransom, which is also Maledil's name, i.e., Christ. What seems to have happened is that the second and third books are attempts to continue the original story but to continue it in a new way. The first book presents a humanistic philologist fighting a misguided, amoral scientist; it presents a struggle between the old Christian-humanist values and those of godless modern scientism. In the first book the notion that myth may be fact is merely toyed with; in the second it is advanced seriously; in the third, it becomes the basis of the whole work, with various attempts to make it also the retroactive basis of the first two as well. In the third book, Ransom becomes in a way the focal point of all myth; he is the fisher king, the Pendragon, the return of the king. And the whole Arthurian legend is projected backwards into the second book by having Arthur reside in the Avalon of Perelandra and having Merlin confirm that this has always been so. What began as an ideological battle is continued as a battle between sheer good and evil; the transition from science fiction to cosmic mythological warfare is not quite smooth; some ragged edges of juncture show.

But I am not concerned so much with the defects of the attempt as with the attempt itself. As has been noted, Lewis has his hero meditate often on what he calls the "purely terrestrial distinction" between truth, fact, and myth; and Ransom finally concludes that what is myth on earth is fact somewhere else in the universe. What this conclusion allows Lewis to do, of course, is to use the grand improbabilities of myth as literal plot and detail; it makes the wonderful probable. Thus ancient and medieval astronomy and astrology, which most would regard as myth, present the reader with real truths of other worlds: the planets all have their guiding "intelligences" (the Oyeresu) as Plato and Averroes thought; the planets ray down influences on earth, as medieval astrologists thought. Venus is supremely warm and feminine, Mars supremely cold, male and martial. The heavens (Deep Heaven) are alive with intelligence in the form of eldila (angels) as in a medieval painting. Arthur is really carried off to Avalon and, in a way, is still not only rex quondam but rex futurusque, since there has been an unbroken line of Pendragons since his time. Ransom is the fisher king, wounded, "with the arid plain behind me," who must be healed before the wasteland of the earth can become fertile. His wound will be stanched in the world where it was received, in Perelandra, and when Perelandra has made ten thousand turns around the Field of Arbol, the dark eldil of earth will be defeated and the world will become as it was in the time of Numinor, the true west, which was indeed a green and pleasant land.

Further, the use of myth as fact allows Lewis to use the great natural metaphors which run through the myths as cosmic facts. The moon's shadow and the dark veil around Venus are evil because they are dark (or are dark and evil) and will one day be dispersed by the good light of the Deep Heaven. The eldila are perceivable only as glints of light, and are explained in terms of light as well as motion. Ransom's vision of eternal beatitude at the end of Perelandra is described as a vast cosmic dance of bands and cords and patterns of light. Behind all this is a philological-metaphysical theory derived, in part at least, from Barfield's theory of ancient concrete meaning:

> ...if those original equations, between good and light, or evil and dark, between breath and soul and all the others, were from the beginning arbitrary and fanciful --if there is not, in fact, a kind of psycho-physical parallelism (or more) in the universe--then all our thinking is nonsensical. But we cannot, without contradiction, believe it to be nonsensical. And so...the view I have taken has metaphysical implications.[47]

The use of natural metaphor as fact allows Lewis to use the "original equations" as the structure of planetary reality, a hierarchy in which the greatest good is light and the greatest evil, dark.

But it remains to ask the effect of mythologizing religion, to ask in short the point and purpose of the four novels. The answer, so far as Lewis himself is concerned, is simple enough: his purpose was to combine an old love with a newer, to combine the romance of the far off and faerie with the religion of his maturity, to unite what the

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[47]Lewis, "Bluspels and Flalansferes," in Rehabilitations, p. 158.

imagination loved with what the intellect was convinced to be true. In short, his purpose was, as I have said in more general terms, to romanticize religion.

Now, it is often said by anti-romantics that the romantic throws up a screen between himself and reality, that he idealizes or dignifies a reality which he would otherwise find unendurable. As one such critic has it, he tries to "maintain an illusioned view of the universe"[48] in the face of broad scientific evidence that the real nature of the world is other than he wants it to be. He tries to see reality as wonderful when it is only probable and even predictable. Or, again, it is a criticism of the romantic that he inhabits (by choice) a dream world, simply abandoning the real world for that of faerie, the land of heart's desire. There is a substratum of agreement between the two criticisms: both hold that the romantic prefers, even demands, the wonderful--one party holding that the romantic romanticizes this world (witchery by daylight), the other holding that the romantic abdicates this world for another of his own making and closer to his heart's desire. The romantic can reply, alternatively, that this world is more wonderful than the anti-romantic supposes; he can, like Chesterton, romanticize even the very notion of being as the Aristotelian scholastics conceived it. Or he can reply, like Shelley, that his dream world has more reality and validity than our own, that his creations are "more real than living men, nurslings of immortality." (We have already seen

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[48]Hoxie Fairchild, The Romantic Quest (New York, 1931), p. 251.

that Barfield praises this second school because their esemplastic images did not reproduce reality as we know it but instead created their own.)

Everyone will agree that the romantic will have the wonderful, one way or another. So it is too with a romantic religionist of Lewis's sort. He will have his religion because he believes it true; but he will also have it wonderful because he is romantic. Lewis sometimes dramatizes the romance of being, though never to the extent that Chesterton did in Manalive (perhaps because, in spite of Lewis's admiration for Chesterton, the fact remains that Chesterton was a Thomistic, "moderate" realist or "conceptualist" and Lewis is not). But what he does in his fiction is rather to take religion out of the normal world and translate it into the fairy land of myth.[49] Thus the beginnings of Christianity (or the end of paganism) are seen against a backdrop of shadows and semi-darkness in Till We Have Faces; Christianity indeed is imaged as a bright dream following on aeons of dark and fearsome ones. All the dimness and opacity of the far mythical past are conjured up in order that they may enhance the birth of Christ; Homer, Sappho, Plato become dreams in order that Christ may seem more real. All the bright hard world of Aristotle is made pliable, is made to retreat into a swirling world of flux where Psyche and Orual are neither real nor

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[49]Tolkien, we will see, holds that to abstract an idea or belief from reality and to project it into myth is a means of recovering of one's perspective toward it. Lewis, reviewing Tolkien's trilogy some ten years after his own was done, agreed explicitly with Tolkien.

symbolic but merely ingredients. The whole of the ancient world is made potency so that the Incarnation may be seen as act. It is the world of Cornford and Edwin Hatch, but it has been manipulated out of reality and into dream.

In the trilogy, Christianity--the very story of Christianity as well as many of its dogma--is translated into mythology in order that Christianity may seem more wonderful (not more wonderful than it is, perhaps, but more wonderful than we ordinarily conceive it). Romance, beginning as a means to Christianity, is now used as a servant to Christianity. The whole trilogy is full of the old Chesterton device of making something marvelous by describing it in terms that we never use for it, of making us see something as if for the first time. The drama of the Incarnation takes on a strange new light by being told by a naked green woman on a floating island on Venus, as the Fall assumes new grandeur by being almost repeated. Maledil, so truly in motion that He is still (a psycho-physical parallel of God's infinite act?); Maledil the Young locked in battle with the Dark Eldil of Thulcandra, setting an impassable frontier against him across the face of the moon; Maledil reviving Merlin after fifteen hundred years so that he may join the Pendragon and the planetary Oyeresu in the fight against the Bent One--what could be more wonderful, what could be less like not only what Newman called "the dreary, hopeless irreligion" of the time but less like the very religion itself of the time? Lewis's religion seems hardly to belong to the same century, or the same world, as Eliot's

Thoughts after Lambeth or Jaspers's and Bultmann's discussion of myth and religion, or the work of Camus.

Nor is it improper to compare Lewis's mythology with the religious writings of the time, for none of the four books is simply donnish fooling with religion. There runs through all the books what has come to be called (since Otto) the feeling of the numinous; there is, in fact, the element which Lewis found in Macdonald and was forced to call holiness. But the feeling of the numinous is never directly attached to the Christian God or to Christ, but to Maledil or Maledil the Young; awe is not felt in the presence of the seraphim or powers but in the presence of the planetary Oyeresu. Orual feels that she is being unmade at the approach of an undefined and pre-Christian divine presence. When Ransom first sees Meldilorn, the island palace of the Oyarsa of Mars, Lewis describes it as "virginal," "still," and "secret" and adds, purposely, that its tree tops were taller than the cathedral spires on earth. When the Oyarsa of Mars comes before Ransom, Ransom's "heart and body seemed to be made of water." When he hears the funeral hymn of the hrossa, his spirit bows down "as if the gate of heaven had opened before him." In the closing pages of That Hideous Strength, Ransom, soon to be assumed to Perelandra, says goodby to the company of faithful and, prelate-like, blesses them in Old Solar: "Urendi Maledil" (presumably Dominus vobis cum). In short, holiness or awe of the divine presence runs through the books, but is is always directed at the mythical counterparts of the Christian trinity or angelology.

Given the framework of the books, of course, this is what is to be expected. But it is with the purpose and the desired effect that I am concerned here. And the purpose is to romanticize this-worldly Christianity by seeing it as something else or as a part of something else, the something else being other-worldly and wonderful.

The extent to which Lewis has romanticized Christianity in his fiction may be emphasized by a contrast with Christianity as it is presented sympathetically but "realistically" by such writers as Greene or Waugh or Mauriac. The best of Greene's characters have a touch of brightness about them that is due largely to their religion, but for the most part their lives are bleak and mundane. Often enough in his work the religion is accepted in a hopeless, desperate way, as in the case of Scobie in The Heart of the Matter, who says his Christian prayer as he commits suicide. Sometimes it is accepted as a dreary answer to the dreary question of the world, as in the case of the police chief in The Quiet American who reads the "sad arguments" of Pascal while he waits for the next footpad or mugger to be brought in. And in Waugh, as in Eliot, Christianity becomes a kind of passionless intellectual achievement at best, at worst a kind of social snobbery. For Richard Crouchback Christianity presents a system of abstract rules; it is a legalistic game which mortals play with God in which a man may try to make love to his divorced wife because he is still theologically married to her. Waugh's Christianity is much like Mr. Angular's: it knows all the answers, it is all intellect. When a mild

theological controversy occurred concerning Scobie's ultimate destination (though a suicide, he had acted out of motives of sheer love for both his wife and mistress), Waugh displayed no indecision, no disposition to dwell on either eros or agape; Scobie, he said, was in hell, where he richly deserved to be. Now to "realistic" Christianity Lewis opposes mythopoeic Christianity, made wonderful by being shown to be a part of a vast web of cosmic romance, a religion grown out of a dim and flickering and unreal past into a present heightened by an interplanetary war between good and evil in which Arthur unites with the twelfth-century Platonists, a religion which will ultimately bring man to the pinnacle from which he can watch the Great Dance.

The romanticism of the trilogy is perhaps made more clear by setting it over against other attempts to do roughly the same sort of thing, that is, to show the battle of Christianity against the forces of evil. One of the clearest distinctions between classical and romantic may be drawn from a comparison of Milton's battle and Lewis's. Milton's is traditional and epic: the battle is between, not equals, of course, but between beings who are far above human capacity; Adam and Eve are, as it were, local pawns in the cosmic battle between forces of good and evil beyond their comprehension. All the grandeur and sublimity of the battle scenes, of the temptation, of the angelic fall from peace, derive from the fact that the beings involved are supernatural, with infinite capacities for good and evil, for suffering and joy. The angelic battle is described as a battle of the Titans

because, for artistic purposes, it is simply that; it is heroic, the primal battle of the earliest age of the heroes. In Lewis the battle has descended to the human level: a middle-aged philologist counseled by the Almighty fights a middle-aged scientist possessed by the devil; the fight is no longer on the plains of heaven, nor even on the ringing plains of windy Troy, but in a glade, in the shallows of a lake, in an underwater cave. The whole thing has become localized and intimate, like part of a Wordsworthian landscape. And yet the issues are, if not the same, at least equally important. As much depends on Ransom as on Milton's Christ. But the sense of cosmic objectivity has gone, perhaps because the tradition itself has gone; Milton is retelling an old and true story, but Lewis is making one up. Intimations of the divine come flooding into Ransom from Maledil much as intimations come flooding into Wordsworth from Nature, while in Milton any divine communication is simply formal, as when Michael lectures Adam on the future.

Again, Bunyan's Christian takes on a stature and nobility that Ransom or John (in The Pilgrim's Regress) never achieve because Christian is everyman, or at least every Christian. Bunyan's images, meant to convey the truths of Christianity, fail to be romantic by being clearly allegorical; the Slough of Despond and the Delectable Mountains (like Milton's darkness visible) have no local habitation, nor are they dwelt on for their own sake; they exist just so far as they are allegorical, as they are representations of the state of the soul.

But the romanticism of the trilogy is most distinguishable in the very romanticizing of reality itself, so far as the religious battle is concerned. The image of battle has always suggested itself as the appropriate one to convey the human religious situation. But battles in general, and particularly religious battles, are hardly ever exciting, or at least the excitement is hardly ever of any appreciable duration. Any soldier knows that, just as any religious man knows it. For every pitched battle, or even faintly exciting skirmish, there are long and bleak periods of entrenchment, or troop movement, or even of activity having nothing at all to do with the war. Every war is ninety percent sheer boredom or unwarlike occupations. As Auden says, "The Time Being is, in a sense, the most trying time of all."[50] Ransom is always in the midst of battle; at every moment the outcome of the world is in doubt. But Auden suggests the real flatness of the great part of the struggle:

> In the meantime
> There are bills to be paid, machines to keep in repair,
> Irregular verbs to learn, the Time Being to redeem
> From insignificance. The happy morning is over,
> The night of agony still to come; the time is noon:
> When the Spirit must practise his scales of rejoicing
> Without even a hostile audience, and the Soul endure
> A silence that is neither for nor against her faith
> That God's Will will be done, that, in spite of her prayers
> God will cheat no one, not even the world of its triumph.[51]

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[50] For the Time Being, 1484.

[51] For the Time Being, 1499-1508.

For most Christians, the time is noon, but never for Lewis's characters.

It may be objected at this point that a writer like Lewis, who is not after all primarily a theologian, may choose to deal romantically with religion in his fiction without its following necessarily that his religion itself is romantic. But a brief examination of his doctrinal works and the general source from which they largely derive will show that this is not the case, that in fact (as I said in Chapter I) his romanticism is not distinguishable from his religion. First of all, as an introduction to the doctrinal works, I must make one last point about the fiction. It will not have escaped notice that the fiction, the trilogy especially, manages to argue for Christianity without at any time going at all deeply into the real dogmas of Christianity. On the eve of Ransom's fight with the devil, for example, Ransom is in communion with the Almighty (Maledil); and it is made perfectly clear that Ransom is to perform a heroic deed in order that a new Redemption will not be necessary on Perelandra. But in what exactly the earthly Redemption consists, what it was that Christ did, these questions of theology never occur. The only point of theology that is dealt with in the trilogy is the paradox of the fortunate fall previously mentioned, and that takes on the aspect of a tour de force, with the devil admitting defeat in a mournful howl. Now I do not mean to suggest that fiction is the appropriate place for theological discussion; I do not mean to suggest even that the fiction suffers from the lack of it (the reverse is probably true). What I do suggest is that the presence of

Christianity and the near absence of dogma may be at least as much an extension of a religious attitude as it is an artistic necessity.

Let us turn for a moment to Lewis's Mere Christianity, a book in which Lewis tries to sketch out for the unbeliever the body of belief which "has been common to nearly all Christians at all times."[52] In an effort not to scandalize the pagan reader, Lewis makes the section called "What Christians Believe" utterly undenominational (to the extent that various sects are mentioned only in alphabetical order). He attempts, as he does in the trilogy and other apologetical works such as The Screwtape Letters and The Great Divorce, to distinguish Christianity as a homogeneous body of belief which may be set over against paganism (old or new), modern materialism, and "scientism," which may be described as the emancipated modern belief that science holds the answers to questions about the human situation, questions that it has traditionally been within the province of religion to answer. Thus the whole historical aspect of Christianity--the religious wars, the doctrinal disputes, the Inquisition, the Reformation itself --all this is ignored on the ground that "Our divisions should never be discussed except in the presence of those who have already come to believe that there is one God and that Jesus Christ is His only Son."[53] Throughout, an attempt is made to see Christianity, as it were, empirically:

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[52]Preface to Mere Christianity (New York, 1957), p. vi.

[53]Preface to Mere Christianity, p. vi.

not to teach theology but to stress the fact that Christianity "works," is operative. Thus of the Atonement, Lewis comments that it has given us "a fresh start," but that "theories as to how it did this are another matter."[54] And the Eucharist he calls "a mysterious action which different Christians call by different names."[55] In the matter of dogmas, in short, the conclusion is that "the thing itself is infinitely more important than any explanations that theologians have produced,"[56] and that "no explanation will ever be quite adequate to the reality."[57]

Now an unfriendly or zealously rationalistic critic might see in such an attitude evidence of anti-rationalism or even fideism. But such a view is short-sighted and too simple. No one familiar with Lewis's university sermons (to mention only one source) could accuse Lewis either of irrationalism or lack of interest in theology. It is rather that, as a layman, he feels that he has to "walk _in mirabilibus supra me_ and submit all to the verdict of real theologians."[58] But such admirable humility is yet only half the story. For the informing spirit of Lewis's Christianity, and for the position that theology occupies in his religion, we must turn elsewhere. I have already indicated Lewis's many debts to Barfield and have indeed spoken of Barfield as

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[54]_Mere Christianity_, p. 43.

[55]_Mere Christianity_, p. 43.

[56]_Mere Christianity_, p. 43.

[57]_Mere Christianity_, p. 43.

[58]"Transposition," in _The Weight of Glory and Other Addresses_ (New York, 1949), p. 28.

"the man behind" Lewis. But examination of Lewis's doctrinal work shows that the real man behind Lewis is, not unexpectedly, the same as he behind Barfield: Coleridge. Examination shows that Lewis's Christianity is not merely "Pauline" (as Miss Nott calls it)[59] but rather transcendental in the sense in which that word is applicable to the beliefs of Coleridge and Kant. Once the kinship is seen, Lewis's doctrinal works fall easily and truly into place as complements to the mythopoeic Christianity of the fiction.

The clearest evidence of the religious kinship is to be found in Lewis's The Abolition of Man, a book which makes the same point as That Hideous Strength--that the real and crucial battle of our time is between Christianity and scientism. In the course of the argument Lewis refers to the "Tao," the combined wisdom of the world, which the Chinese had defined as "the reality beyond all predicates, the abyss that was before the Creator Himself. It is Nature, it is the Way, the Road. It is the Way in which the universe goes on, the Way in which things everlastingly emerge, stilly and tranquilly, into space and time."[60] It is this Way or "law of nature" that all must assent to, must affirm. It is the necessary premise to any argument; it is undemonstrable but obligatory. But how affirm an undemonstrable premise? By an act of the Practical Reason, for the premise is in fact a "platitude" of the

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[59] The Emperor's Clothes, p. 255.

[60] The Abolition of Man (New York, 1947), p. 11.

Practical Reason, and "we must accept the ultimate platitudes of Practical Reason as having absolute validity...."[61] Against the "understanding" of science in the realm of morality, Lewis opposes, in Coleridge's words, the "Practical Reason of Man, comprehending the Will, the Conscience, the Moral Being with its inseparable Interests and Affections--that Reason...which is the organ of Wisdom, and (as far as Man is concerned) the Source of living and actual Truths."[62] In a word, the assent to the Tao is a non-conceptual assent, a moral affirmation.

Now such an affirmation supposes the whole of the Kant-Coleridge distinction between, respectively, the understanding and the reason, and the pure or speculative reason and the practical. The understanding, as Coleridge defined it, is an adaptive faculty common to both men and beasts; it is, in man, a higher and more subtle form of the instinct that leads the ant and the bee to build roads, walls, hives in order to obtain a certain goal of ease or security. It is discursive, it makes syllogisms, it abstracts and compares and generalizes. It is limited in its operation in the sense that the materials it works with are phenomena, that is, reality perceived according to the Kantian categories of space and time and organized according to the Kantian forms of perception (substance, quantity, cause, effect, and so on).

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[61] The Abolition of Man, p. 32.

[62] Coleridge, Aids to Reflection (London, 1836), p. 165.

It does not work with the noumenal reality because it does not perceive the noumenal reality; it can see noumena only in terms of phenomena (Barfield's collective representations). If it tries to go beyond this sphere, if it tries to deal discursively with noumenal reality, it becomes "the meddling intellect," murdering to dissect a transcendental reality perceptible only to the Reason. The Reason (either speculative or practical) is a single power of knowing in which all men share, while there are as many understandings as there are men and beasts. Reason is the Word, the Logos; it perceives things of the spirit as the senses perceive material things; it is "reasoning from infinite to infinite." while understanding is "reasoning from finite to finite."[63] It is not inference (the Logos has no need to infer); it is spiritual perception.

It is this Reason considered under its practical (or moral) aspect which Lewis utilizes in the assent to the existence of Natural Law, or to the reality and validity of conscience. We recall that he agrees with Barfield that our logic is a participation in the cosmic Logos, which is an echo of Coleridge's belief that Reason is "part of the Image of God in us."[64] And it is Reason considered under its pure or speculative aspect which is the basis of much of Lewis's doctrinal work --The Problem of Pain, Miracles, the university sermons. Coleridge had

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[63] Aids to Reflection, p. 155.

[64] Aids to Reflection, p. 140.

assigned a particular function to speculative Reason in matters of theology. It is to be used to buttress the truths of faith which have been apprehended by the assent of the Practical Reason, truths which have been presented for acceptance by Revelation. "It is its office and rightful privilege to determine on the negative truth of whatever we are required to believe. The Doctrine must not contradict any universal principle: for this would be a Doctrine that contradicted itself."[65] The distinction here is nice: it is not to establish the truth of dogma (that has been established by Practical Reason, or moral assent); it is rather to show that the dogma is not contrary to reason. In other words, the function of Pure Reason is to work at hypotheses, not in the hope of arriving at truth of dogma but rather in the hope of showing that it is not absurd to believe the dogma. So, in The Problem of Pain, Lewis's concern is to establish reasonable hypotheses about the existence of mental and physical anguish in the world; the fact that pain should exist must be shown to be not irreconcilable with the established truths of Christianity. Pain thus becomes "God's megaphone,"[66] a means by which God tries to make unrepentant man turn to Him. "...it gives the only opportunity the bad man can have for amendment. It removes the veil; it plants the flag of truth within the fortress of a rebel soul."[67]

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[65] Aids to Reflection, p. 177.

[66] Problem of Pain, p. 83.

[67] Problem of Pain, p. 83.

In Miracles, Lewis attempts to show that miracles are amenable to Reason by hazarding that what seems miraculous in our nature is perhaps merely natural in another; what we perceive when we see a "miracle" is not really a miracle at all but a bringing together of two different and perhaps opposite natures. God, for reasons known only to Him, allows two such natures to come into contact, and for a moment one nature operates according to the laws of the other; the result seems to us miraculous (i.e., inexplicable). In any case, once the miraculous phenomenon has occurred, it is received into the nature we know, and begins to abide by the natural laws of our own earth. The Virgin Birth is a miracle, but Christ went through the nine months of gestation. Nature absorbs the miraculous into itself.

But the negative function of Pure Reason in theological matters is most evident in Lewis's university sermons, particularly in the two entitled "The Weight of Glory" and "Transposition." In the first, Lewis deals with the Christian concept of "glory," the state we will assume in beatitude. If it means fame or good reputation, it seems to contradict the Christian notion of humility. But when it is suggested that it does not mean fame among men but rather praise by God, it is seen to be not contradictory to reason. And if it means "brightness, splendour, luminosity,"[68] it seems at first rather silly: "who wishes to become a kind of living electric light bulb?"[69] But again speculation shows

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[68]"The Weight of Glory," p. 12.

[69]"The Weight of Glory," p. 8.

the doctrine not to be absurd, but in fact to be founded on one of the deepest and most common of human desires, the desire for beauty. Here and now we can only perceive beauty; but we want more. "We want something else which can hardly be put into words--to be united with the beauty we see, to pass into it, to receive it into ourselves, to bathe in it, to become part of it. That is why we have peopled air and earth and water with gods and goddesses and nymphs and elves--that, though we cannot, yet these projections can, enjoy in themselves that beauty, grace, and power of which Nature is the image."[70] In the state of beatitude, this deep desire will be somehow fulfilled, and though we do not know how, yet it is enough that the doctrine has been shown to be reasonable.

"Transposition" is an attempt to show the reasonableness of the phenomenon of "glossolalia," or "speaking with tongues." We believe that the apostles spoke with tongues, yet we have evidence from revival meetings that something much like that same phenomenon sometimes occurs and produces a torrent of gibberish. We are forced into the position of holding that "the very same phenomenon which is sometimes not only natural but even pathological is at other times (or at least one other time) the organ of the Holy Ghost."[71] Lewis attempts to remove the apparent absurdity by pointing out that when the Almighty acts in our

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[70]"The Weight of Glory," p. 13.

[71]"Transposition," in The Weight of Glory, p. 17.

Nature, he acts within the limitations of that Nature; analogously, we have the case of lust and love, which both culminate in the sexual act but which are different things. The human body has limitations; its organs must be used for many purposes, and the same organs must be used to gratify lust in a waste of shame and to consummate the noblest kind of sexual love. Pepys, says Lewis, was ravished by hearing the music of The Virgin Martyr, and reported that it pleased him so much that it made him physically sick. Thus both aesthetic pleasure and sea-sickness (for example) bring about the same physical phenomenon, simply because the body is limited in its physical reactions to psychological and spiritual stimuli. And thus glossolalia and religious hysteria appear to be the same because what is rich and complex is being expressed in a poorer medium, translated into a cruder language, and using what comes to hand, the limited reactions of the body. Further, what is unpleasant in one case (the sickness) becomes pleasant in another. The sickness of the stomach common to both sea-sickness and aesthetical rapture is hated in one case and wanted in the other. The physical reactions themselves can be transformed according to the stimulus that effects them. There is perhaps an analogy, Lewis thinks, between this transposition and the theology of the Incarnation. As the sensation of sickness is subsumed by aesthetic joy and made, as it were, a part of that joy, so in the Incarnation, which worked "not by conversion of the Godhead into flesh, but by taking of the Manhood into

God," man may be "veritably drawn into" God.[72] But Lewis advances this only as a hypothesis, walking in mirabilibus supra me. The real truth (as distinct from its lack of logical absurdity), the way that it really differs from hysteria, can be known only as St. Paul himself knew it: by Practical Reason, by spiritual perception. "Spiritual things are spiritually discerned."[73]

Now what I have said of Lewis's doctrinal works, that they are products of the Pure Reason and thus adjuncts to the Practical Reason or the will, is in some degree true, if not of Anglicanism as a whole, at least of some part or school of Anglicanism. Historical examination shows that Coleridge played no small part in nineteenth-century broad-church Anglicanism before the advent of modernism.[74] Further such

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[72]"Transposition," p. 28.

[73]"Transposition," p. 25.

[74]See C. T. Sanders, Coleridge and the Broad Church Movement (Durham, N.C., 1942). F. D. Maurice paid tribute to Coleridge's part in the movement in 1842. His book The Kingdom of Christ is concerned with a universal church to which all the sects could belong, and he wrote in his dedication to Derwent Coleridge: "In preparing for the consideration of this great subject I have felt...that Mr. Coleridge's help has been invaluable to us. Nearly every thoughtful writer of the day would have taught us, that the highest truths are those which lie beyond the limits of Experience, that the essential principles of the Reason are those which cannot be proved by syllogisms, that the evidence for them is the impossibility of admitting that which does fall under the law of experience, unless we recognize them as its foundation; nay, the impossibility of believing that we ourselves are, or anything that is, except upon these terms. The atheism of Hume has driven men to these blessed discoveries, and though it was your father's honour that he asserted them to an age and a nation which had not yet discovered the need of them, he certainly did not pretend...that he was the first receiver or expositor of them. But the application of these principles to Theology, I believe, we owe mainly to him. The power of perceiving that by the very law of the Reason the Knowledge of God must be given to it; that the moment it attempts to create its Maker, it denies itself...I must acknowledge that I received from him." Quoted from Basil Willey, Nineteenth Century Studies (London, 1949), p. 3.

examination, which is beyond the scope of this work, might reveal why it is a "typically Anglican conviction that truth is larger and more beautiful than our imperfect minds are able to apprehend or conceive,"[75] and why Anglicanism, more than some other communions, should strive always "not to define too exactly those mysteries which God has hidden in His own knowledge."[76] I do not suggest that Lewis's romantic Christianity is identical with Anglicanism as such, any more than the romantic religion of Macdonald or Chesterton was identical with their formal religions. I do suggest that Lewis has come to terms with dogma in a typically romantic way learned from Coleridge, that he has done this in order to go beyond dogma to experience, the romantic experience of longing which he now can see as of religious significance. Transcendental Christianity preserves the value of both dogma and experience by explaining both as attempts to reach the same end, by showing that sehnsucht is qualitatively the same as the Practical Reason or the Will. Romantic longing is for what never was on sea or land, for the beyond "partly in the west, partly in the past"; transcendental Christianity provides an ultimate reality that is opaque, unapproachable and unknowable except through the will. As Coleridge said, "Omnia exeunt in mysterium....There is nothing, the absolute ground of which is not a Mystery. The contrary were indeed a contradiction in terms: for how

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[75]Stephen Neill, Anglicanism (Baltimore, 1958), p. 422.

[76]Anglicanism, p. 429.

can that, which is to explain all things, be susceptible of an explanation?"[77] Christianity itself, for the transcendentalist, may be thought of as a myth or accommodation, so far as it is understood rather than perceived spiritually by moral means; just so far as Christianity is formal and dogmatic, it is a limitation of the transcendent God, a form of perception like quantity or substance by which we mutilate and distort the I AM WHO AM. In order to know God, we must love Him; there is no discursive way. Transcendental Christianity, like romantic longing, puts its good in "the High Countries,"[78] where the heart is.

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[77]Coleridge, Aids to Reflection, p. 131.

[78]Lewis, Preface to The Great Divorce (New York, 1946), p. vii.

CHAPTER IV

CHARLES WILLIAMS AND ROMANTIC THEOLOGY

The most extensive and perceptive criticisms of the work of Charles Williams to date are those of his friends and close acquaintances --Lewis, Eliot, Ann Ridler. Now no one can doubt that, other things being equal, to have known the man whose work you deal with is almost surely to possess insights into the work that other critics will not have. Yet there are dangers in such intimate knowledge. Coleridge was a better critic of Wordsworth after their estrangement, and no one turns to Boswell for a critical evaluation of Irene. One might even argue that the more magnetic the personality of the writer, the less objective the criticism of his friends will be. It is one of the difficulties which I have already noted as facing the critic of contemporary matters. It is necessary to point out the danger in the case of Williams, for he seems to have impressed his friends in a way not really susceptible of analysis by someone who did not know him. Lewis, when he tried to combine the idea of death with the idea of Charles Williams, found that it was "the idea of death that was changed."[1] And, speaking of Williams's death, he records the testimony of two of William's friends:

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[1]Preface to Essays Presented to Charles Williams (London, 1947), p. xiv.

> A lady, writing to me after his death, used the word stupor (in its Latin sense) to describe the feeling which Williams had produced on a certain circle in London; it would almost describe the feeling he produced on us after he died. There is, I dare say, no empirical proof that such an experience is more than subjective. But for those who accept on other grounds the Christian faith, I suggest that it is best understood in the light of some words that one of his friends said to me as we sat in Addison's Walk just after the funeral. 'Our Lord told the disciples it was expedient for them that He should go away, otherwise the Comforter would not come to them. I do not think it blasphemous to suppose that what was true archetypally, and in eminence, of His death may, in the appropriate degree, be true of the deaths of all of His followers.'[2]

Eliot, commenting on the unity of Williams's life and work, adds, "To have known the man would have been enough; to know his books is enough; but no one who has known both the man and his works would have willingly foregone either experience."[3] And Auden has said that his meetings with Williams were "among my most unforgettable and precious experiences."[4] Ann Ridler mentions that, when he was lecturing at Oxford during the second World War, he always had time to talk with his students, even the dullest. "His friends, to tease him, would call him promiscuous, and perhaps would wish him to be more selective, but would then recall that the saints were not selective."[5]

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[2]Preface to Essays Presented, p. xiv.

[3]Introduction to All Hallows' Eve (New York, 1948), p. xi.

[4]Introduction to The Descent of the Dove, The History of the Holy Spirit in the Church (New York, 1956), p. v.

[5]Introduction to The Image of the City and Other Essays (London, 1958), p. xxii.

Now these testimonies to Williams's sanctity must be taken into account in any discussion of his work. For as regards his theological beliefs, his theme is one and always was: what he calls "substitution," "co-inherence," "exchange." In the following pages I will discuss these principles as theological beliefs inducing, in Williams, certain attitudes; I will not, and cannot, discuss them as a practical way of life. But exchange and substitution may have been for Williams, as Auden says, not only a "basic theme" but "a way of life by which...he himself lived."[6] Now as a practical way of life, substitution and exchange become a kind of physical communion of the saints by which one man may literally bear the burden of another's pain and anguish. By an act of the will one may assume another's suffering, and by an act of the will one may yield up his suffering to another. Such a notion, I believe, strikes the average reader as either grotesque (like something out of Williams's occultish novels), or as a matter bordering on the miraculous. And either alternative makes him uneasy. But Williams's friends were not uneasy: knowing the man, they accepted the second alternative. Eliot speaks of the "states of consciousness of a mystical kind" which Williams "knew, and could put into words."[7] And of this practical way of exchange following from these states, Lewis adds that he believes Williams "spoke from experimental knowledge."[8]

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[6]Introduction to Descent of the Dove, p. v.

[7]Introduction to All Hallows' Eve, p. xvii.

[8]"Williams and the Arthuriad," in Arthurian Torso (London, 1948), p. 123.

On the question of whether or not Williams had mystical experiences, I, of course, can have no opinion except from the evidence of his work. There he often speaks of mystical experience in connection with Dame Julian of Norwich or Evelyn Underhill or the pseudo-Dionysius;[9] and one certainly gets the impression that he knows whereof he speaks, that he speaks, as it were, from the inside. And it may be that what looks from the outside like transcendental philosophy, which sees the world as manifesting God in His various aspects, may be from the inside knowledge arrived at by spiritual communion. It may be that, like Dame Julian, Williams saw the essential Unity of the world. But what his work shows to the reader is that he was a man (as Wordsworth said of Coleridge) to whom the essential unity of things had been revealed--but by natural means, exciting moments of metaphysical insight.

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[9]But he is not then talking about his own experience. Thus, in his edition of Evelyn Underhill's letters (London, 1943) he quotes approvingly what Miss Underhill is in turn quoting from her spiritual teacher Baron von Hugel: "We all need one another...souls, all souls, are deeply interconnected. The Church at its best and deepest is just that--that interdependence of all the broken and meek, all the self-oblivion, all the reaching out to God and souls...nothing is more real than this interconnection. We can suffer for one another--no soul is saved alone and by its own efforts." (p. 21) Williams remarks that he once talked briefly to Miss Underhill about this principle of substitution-exchange. He had written of an exchange in his novel Descent into Hell: "He endured her sensitiveness, but not her sin; the substitution there, if indeed there is a substitution, is hidden in the central mystery of Christendom." And he adds: "It was a well-meant sentence, but she charmingly corrected it. She said something to this effect: 'Oh, but the saints do--they say they do. St. Catherine said: "I will bear your sins."' She spoke from a very great knowledge of the records of sanctity, but I should be rather more than willing to believe that she spoke from a lofty practice of sanctity and from a great understanding of the laws that govern, and the labours that are given to, sanctity." (p. 21)

Nowhere in his work (so far as I am aware) does he lay claim to anything more than that; and it is with his work that I must deal.

What is received is received according to the condition of the receiver: a personal knowledge of Williams the man has helped to form the receiving intellects of his friends. It may be that his friends, disarmed, are thus partially disabled as critics; or it may be that other critics are themselves disabled by the lack of such knowledge. It is a nice question, to which I do not have the answer, but a question which must be posed. Truth, as Donne said, is a steep cliff, and we go many a weary round to scale it. No one ever lived who did not carry with him his armor of preconceptions and his shield of beliefs. No one ever went naked into an ideological battle. The most that any man (and critic) can hope is that he know the armor he is wearing. That of Lewis, Auden, Eliot and Ann Ridler is that of the Anglican faith and the friendship of Williams. The rest of us must look to our own.

And here I must say a further preliminary word, this time as regards the limitations I have imposed upon myself in my approach to Williams's work. It is at present difficult to say into what literary category Williams's best work falls. He is perhaps best known for his theological thrillers, and of all his work these have been dealt with the most extensively by critics. Lewis regards his poetry as his most important literary work, and looks forward to the time when "Williams criticism" will sweep away Lewis's own preliminary and tentative remarks on the Arthurian poems. And another critic regards Williams as "a

Miltonic poet"[10] who, in the Taliessen poems, has "produced a new kind of poetic mythology."[11] Further, any estimate of Williams's total work must include an evaluation of his dramatic work, particularly his contribution (at the same time as Eliot) to the poetic drama. The resemblance between Williams's Thomas Cranmer of Canterbury and Eliot's Murder in the Cathedral is too marked to be merely accidental. Finally, there remains (aside from his theological writing) a quite extensive and uncollected mass of literary criticism. Of this last, some is hack work, but some is rather highly regarded--his introduction to the World's Classics edition of Milton, his several pieces on Dante (particularly The Figure of Beatrice), and his criticism of Wordsworth in Reason and Beauty in the Poetic Mind.

Thus, unfortunately for the literary historian, Williams's talent splashes untidily into several areas. Literary assessors will have to decide Williams's merit in fiction of a special sort, in poetry, in drama, in criticism. In the last, it may well be found (as has been suggested to me) that Williams anticipates such recent and equitable analyses of romantic theories of poetry as that of M. H. Abrams; and certainly Williams's interest (both critical and creative) in the nature of allegory and symbolism antedates such recent interest in the subject as shown by Northrop Frye and Edwin Honig. And there is little

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[10]George Every, Poetry and Personal Responsibility, An Interim Report on Contemporary Literature (London, 1949), p. 41.

[11]Poetry and Personal Responsibility, p. 59.

doubt that Williams belongs in the ranks of those who, like Douglas Bush and Lewis, have done so much to re-establish the reputation of Milton after the damaging attacks on it by Eliot, Pound, and Leavis, among others.

Williams, then, may be approached from many directions; and ultimately he must be so approached, for (and this is the possibility that nags every critic) he may just be a really important writer. But the shoemaker must stick to his last. I have sketched out problems for others that I mean to ignore myself; my purpose, as I have said before, is not literary evaluation as such but the examination of a religious-literary phenomenon. Thus I have drawn no line between his work in the several categories. His religious ideas and attitude are fundamental to all his work and pervade all his work, and so I have traced out these things in whatever form they occur in his work, using as criteria only the clarity or the forcefulness with which they are expressed.

We may begin, then, with a term that I have already used in connection with Lewis and Barfield--transcendentalism. Williams, says one of his critics, belongs "to the tradition of Christian transcendentalism in English poetry--the great tradition of Spenser, Vaughan, the later Wordsworth and Coleridge...."[12] It will be clear as we go on that the observation is true of his prose as well. Yet it is not really helpful to call Williams transcendental in the sense that I have used the term

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[12]John Heath-Stubbs, Charles Williams (London, 1955), p. 15.

of Barfield and Lewis. Within the rather vague confines of the phenomenon we call transcendental Christianity, there are all sorts of emphasis possible; and though it is true to say that Spenser and Coleridge belong to the same tradition, such cataloguing is of little real help in establishing what it was that each man particularly believed and practised. I have used the term transcendental of Barfield to refer especially to his use of the creative imagination as the concept comes from Coleridge and, ultimately, out of German romantic philosophy. And I have used the term of Lewis to mean especially his use of the transcendental epistemology as it is found in Kant and, again, Coleridge.

But though there is emphasis in Williams's work on the faculty of the creative imagination, it is not the same sort of emphasis that we have found in Barfield; nor are there the distinctions between the speculative and the practical intellect that we have found in Lewis. There is rather more of Wordsworth than of Coleridge in Williams's work. He is more the poetic romantic than the analytical romantic, more concerned with the Wordsworthian vision than with the Coleridgean glossing of the workings of the mind. What we find in Williams's work is emphasis on the union of the intellect and the imagination as the highest means of reaching religious truth. We find him time and again insisting on this union in terms for which he has to resort to Wordsworth: this union results in "the feeling intellect," or "absolute power," or "reason in her most exalted mood." Thus Merlin in Taliessen through Logres magically sends his imagination into the "third sphere" in order to perceive

Pelles the Wounded King and Lancelot outside the King's gate, reduced to wolf-shape after his enchanted begetting of Galahad on Helayne:

> he sent his hearing into the third sphere--
> once by a northern poet beyond Snowdon
> seen at the rising of the moon, the mens sensitiva,
> the feeling intellect, the prime and vital principle,
> the pattern in heaven of Nimue, time's mother on earth,
> Broceliande. ("The Son of Lancelot," pp. 55-56)

This union of intellect and imagination as a way to religious truth is illustrated most clearly in what Williams called "the theology of romantic love," and it is with this theology that we must greatly concern ourselves in this chapter.

Before we examine the phenomenon of romantic theology, however, it is necessary to glance at the framework within which it exists. To do this requires sketching out Williams's general theological beliefs and, by so doing, establishing another facet of his transcendental theology.

We must begin by pointing out that Williams follows "one arrangement of doctrine rather than what is perhaps the more usual" but one "that...is no less orthodox."[13] This arrangement of doctrine holds that God (to speak in time) desired to become incarnate.[14] He could have done so without creating man and the universe, but He chose the

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[13]Williams, The Forgiveness of Sins (London, 1950, in a volume which also includes He Came Down From Heaven), p. 119.

[14]The doctrine that the Incarnation would have occurred even had there been no Fall, Williams attributes to Duns Scotus. See Descent of the Dove, p. 122.

latter course:

> He willed...that this union with matter in flesh should be by a mode which precisely involved creatures to experience joy. He determined to be incarnate by being born; that is, he determined to have a mother. His mother was to have companions of her own kind; and the mother and her companions were to exist in an order of their own degree, in time and place, in a world. They were to be related to him and to each other by a state of joyous knowledge; they were to derive from him and from each other; and he was to deign to derive his flesh from them. All this sprang, superfluous, out of his original intention--superfluous to himself and to his direct purpose, not superfluous to his indirect purpose of love. It was to be a web of simultaneous interchange of good. 'In the sight of God,' said Lady Julian, 'all man is one man and one man is all man.'[15]

From the above description of the creation and Incarnation, we may proceed to the rest of the root ideas to be found in Williams's work. First, as I have already said, from this description another facet of his transcendentalism is clear. The universe, including the unity, man, is to be seen as a vast interlocking web of glory; all things manifest God in their degree; the hills skip for joy and the sons of God shout His praises. All things, man included, are glints of God; He is not in all things but, as it were, behind all things; the creation is an array of the masks of God. It is thus that Taliessen envisions the Empire (the world); it is the unity of Byzantium (heaven) translated into multiplicity in order to be perceived phenomenally:

> The organic body sang together;
> dialects of the world sprang in Byzantium;
> back they rang to sing in Byzantium;

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[15]Forgiveness of Sins, pp. 119-20.

the streets repeat the sound of the Throne.

The Acts issue from the Throne.
Under it, translating the Greek minuscula
to minds of the tribes, the identities of creation
phenomenally abating to kinds and kindreds,
the household inscribes the Acts of the Emperor;
the logothetes run down the porphyry stair
bearing the missives through the area of empire.
("The Vision of the Empire" in Taliessen, p. 6)

Thus there are, as Melville and Emerson and Baudelaire knew, "correspondences" between things. This, for Williams, is particularly so in respect to God and man. The whole of the relationship among men, and between man and God, is clear from the meanings of three of Williams's favorite terms: co-inherence, substitution, and exchange. We must pause here to examine them.

The three terms all refer to single aspects of the same thing, and this thing we may call the universal principle of existence. This principle may be stated negatively by saying that nothing, not even God, exists alone and without reference to anything else. The pattern of all existence is to be found in the Trinity: this is the supreme example of co-inherence and exchange. And the universe, as in the neo-Platonic tradition, mirrors or adumbrates the existence of God. All things co-inhere in each other and in God because, literally, that is the way existence is, that is the nature of existence, divine or worldly. And substitution, the model of which is the Redemption and the Atonement, is a further application of this same principle. As all things co-inhere and practise exchange among each other, so all things substitute for each other. More accurately, in the case of man, who is a unity, all men

substitute for each other and thereby serve themselves. Augustine, says Williams, stressed the existence and importance of this web of humanity:

> 'Fuimus ille unus' he said; 'we were in the one when we were the one.' Whatever ages of time lay between us and Adam, yet we were in him and his guilt is in us. And indeed if all mankind is held together by its web of existence, then ages cannot separate one from another. Exchange, substitution, co-inherence are a natural fact as well as a supernatural truth. 'Another is in me,' said Felicitas; 'we were in another,' said Augustine. The co-inherence reaches back to the beginning as it stretches on to the end, and the anthropos is present everywhere. 'As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive'; co-inherence did not begin with Christianity; all that happened then was that co-inherence itself was redeemed and revealed by that very redemption as a supernatural principle as well as a natural.[16]

But the nature of substitution and exchange, principles of existence as they are, does not permit them to be practised only at the whim or will of the persons involved. Christ's substitution was a willing one, and man may imitate Him in sacrifice and desired suffering. But this is only a part of existence. Frequently Williams uses the image of a city as a symbol of the continual exchange that constitutes existence; the city exists only as a vast "exchange between citizens."[17] And the necessary exchange is not necessarily between lovers or even acquaintances; it may be, and often is, between enemies, people who despise each other.

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[16] Descent of the Dove, pp. 69-70.

[17] "Anthropotokos," in Image of the City, p. 112.

> Hostility begins to exist...whenever and wherever we forget that we are nourished by, that we live from--whomever; when we think that we can choose by whom we shall be nourished. If anthropos has any meaning, if the web of humanity is in any sense one, if the City exists in our blood as well as in our desires, then we precisely must live from, and be nourished by, those whom we most wholly dislike and disapprove.[18]

Thus the very nature of existence, for Williams, may be nearly paraphrased by the Scholastic definition of accident as that to whose nature it belongs to exist by virtue of another. All things, it may be said, are accidents existing by virtue of the substance (the only substance) of the co-inhering Trinity of God.

Now, again to speak in terms of time, this is the way the world was before the Fall. But to speak in terms of time is inaccurate, according to Williams. Though Williams never mentions Kant, he seems to hold with Kant that time is a mode of perception; we grind the timeless down into temporality and sequence because otherwise we could perceive nothing. Strictly speaking, the past, the present, and the future are relative and temporal terms. Existence operates in timelessness: the past and the future are happening. The practices of substitution and interchange can and do operate in the past as well as in the present and the future. Thus Taliessen envisions all Christian poets indebted to Virgil rushing out of the future at the hour of his death to substitute for him:

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[18]"Anthropotokos," in Image of the City, p. 112.

> Virgil was fathered of his friends.
> He lived in their ends.
> He was set on the marble of exchange.
> ("Taliessen on the Death of Virgil" in Taliessen, p. 32)

Thus we may warily hope that Herod does not slaughter the innocents, nor Salome demand the Baptist's head. Examples of this timelessness in the novels are numerous and have often been noted. The most spectacular occurs in Descent into Hell: the heroine, haunted by a doppelganger, allows another to bear her burden of fear; she in turn takes on the sufferings of her ancestor, a Protestant martyr who died at the stake under Bloody Mary, thereby providing him with the courage to go to his death singing the praises of God. Ann Ridler, who accepts Williams's doctrine of substitution, remarks on the advantages of substitution operating outside time:

> ...one of its great rewards is the liberation which it brings from the tyranny of time as well as space, so that the sense of guilt at any temporary forgetfulness is abolished: there is no such word as too late; all times, like all fortune, must be good. This is also surely the justification for those efforts to share imaginatively in the sufferings of Christ, which to some have seemed a masochistic practice: if the doctrine is true, even there the Creator may accept help from His creature--a help that speeds from any point in time.[19]

Now this is the nature of the transcendental, interlocking universe so far as it is not fallen. It is good; it could not be otherwise, being, as it is, a divine facade. There remains then to explain the nature of evil and the fall of man, their place in the creation which

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[19]Introduction to The Image of the City, p. xlix.

God looked on and found to be good. If the creation is good, if all things praise God by their existence, it follows that man ought normally to perceive this. But man does not. How does it happen that he does not perceive the true nature of things? The answer lies in the nature of the fall.

Williams explains the nature of the fall by what he calls "the myth of the alteration of knowledge." Before the fall occurred (or occurs) man knew (or knows) the good as good; he existed in "a state of joyous knowledge"; he perceived the transcendent universe, of which he is himself a part, for what it really is, a reflection of the love and glory of God. The fall of "the Adam" (Williams stresses the human unity described by the Lady Julian) consisted in failing to be, in Milton's words, "lowly wise." The Adam wished to be as God, knowing both good and evil. In the prelapsarian state the Adam, knowing all things as good, could know evil only as an intellectual possibility. But the Adam received the wish, and knew immediately "good lost and evil got."

> Unfortunately to be as gods meant, for the Adam, to die, for to know evil, for them, was to know it not by pure intelligence but by experience. It was, precisely, to experience the opposite of good, that is the deprivation of the good, the slow destruction of the good, and of themselves with the good.[20]

They wished to see "the principles at war" as God does; but what God sees as mere possibility they had to live:

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[20] Forgiveness of Sins, p. 123.

> The Adam in the hollow of Jerusalem respired:
> softly their thought twined to its end,
> crying: O parent, O forked friend,
> am I not too long meanly retired
> in the poor space of joy's single dimension?
> Does not God vision the principles at war?
> Let us grow to the height of God and the Emperor:
> Let us gaze, son of man, on the Acts in contention.
>
> The Adam climbed the tree; the boughs
> rustled, withered, behind them; they saw
> the secluded vision of battle in the law;
> they found the terror in the Emperor's house.
>
> The tree about them died undying,
> the good lusted against the good,
> the Acts in conflict envenomed the blood,
> on the twisted tree hung their body wrying.
> . . . . . .
> they had their will; they saw; they were torn in the terror.
> ("The Vision of the Empire" in Taliessen, pp. 10-11)

Evil, for Williams as for Aquinas, has no positive existence; it is good warped and bent or, more accurately, good misperceived.

> They knew good; they wished to know good and evil.
> Since there was not--since there never has been and
> never will be--anything else than the good to know,
> they knew good as antagonism. All difference consists
> in the mode of knowledge.[21]

The nature of the Fall, then, may be described as man's loss of vision. With the Fall he loses his clarity and accuracy of moral and metaphysical sight. "Hell," Williams observes, "is inaccurate."[22] Man sees good as evil, awarding to evil the tenuous existence of a mode of

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[21] Forgiveness of Sins, p. 129.

[22] Quoted by Heath-Stubbs, p. 18.

perception, a way rather than a phenomenal existence. It follows, then, that the Redemption must consist of some way or ways of restoring the original accuracy of knowledge. And, according to Williams, the Redemption consists of two such ways: the Negative Way and the Affirmative Way. The Negative Way is the way of ascetism and denial, the rejection of all the images of God which make up creation in favor of the single image of God Himself. This is the way of what we usually call mysticism: the original clarity of vision, the true God-man relationship, are restored to the follower of the Way of Rejection by means of a direct communion with God. This is the way of the anchoress, the hermit, of St. John of the Cross and St. Theresa of Avila. In Taliessen through Logres Dindrane, whose religious name is Blanchefleur, follows the Way of Rejection, as Taliessen himself follows the Way of Affirmation. She rejects the good and pleasant life of the court for that of the nunnery where she will devote her life to bringing up Galahad. She

> professed at Almesbury
> to the nuns of infinite adoration, veiled
> passions, sororal intellects, earth's lambs,
> wolves of the heavens, heat's pallor's secret
> within and beyond cold's pallor, fires
> lit at Almesbury....
> ("The Son of Lancelot" in Taliessen, p. 55)

The pseudo-Dionysius, says Williams, is "the great intellectual teacher of that Way...."[23]

The other Way is the Way of the Affirmation of Images, the

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[23]The Figure of Beatrice (London, 1943), p. 8.

determination to restore the original vision by affirming in some way that the images of God of which creation consists are still good; this way consists not in ignoring or rejecting the world but in accepting it for what it is, but what it no longer seems to be--good. Now these images to be affirmed are not subjective; they are, as Williams said of them in respect to Dante, "the subjective recollection within him of something objectively outside him" (Barfield's collective representations); they are images "of an exterior fact and not of an interior desire."[24] Thus, as Antony Borrow says, "Potentially...any and every thing known or perceived by man, including man, is an object from which such an image may be formed."[25] Thus death, madness, bereavement, loss are images to be affirmed. "The Way of the Affirmation is...an acceptance of the world, including an acceptance of what we happen to see as evil, and at the same time continually striving to see it as one aspect of God."[26]

Now the mystic, the follower of the Way of the Rejection of Images, has his original vision restored, at least briefly, by direct communion with the Godhead; he has seen what Plato called the Idea of the Good, though when he returns to the mundane cave in which the rest of us live he can only speak to us of his vision in metaphors and dark conceits, can only tell us, like St. John of the Cross, of the light in

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[24] The Figure of Beatrice, p. 8.

[25] "The Affirmation of Images," Nine (Summer/Autumn, 1952), 327.

[26] "The Affirmation of Images," Nine, p. 329.

the dark night of the soul, or, like St. Theresa, of the bright nuptial hymns she has heard. But a vision need not be intelligible; for a moment the mystic has seen the light turned on behind the universe, has seen the great wheels rolling, like Ezekiel. But how does the Affirmative Way restore the accuracy of prelapsarian vision? The answer to this, which is the burden of this chapter, is the essence of Williams's religious romanticism.

Williams's romanticism is what might be called "corrected" romanticism. It is theologized romanticism, the romantic experience seen sub species aeternitatis. Williams, says Lewis, was a "romantic theologian."

> A romantic theologian does not mean one who is romantic about theology but one who is theological about romance, one who considers the theological implications of those experiences which are called romantic. The belief that the most serious and ecstatic experiences either of human love or of imaginative literature have such theological implications, and that they can be healthy and fruitful only if the implications are diligently thought out and severely lived, is the root principle of all his work. His relation to the modern literary current was thus thoroughly 'ambivalent'. He could be grouped with the counter-romantics in so far as he believed untheologized romanticism ...to be sterile and mythological. On the other hand, he could be treated as the head of the resistance against the moderns in so far as he believed the romanticism they were rejecting as senile to be really immature ....[27]

It is the "uncorrected" romanticism, or what Williams calls pseudo-romanticism, which Williams dislikes. Uncorrected romanticism may be defined as the romantic experience unreflected upon, the romantic

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[27]Preface to Essays Presented, p. vi.

experience seen only as itself and not through the spectacles of eternity. If Wordsworth has been content to revel in the experience of Nature which haunted him like a passion instead of looking for its meaning, he would have been an "uncorrected" romantic. If the man in love does not try to see the significance of being in love, he, too, is an uncorrected romantic. The experience itself is not enough; it must be related to the rest of the web of existence. True romanticism must consist of the union of the intellect and the imagination; it must be passionate thought, analyzed passion. Wordsworth and Blake, says Williams, were true romantics.

> The true Romantic, maintaining the importance of what Blake calls 'the visionary Fancy or Imagination', admits and believes that the holy intellect is part of it. ... Both of these noble poets have been said to repudiate 'the meddling intellect'; in so far as they did, it was precisely the meddling intellect which they discarded. The power which they felt and believed was defined by Wordsworth in the grand climax of the Prelude--'the feeling intellect'.[28]

Williams's "true" romanticism, characterized as it is by the "feeling intellect," is a good deal like the current notion of metaphysical poetry which stems from Grierson and Eliot. If we may borrow Eliot's phrases, we may say that Williams's true romantic is one in whom there can be no "dissociation of sensibility," one who feels a thought as immediately as the odor of a rose, one whose thoughts are experiences which modify his sensibility. In Eliot, however, the unified sensibility serves largely as a faculty for the writing of poetry. In Williams,

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[28]"Blake and Wordsworth," in Image of the City, p. 60.

the union of thought and feeling serves, as I have indicated, as a means of arriving at religious truth.

Now theologized romanticism is one of the modes of the Affirative Way, and thus one of the ways of restoring the prelapsarian vision. The romantic experience theologized, like Lewis's sehnsucht, is one of the potential benefits to man brought about by the Redemption. There are various kinds, or modes, of the romantic experience which, when joined with the intellect, may lead man back to the original vision. Williams nowhere in his writing develops them, but he apparently used them as talking points in his wartime lectures to Oxford undergraduates. John Heath-Stubbs catalogues them from this source:

> In a lecture which I heard him deliver at Oxford in 1943, Charles Williams distinguished five principal modes of the Romantic experience, or great images, which occur in poetry. They are:
> (a) The Religious experience itself. Having posited this, Williams proposed to say nothing further about it. Obviously, in a sense, it is in a category apart, and includes the others.
> (b) The Image of woman. Dante's Divine Comedy is the fullest expression of this mode, and its potential development.
> (c) The Image of Nature. Of this Wordsworth in The Prelude...was the great exponent.
> (d) The Image of the City. Had Williams not been addressing an audience composed of English Literature students, I have no doubt that he would have cited Virgil, in the Aeneid, as the great exponent....
> (e) The experience of great art. Of this, Keats's Ode on a Grecian Urn was a partial expression.[29]

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[29]Heath-Stubbs, pp. 18-19.

The only one of these five modes of the romantic experience which Williams ever fully developed is the image of woman, out of which subheading comes his theology of romantic love. Of the others there are only scattered hints throughout his work. The experience of great art, for example, he touches on briefly in the novel Many Dimensions. The plot centers about a certain stone by the use of which a man may travel through space and time. One of the persons in the novel, having experienced this travel, meditates its possibilities and causes:

> ...the past might, even materially, exist; only man was not aware of it, time being, whatever else it was, a necessity of his consciousness. 'But because I can only be sequentially conscious,' he argued, 'must I hold that what is not communicated to consciousness does not exist? I think in a line--but there is the potentiality of the plane.' This perhaps was what great art was--a momentary apprehension of the plane at a point in the line. The Demeter of Cnidos, the Praying Hands of Durer, the Ode to a Nightingale, the Ninth Symphony--the sense of vastness in those small things was the vastness of all that had been felt in the present.[30]

Before we turn to the theology of romantic love as Williams's most fully developed mode of the Affirmation of Images, there is one last general theological point which we must consider, for it plays a basic part in that mode: the point is Williams's beliefs concerning the body, its place and function in the religious life.

Ann Ridler believes that Williams's notions about the body came originally out of what we should call occult sources. Shortly after

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[30] Many Dimensions (London, 1947), p. 58.

the first World War, Williams became friendly with A. E. Waite, who introduced him to the Order of the Golden Dawn, the theosophical society of which Yeats had earlier been a member. Though Williams's connection with the order was brief, he read with great interest Waite's book The Secret Doctrine in Israel, which is a study of the Jewish mystical work called the Zohar. Waite's book makes much of the body as symbolic:

> The frontispiece shows a diagram of the Sephirotic Tree laid out upon the figure of a man, with the different properties related to different parts of the body--e.g., Chesed, Mercy, is at the right hand, Geburah, Severity, at the left. In this book, I believe, are the foundations of Williams's thought about the symbolism of the body, and of his life-long attempt to develop an adequate theology of marriage....[31]

There is also much of the Arthurian imagery of Waite's The Hidden Church of the Holy Grail in Williams's Arthurian poetry. There is an end-paper design in the English edition of Taliessen through Logres which indicates in Blakean fashion the symbolic geography of the poems.

> Here the Empire is represented as a human figure. The head is in Logres (Britain) for it is in Britain that the myth is to be enacted....The breasts are in Gaul (where Christendom is nourished by the milk of

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[31]Ridler, p. xxv. Williams himself has said that "the visionary forms of the occult schools are but dreams of the Divine Body." ("The Index of the Body" in Image of the City, p. 84.) D. D. Runes's summary is helpful here: "God is ain soph, the endless, ever creating; or, in the words of...Spinoza, 'Natura naturans' (infinite creative substance).

"God manifests Himself in ten emanations, or Sephiroth. His divine attributes are: Wisdom, Reason, Knowledge, Greatness, Strength, Beauty, Eternity, Majesty, Principle, and Sovereignty (Chokmah, Binah, Daath, Gedulah, Geburah, Tiphereth, Netzach, Hod, Yesod, Malkuth). The Wisdom of the Kabbalah (New York, 1957), pp. 9-10.

> learning and culture). The hands, at Rome, symbolize the manual acts of the Pope, which are the acts of the Church (blessing, laying on of hands, etc.). Byzantium, the seat of the Emperor...is the navel--traditionally the seat of the soul. Jerusalem is the genital organs --the place both of Crucifixion and Redemption. At the furthest remove from Logres (but nearest to Byzantium) is Caucasia, the buttocks--this represents the natural, but still essentially good, human functions.[32]

It is with such body symbolism in mind that one must read

> The milk rises in the breasts of Gaul,
> Trigonometrical milk of doctrine.
> Man sucks it; his joints harden,
> sucking logic, learning, law,
> drawing on the breasts of intelligo and credo.
> ("The Vision of the Empire," Taliessen, p. 8)

Certainly much of the occultism of the novels concerns the body, not in a specially erotic way, but as a vehicle formed (according to both neo-Platonic and kabbalistic traditions) out of "prime matter." It has been suggested that Milton was also familiar with the teachings of the Zohar and kabbalistic lore;[33] in any case an acquaintance with

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[32]P. 36.

[33]See Denis Saurat, Milton: Man and Thinker (New York, 1925), Part IV, Section II, pp. 281-328. See also Saurat, Gods of the People (London, 1947), pp. 140-41. It is not relevant to try to establish proof of this knowledge here, and in fact it may be unprovable. Certain lines in Paradise Lost, however, do remind one of phrases from Hermetic or kabbalistic literature (though they may as easily be only neo-Platonic). Thus Hermes Trismegistus: "That which is below is like that which is above, and that which is above is like that which is below, for the performance of the miracles of the one substance." (Quoted in Runes, p. 168.) Heaven must in some way correspond to earth in order for the magician or alchemist to work his wonders.

Raphael, about to reveal to Adam the creation of all things, the Satanic rebellion and fall from grace, cautions his listener in a way that also suggests these heaven-earth correspondences:

> ...and what surmounts the reach
> Of human sense I shall delineate so,
> By likening spiritual to corporeal forms,
> As may express them best--though what if Earth
> Be but the shadow of Heaven, and things therein
> Each to other like, more than on earth is thought?
> (PL, V, 571-76)

the neo-Platonic and possibly kabbalistic traditions as they appear in Milton clarifies a great deal of the rather muddy background of many of Williams's novels. (Williams, as I have said, was a great admirer of Milton and so the comparison is relevant.) We recall Raphael's lecture to Adam on the properties of angelic bodies: they both eat and practise some form of intercourse. Matter (of which the angels are composed) is able to endure nearly endless "refinement" or attenuation, but it remains matter. It is out of prime matter, Chaos, that the Miltonic universe is created in Paradise Lost; Adam and all else have originally come from the swirling, indeterminate mass of hot, cold, moist, and dry which lies amorphously "beneath" heaven.

The magic stone of Many Dimensions is somehow a bit of prime matter on which have been engraved the letters of the Tetragrammaton. Its magical qualities derive from the fact that it is what an Aristotelian might call pure potency: it can, by an act of its user's will, become anything its user desires. Now the bodies of the characters in a Williams novel of course derive from this same substance; what is less obvious is that their souls do too, their souls being as much material as the "bodies" of Milton's angels. This is not often stressed in the novels, but when it does occur it leads to the same rather grotesque conclusion that we find in Paradise Lost as soon as we take Raphael's speech at all literally (as Milton gives us every chance to do). In All Hallows' Eve a dead woman returns to the scene of her active life, and still feels love for, and attraction to, her live husband. Because

both she (though dead) and he (though alive) are of the same substance some sort of semi-physical relationship is possible. And one critic has found "a suggestion of Swedenborgianism, perhaps, in the idea of a posthumous sexuality that more than one passage of this novel evokes."[34]

Other instances of this occult vision of the body and of matter are numerous in the novels. In the case of substitution that I have already cited from Descent into Hell, Williams makes it clear that the body as well as the mind accepts the sufferings of others: "The body of his flesh received her alien terror, his mind carried the burden of her world."[35] In The Greater Trumps the heroine of the novel stands in her library with her lover, holding in her hands the greater trumps of the Tarot pack which are the archetypes of power and energy, keys to the prime matter out of which all things come. And by a union of her will with the primal energy of the cards, she creates:

> ...nor was it mere fancy that some substance was slipping between her fingers. Below her hands and the cards she saw the table, and some vague unusualness in it attracted her. It was black...and down to it from her hands a kind of cloud was floating. It was from there that the first sound came; it was something falling--it was earth, a curtain, a rain of earth falling, falling, covering the part of the table immediately below, making little sliding sounds--earth, real black earth.[36]

Now how far this occultism is to be taken seriously is problematical. Eliot assures us that he has "never known a healthier-minded

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[34]Ernest Beaumont, "Charles Williams and the Power of Eros," Dublin Review, No. 479 (Spring, 1959), 71.

[35]Descent into Hell (New York, 1949), p. 109.

[36]The Greater Trumps (New York, 1950), p. 51.

man than Williams," that the occultism and magic are merely an "apparatus," that Williams merely "borrowed from the literature of the occult...for the sake of telling a good story."[37] Others, however, are not so sure of this. The same critic who was bothered by the hint of Swedenborgianism in All Hallows' Eve finds that "a certain illuminism is apparent in the novels; moreover, the goetic element is clearly not intended to be symbolical only; one has the impression that Williams considered the magical events he described as possibilities that could be actually realized."[38] And he agrees with another critic that Williams was "under the sway of erotic spiritualism."[39]

But however much or little Williams believed the occult views of matter and the body to be found in the novels, we must set over against such views his beliefs about the body and matter as they are related to the Incarnation. We recall that Williams chose to follow "one arrangement of doctrine: rather than another, and that the arrangement he chose involves the belief that God would have become incarnate even had there been no fall. Such an arrangement of doctrine makes one point very clear: it is not possible to regard matter as in any sense evil. If the fall necessitated the Incarnation, then one may be Platonist enough to hold that Christ's love for man enabled Him to take on "even" matter to save him; it is possible to retain the Platonic

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[37]Eliot, p. xv.

[38]Beaumont, p. 74.

[39]Evgveny Lampert, The Divine Realm (London, 1944), n. 1., p. 93. Quoted by Beaumont, p. 74.

view of matter as evil and the body as punishment. One need only look at the great Augustinian tradition in Christianity to confirm this possibility. But if the Incarnation would have occurred even without the fall, then this possibility no longer exists. We can no longer be pained that God had to assume the indignity of matter in order to save us; He wanted to assume matter; and therefore any indignity we see either in His assumption of matter or in matter itself must derive not from the object, matter itself, but from our misconception of it. In fact, it seems to follow that the usual view of matter as somehow less than spirit is simply a result of the fall, part of our postlapsarian blindness.

Williams's view of the goodness of matter are somewhat tenuous, and I will not make them any more explicit than he himself did. Certain things, though, are, in his view, clear enough. So far as we can understand the fall itself, for example, we can see that whatever prohibition was violated by the Adam was violated by the spiritual side of the Adam, not by the physical. The sin of the fall consisted in an act of the will, not the body.

> The body was holily created, is holily redeemed, and is to be holily raised from the dead. It is, in fact, for all our difficulties with it, less fallen...than the soul in which the quality of the will is held to reside; for it was a sin of the will which degraded us. 'The evidence of things not seen' is in the body seen as this epigram; nay, in some sense, even 'the substance of things hoped for', for what part it has in that substance remains to it unspoiled.[40]

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[40]"Index of the Body," in Image of the City, p. 85.

It is perhaps worth remarking here on the eclectic quality of Williams's thought. So far as he is a transcendentalist, he is within the great stream of neo-Platonism; so far as he is an occultist, he is a part of a minor eddy of the same stream. But his evaluation of the body and of matter, his insistence on the goodness of matter, place him closer to the tradition of medieval Aristotelianism. Yet such a remark as the one we have just noted, that it is the soul rather than the body that has fallen, has little meaning in terms of Aristotelianism; it belongs rather to the neo-Platonic tradition which in the Middle Ages produced the endless debates between the body and the soul. Aquinas echoed Aristotle in holding that the union between body and soul is "substantial," that it is inaccurate to say that the eye sees or the ear hears or the will sins, but rather that the man sees with the eye, hears with the ear, sins with the will. Thus it was man that was involved in the fall, and it was on man that the consequences devolved.

The objection is minor, however. Williams's main thesis is that the Church has, if not preached, at least tolerated and encouraged a kind of unofficial Manicheeism. This is particularly so as regards marriage. "The hungry sheep look up for metaphysics, the profound metaphysics of the awful and redeeming body, and are given morals."[41] But the body, as we have seen, cannot be evil. It cannot be evil because of the nature of the Incarnation:

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[41]"Sensuality and Substance," in Image of the City, p. 75.

> ...it is clear that the Sacred Body was itself virtue. The same qualities that made His adorable soul made His adorable flesh. If the devotion to the Sacred Heart does not, in itself, imply something of the sort, I do not know what it does imply. The virtues are both spiritual and physical--or rather they are expressed in those two categories. This is recognized in what are regarded as the more 'noble' members in the body--the heart, the eyes. But it is not so often recognized as a truth underlying all the members--the stomach, the buttocks.[42]

God operates, manifests Himself, in the two modes of matter and spirit; it follows that the two cannot be compared in terms of value--they are simply different. Yet the Church has allowed it to be assumed that the two modes could be so evaluated. Thus the word sacramental, Williams comments, "has perhaps served us a little less than well; it has, in popular usage, suggested rather the spiritual using the physical than a common--say, a single--operation."[43]

Now the Incarnation, for Williams, is the supreme example of God manifesting Himself in the two modes (the Eucharist is an echo of this manifestation). We say that God became man, assumed the body and soul of man in the person of Christ--"the Word was made flesh." But we may also say, with the author of the Athanasian Creed, that God became man "not by conversion of the Godhead into flesh, but by taking of the manhood into God...not by confusion of substance, but by unity of person." And "Not me," said St. Paul, "but the God in me." All men are

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[42]"Index of the Body," in Image of the City, p. 84.

[43]"Index of the Body," in Image of the City, p. 85.

literal members of the "Mystical Body of Christ." The virtues exist in the body as truly as in the soul, though differently.

> The Sacred Body is the plan upon which physical human creation was built, for it is the centre of physical human creation. The great dreams of the human form as including the whole universe are in this less than the truth. As His, so ours; the body...is also a pattern. We carry about with us an operative synthesis of the Virtues...the Sacred Body [is]...the Archtype of all bodies. In this sense the Eucharist also exposes its value. The 'index' of our bodies, the incarnate qualities of the moral universe, receive the Archtype of all moralities truly incarnated; and not only the pattern in the soul and will but the pattern in the body is renewed. ... We experience, physically, in its proper mode, the Kingdom of God: the imperial structure of the body carries its own high doctrines--of vision, of digestion of mysteries, of balance, of movement, of operation.[44]

Thus, for Williams, there can be no talk of the soul as "the divine element" in man; there are two divine elements in man--both the soul and the body. Taliessen meditates on the fact that women cannot be priests because they share, by menstruation, in the "victimization of the blood," and thus in a sense are part of the sacrifice itself. And he continues:

> Flesh knows what spirit knows,
> but spirit knows it knows--categories of identity:
> women's flesh lives the quest of the Grail
> in the change from Camelot to Carbonek and from Carbonek
> to Sarras,
> puberty to Carbonek, and the stanching, and Carbonek to death.
> Blessed is she who gives herself to the journey.
>
> Flesh tells what spirit tells
> (but spirit knows it tells). Women's travel

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[44]"Index of the Body," in Image of the City, pp. 86-87.

> holds in the natural, the image of the supernatural....
> ("Taliessen in the Rose Garden" in The Region of the Summar Stars, pp. 26-27)

Man, at the Incarnation (whether in time or out of time), became "in-godded," became a "son of God" in body as well as in spirit. And thus the theology of romantic love, to which we may now turn, has much to say about the body as well as the spirit, for romantic love does not deal with "the marriage of true minds" but with total beings in whom God has manifested Himself in the two modes of spirit and matter.

Let us begin by recalling that romantic love, for Williams, is, or can be, one of the ways of practising the Affirmation of Images, of following the Affirmative Way. If practised rightly it leads to the restoration of the original vision of all things as good, to the removal of the scales from the eyes, to prelapsarian accuracy of knowledge. And, to move to the other end of the spectrum, it can lead out of the fallen world and to beatitude.

According to Ann Ridler, Williams wrote a complete book on Romantic Theology, but the authorities to whom he showed it objected to it, or to part of it, and it was never published. Thus his fullest treatments of the subject are to be found in a pamphlet called Religion and Love in Dante, and the books The Figure of Beatrice and He Came Down from Heaven. As two of the titles indicate, it is difficult to separate Williams's Romantic Theology from his views of Dante, for it was in Dante's work that he found the only real example of the particular mode of the Affirmative Way that is romantic love. It is in Dante, Williams

thinks, that we find the first and greatest "true" romanticism: the union of thought and feeling leading to beatitude, the theologizing of the romantic experience as it came to Dante from the troubadours' treatment of courtly love. What Wordsworth is later to call Imagination is in Dante "the union of the mind and heart with a particular vision."[45]

Now the word "romantic" as Williams uses it to qualify "theology" is used "in some such defining sense as the words Pastoral, Dogmatic, or Mystical; it means theology as applied to a particular state --that of romantic love."[46] The first thing that the romantic theologian must decide is what romantic love is, what the experience of being in love consists of; and obviously it is not an easy thing to determine, though it is easy enough to lampoon. "It is neither sex appetite pure and simple; nor...is it necessarily related to marriage. It is something like a state of adoration, and it has been expressed ...by the poets better than by anyone else."[47] Thus Williams turns for a description of the state, not to one of the "more extreme Romantics,"[48] who might prejudice his case, but to Milton. Adam's explanation to Raphael of the state of mind that Eve produces in him, Williams

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[45] Religion and Love in Dante (Westminster, 1941), p. 5.

[46] Religion and Love in Dante, p. 3.

[47] He Came Down from Heaven, p. 65.

[48] He Came Down from Heaven, p. 65.

thinks, serves as a useful introductory sketch (he neglects to mention that Raphael's reaction to the description is immediate apprehension and concern, and that Raphael warns Adam that such a state is dangerous to prelapsarian bliss):

> ...when I approach
> Her loveliness, so absolute she seems
> And in herself complete, so well to know
> Her own, that what she wills to do or say
> Seems wisest, virtuousest, discreetest, best.
> All higher knowledge in her presence falls
> Degraded: Wisdom in discourse with her
> Loses, discount'nanced, and like Folly shows:
> Authority and Reason on her wait,
> As one intended first, not after made
> Occasionally: and, to consummate all,
> Greatness of mind and nobleness their seat
> Build in her loveliest, and create an awe
> About her, as a guard angelic placed.[49]

What has to be established about the experience so described is, "is it serious? is it capable of intellectual treatment? is it capable of belief, labour, fruition? is it...true?"[50] These are the questions which Romantic Theology must answer. It is the work of Romantic Theology to discover if this experience can yield "the first matter of a great experiment."[51] The end of such an experiment is the end of all the Ways to God. "The end...is known by definition of the kingdom: it is the establishment of a state of caritas, of pure love,

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[49] Paradise Lost, VIII, 546-59.

[50] He Came Down from Heaven, p. 66.

[51] He Came Down from Heaven, p. 66.

the mode of expansion of one moment into eternity."[52]

Williams then proceeds to an analysis of the experience of falling in love, its potentialities and its consequences. His discussion, as I have said, largely consists of a gloss on Dante's Vita Nuova, Comedy, and Convivio. Dante himself analyzed his reaction to the sight of Beatrice quite accurately, says Williams, allowing for the differences between medieval and modern physiological terminology:

> The heart, where (to him) 'the spirit of life' dwelled, exclaimed to him...'Behold a god stronger than I, who is come to rule over me'. The brain declared: 'Now your beatitude has appeared to you'. And the liver (where natural emotions, such as sex, inhabited) said: 'O misery! how I shall be disturbed henceforward![53]

Dante sees her as "the youngest of the angels," as "the destroyer of all evil and the queen of all good."[54] When she salutes him in the street he is cast into a state of such exaltation that he would have forgiven any injury done him and "if anyone had asked me a question I should have been able to answer only 'Love'."[55] He is, says Williams, "in a state of complete good will, complete caritas towards everyone."[56] He is, as we say, in love. "And therefore he calls her salutation

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[52]He Came Down from Heaven, p. 66.

[53]Religion and Love in Dante, pp. 6-7.

[54]Religion and Love in Dante, p. 8.

[55]Religion and Love in Dante, p. 9.

[56]Religion and Love in Dante, p. 9.

'blessed', because it is beatitude which it inspires. In fact, he becomes for one moment in his soul that Perfection which he has observed in Beatrice."[57]

But though the vision of Beatrice fills Dante's being with caritas, says Williams, Dante does not suggest that that state is in any way permanent. It comes upon him gratuitously, but it does not remain so. His being is acting according to a kind of natural law; having been granted the vision, "Love, charity, agape, was for the moment inevitable."[58] But the vision would fade, as Wordsworth's youthful vision of Nature faded: and like Wordsworth's vision it would have to be replaced by something which the vision had made possible. The problem for Dante, as for all romantic lovers, is to discover the Way to God that the vision has pointed him towards and made him aware of: "could he indeed become the Glory which he saw and by which for a moment he had been transfused?"[59] The rest of Dante's work, says Williams, including especially the Comedy, is "a pattern of the Way."[60]

Later in the Vita Nuova Dante sees coming towards him a girl named Joan, the beloved of his friend Cavalcanti; she is so beautiful

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[57]Religion and Love in Dante, p. 9.

[58]Religion and Love in Dante, p. 10.

[59]Religion and Love in Dante, p. 10.

[60]Religion and Love in Dante, p. 10.

that she is called "Primavera," Spring. She is followed by Beatrice; and the thought occurs to Dante that Joan goes before Beatrice as John the Baptist went before Christ. This is not, according to Williams, a near blasphemous conceit derived by adding theological or religious concepts to the tradition of courtly love. It is probably seriously meant, and if it is so meant,

> ...it is the beginning of a very high mystical identity. Beatrice is not our Lord. But Beatrice has been throughout precisely the vehicle of Love, of sexual love and of the vision in sexual love. She has awakened in Dante a celestial reverie; she has appeared to him the very carriage of beauty and goodness; she has, unknowingly, communicated to him an experience of caritas. These are the properties of Almighty Love. What Dante is now doing is to identify the power which reposed in Beatrice with the nature of our Lord. Love had been...a quality; now...he is on the point of seeing it as precisely the Person of Love.[61]

The nature of the experience of falling in love is now fairly clear. The lover is given the experience gratuitously (like grace; in fact, such experience is grace); the lover is in a state of caritas because what he perceives in the person (the vehicle, the carriage) of the beloved is Love, is Christ. He sees, not her, but Christ in her; and caritas is at once the condition of his seeing and the object of his vision. This mystical identity which Dante propounds in the Vita Nuova is carried to its great conclusion in the Purgatorio. Here Beatrice is a part of the procession of Angels, Virtues, Prophets and

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[61] Religion and Love in Dante, p. 11.

Evangelists led by the two-natured Gryphon who is Christ.

> She gazes into the eyes of the Gryphon...and it back into hers. There it is mirrored now as one, now as the other, 'immutable in itself, mutable in its image'. The Godhead and the Manhood are, as it were, deeply seen in those eyes whence Love began to shoot his arrows at Dante, by the Glory and the femininity. The moment in the New Life when the girl was seen as the vehicle of Love, preceded by Joan as Christ was preceded by John, is here multiplied and prolonged--one might say, infinitely. The supernatural validity of that 'falling-in-love' experience is again asserted....In the full Earthly Paradise, she is seen mirroring the Incarnate Splendour, as in Florence its light had been about her.[62]

In a word, what the lover in the actual state of being in love perceives is the timeless fact of the Incarnation; he perceives the fact that the loved one is "ingodded," that human nature is taken up into Godhead, as the Athanasian Creed says. Dante himself could only symbolize this; he saw, he says, "the circle which is Christ painted with the image of man."[63] It is the circle of which the apparition of Love had spoken in the Vita Nuova, the circle by which St. Bonaventure had symbolized God when he said that God is a circle whose center is everywhere and whose circumference is nowhere. What the lover perceives, through this temporary return to prelapsarian vision, is the true nature of things; he sees accurately that Christ is agape, is Love, and that man, by the Incarnation, is ingodded in Him.

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[62] Religion and Love in Dante, p. 30.

[63] Religion and Love in Dante, p. 35.

The lover, then, experiences a vision of beatitude, which may be defined as the true knowledge and experience of the God-man relationship. But he experiences it only briefly. It may lead to the final Paradisal and permanent vision as Dante described it, but only if it is acted upon. Falling in love, being granted the Beatrician vision, is a mode of the romantic experience; if it is allowed to lie fallow, if it is untheologized, of itself it comes to nothing good. If it is theologized, it leads to power in this life and beatitude in the next. It is an invitation to follow a certain mode of the Affirmative Way; it is not in itself the Affirmative Way, for of its nature it is not lasting.

> The effort after the pattern marks the difference. The superstitions make heaven and earth in the form of the beloved; the theology declares that the beloved is the first preparatory form of heaven and earth. Its controlling maxim is that these things are first seen through Beatrice as a means; the corollary is that they are found through Beatrice as a first means only. The preposition refers not only to sight but to progress.[64]

The vision brought about by romantic love, like the vision brought about by Nature, is not beatitude; it is a return to prelapsarian vision in which all the images of God are seen as preparatory to the final experience of God. Nature, for Wordsworth, is not an end, but a way of arriving at; so, for Dante, "Beatrice is his Knowing."[65]

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[64] He Came Down from Heaven, p. 70.

[65] The Figure of Beatrice, p. 232.

"Hell," says Williams, "has made three principal attacks on the Way of Romantic Love."[66] The first is the assumption that the Beatrician vision is everlasting. As we have seen, this is not so. It is the false romantic who tries to retain the bliss of the vision by multiplying the number of his sexual love affairs. The vision "is eternal but is not everlastingly visible, any more than the earthly life of Christ."[67] It is a momentary perception of God's glory in the love which is Christ. "The appearance of the glory is temporary; the authority of the glory towards pure love is everlasting; the quality of the glory is eternal, such as the heavens have in Christ."[68]

In Taliessen through Logres Williams gives an example not only of the transience of the vision but of the vision untheologized (and thus dangerous) in the experience of Palomides, the Saracen knight, when he visits the court of King Mark and there sees the Queen Iseult sitting between her husband Mark and her lover Tristram. He falls in love with the queen and experiences the Beatrician vision. But he cannot take the normal course of the Way of romantic love; he cannot marry the queen, who already has both husband and lover. And, as Lewis says, he is unwilling to take "the long pilgrimage of Dante to 'intellectual nuptials'."[69] For a moment he sees the queen as holy flesh and holy

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[66] He Came Down from Heaven, p. 79.

[67] He Came Down from Heaven, p. 79.

[68] He Came Down from Heaven, p. 79.

[69] "Williams and the Arthuriad," in Arthurian Torso, p. 126.

spirit ingodded in Christ; but then the vision fades (because his will has failed to act upon it), and he is overcome with sexual jealousy, symbolized in the poem by the image of the Questing Beast. In the first flush of the vision he sees the queen's arm as it lies gracefully on the table; he sees it, as I have said, as Christ under the mode of matter, as a vision which begins the Affirmative Way: his heart and his thought flame in union, his mind moves

> by the stress
> of the queen's arm's blissful nakedness,
> to unions metaphysical....

But the vision vanishes almost at once:

> Down the arm of the queen Iseult
> quivered and darkened an angry bolt;
> and, as it passed, away and through
> and above her hand the sign withdrew.
> . . . . . .
> division stretched between
> the queen's identity and the queen.
> Relation vanished, though beauty stayed;
> too long my dangerous eyes delayed
> at the shape on the board, but voice was mute;
> the queen's arm lay there destitute,
> empty of glory....

And immediately he is overcome with jealousy:

> and aloof in the roof, beyond the feast,
> I heard the squeak of the questing beast,
> where it scratched itself in the blank between
> the queen's substance and the queen.
> ("The Coming of Palomides," in Taliessen, pp. 35-37)

The second assumption of Hell is that the love experience is a personal possession of the lovers. But love does not belong to the lovers; rather they belong to it. They cannot own love any more than they can own Nature or art or any other mode of the romantic experience.

The experience is God-sent; they are meant for love, not love for them. The essence, Williams is fond of saying, is meant for the function, not the function for the essence. Thus in Williams's play Seed of Adam, Mary, after the archangel has announced to her that she is to be the mother of Christ, enters the state of caritas as surely as any romantic lover, but realizes that the state is not a personal possession. Joseph asks her whom she is in love with, and she replies,

> Dearest, you did not hear: we said in love.
> Why must, how can, one be in love with someone?

To Joseph's objection that to be in love with someone is the nature of love, she answers,

> Dearest, to be in love is to be in love,
> no more, no less. Love is only itself,
> everywhere, at all times, and to all objects.[70]

To be in love is to be able to see accurately again; the sight is not limited to any one thing, but extends to all the images of God which constitute reality.

The third assumption of Hell is that "it is sufficient to have known that state of love."[71] This occurs when the experience is held to be thrilling and unique but only natural, when its transience is taken as proof that the experience is illusory and when, as a result, the experience is not related to the rest of life. The person who has

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[70]"Seed of Adam," in Seed of Adam and Other Plays (London, 1948), p. 11.

[71]He Came Down from Heaven, p. 80.

been in love but has passed out of it without theologizing it is perhaps a good person, naturally speaking. But St. Paul allows him no place on the Way to God: he may have faith enough to move mountains, but if he has not caritas it avails him nothing.

This third assumption of Hell enables us to see what Williams means by theologizing the romantic experience. The lover must do what Palomides did not do. "To be in love must be followed by the will to be love; to be love to the beloved, to be love to all, to be in fact (as the Divine Thing said) perfect."[72] Thus a slave girl in Taliessen through Logres falls in love with Taliessen and experiences the Beatrician vision. There can be no hope of marriage, for Taliessen is the poet, the unicorn, not made for women. But she can do what Palomides did not do; she can direct her experience to holiness. And, with Taliessen's help, she does this. The vision, he tells her, is more than he is, more than his song is, though he and the song have effected the vision in the experience.

> The king's poet leaned, catching the outspread hands:
> More than the voice is the vision, the kingdom than the king:
> the cords of their arms were bands of glory; the harp
> sang her to her feet, sharply, sweetly she rose.
>
> The soul of a serving-maid stood by the king's gate,
> her face flushed with the mere speed of adoration.
> The Archbishop stayed, coming through the morning to the Mass,
> Hast thou seen so soon, bright lass, the light of Christ's glory?
>
> ("The Star of Percivale" in Taliessen, p. 46)

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[72] He Came Down from Heaven, p. 81.

There are, in short, duties to be performed, Christian duties to be done in and through love. The Beatrician vision is a "way of return to blissful knowledge of all things. But this was not sufficient; there had to be a new self to go on the new way."[73] The lover for a moment sees the world as it is; it then becomes his duty to go on acting as if the vision remained with him, even though it does not. Having seen the Incarnation, the ingodding of man, and having thus perceived that all mankind is one, all men co-inhering in each other and all in turn co-inhering in Christ; having briefly seen and to a degree experienced all this, it becomes his duty to make the Beatrician vision modify his life. It is, in brief, his duty to become and remain a good Christian by means of the special grace which has been awarded him. All the things and the activities of the world are the matter to which caritas should be the form. After the vision come the duties; but the duties are only made possible by the vision.

The way of romantic love is only one mode of the Affirmative Way; the other modes also provide the particular stopping place at which a man may say, with Dante, Incipit vita nova. The other modes also provide the original infusion of caritas, the return through love to the real vision of the world; and the other modes equally demand the living of the life in caritas, the seeing of all things in caritas. The way of romantic love does not make the Christian life any easier

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[73] He Came Down from Heaven, p. 85.

than the other ways do; like them, it only makes it possible.

Of the validity of Williams's claims for the power and potential beneficence of romantic love, no one has had a great deal to say as yet. And that this should be so is not surprising, for the validity of Williams's argument depends largely upon two vastly complex and ambiguous questions: one a question of some importance to the whole of western civilization, the other a question of some importance to literary and religious history. The first is the question of the nature of love itself: what is human, "romantic" love, and how does it differ from, or resemble, man's love for God and, in turn, God's love for man? The second question is the function of Beatrice in the work of Dante: was she a real woman, and if so, did she remain real throughout his work or did she become symbolical or anagogical; was she a woman in the Comedy or was she Theology? And if she is both literal and anagogical, according to Dante's fourfold interpretation, then what becomes of Williams's prime example of the Way of Romantic Love?

I do not pretend to have the answers to these questions; but some lines of approach to the answers must be sketched out. In a discussion of the nature of sexual love, most modern writers have thought it necessary to take the historical approach and begin their analysis of romantic love with a study of the troubadour poetry of eleventh and twelfth century France. "French poets, in the eleventh century, discovered or invented, or were the first to express, that romantic species of passion which English poets were still writing about in the

nineteenth."[74] Until then, in western civilization, romantic love as we normally conceive it did not exist. For classical Greece, the highest form of human affection was friendship between two males. Marriage was a partnership necessitated by the social order. Passionate love was an abnormality, an excess, as in Medea. Nor did romantic love exist for the Romans: Dido's love for Aeneas is a kind of frenzy, and Ovid's treatment of love is hardly more than a series of ironic and realistic comments on the sexual relationships between man and woman--rules for, and advice about, the skirmishes and major battles of sexual warfare. Nor did the Dark Ages produce romantic love: its general view of love echoed the caustic comment of St. Paul--it is better to marry than burn. Every woman was, at least potentially, Eva rediviva; the medieval marriage of convenience is evidence of the view that woman was held to be hardly more than valuable property.

All this changes in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, as if humanity had turned a corner in history, or in evolution. The beginnings of courtly love mark what Lewis has called one of the real changes in human sentiment;[75] and thus it is at this point that a discussion of romantic love usually begins. The important part of such discussions, so far as we are concerned, is the attempt to distinguish the kinds of love possible to human beings, the attempt to show that there is, or is

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[74]Lewis, Allegory of Love (New York, 1958), p. 4.

[75]Allegory of Love, p. 11.

not, a relationship between man's love of woman and man's love of God. For what Williams's Romantic Theology claims is that love of woman can lead to love of God, to beatitude, in fact. For Williams, the romantic love relationship is, in Buber's terms, a spectacular example of the I-Thou relationship possible to human beings; and in all such relationships the Divine Thou is operative. "Every particular Thou is a glimpse through to the eternal Thou; by means of every particular Thou the primary word addresses the eternal Thou."[76] More specifically, "He who loves a woman, and brings her life to present realisation in his, is able to look in the Thou of her eyes into a beam of the eternal Thou."[77]

The question is, what connection (if any) is there between romantic love and love of God, between Eros and Agape. For Nygren, no connection exists. Eros is one thing, agape another. Agape, the love for God, is brought about by God Himself. Where there is nothing, He puts something, and then there is human love for Him. There is no possibility of confusing the two loves; they differ in ends and in origins, and human love (eros) is not even an image or an echo of love for God (agape), for man is naturally capable of eros and naturally incapable

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[76]Martin Buber, I and Thou, translated by R. G. Smith (New York, 1958), p. 75.

[77]I and Thou, p. 106.

of agape.[78] For de Rougemont, romantic love (eros) is the dark passion pictured so well in the Tristan myth. It is an analogue to the Manichean and pagan desire for utter extinction in the One. Eros, or "boundless desire," does not want earthly fulfillment; what it really wants is death. Tristan and Iseult are forever parting, forever separating, because they do not really want each other. They want the agonies of being apart, because their passion is an echo of the Manichean hatred of matter and of diversity; underneath the surface love of eros is the urge to flee the world of daylight for the night of extinction.

> Eros is complete Desire, luminous Aspiration, the primitive religious soaring carried to its loftiest pitch, to the extreme exigency of purity which is also the extreme exigency of Unity. But absolute unity must be the negation of the present human being in his suffering multiplicity. The supreme soaring of desire ends in non-desire. The erotic process introduces into life an element foreign to the diastole and systole of sexual attraction--a desire that never relapses, that nothing can satisfy, that even rejects and flees the temptation to obtain its fulfillment in the world, because its demand is to embrace no less than the All. It is <u>infinite transcendende</u>, man's rise into his god. And this rise is <u>without return</u>.[79]

Christianity, according to de Rougemont, has changed the whole end and direction of eros. The Incarnation both gave to man and showed to man the worth and dignity of the individual. Man no longer had to

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[78]For my summary of Nygren's views, I am indebted to D'Arcy's <u>Mind and Heart of Love</u> (New York, 1956), passim.

[79]<u>Love in the Western World</u>, translated by M. Belgion (New York, 1957), p. 52.

run from other men because they were diverse and imperfect manifestations of the One. It was now possible to love the other "as he or she really is."[80] Christian love was now seen to be in imitation of Christ's love for the Church; and it is this Christian love which is agape, the love of one's neighbors, the love of one's enemies. Eros and agape, for de Rougemont as for Nygren, have no connection; in fact, it is part of de Rougemont's thesis that marriage founded on the Manichaen admiration for passionate love cannot help but founder. Neither in Nygren nor in de Rougemont, then, is there anything like a Way of Romantic Love. Eros leads nowhere in Nygren's scheme; in de Rougemont's it leads only to Manichaeism or hell.

M. C. D'Arcy, in a work published after Williams's death, has looked critically at the work of Nygren and de Rougemont and several others. There are, he believes, partial truths in Nygren, de Rougemont, the Existentialists, the Personalists, in Buber and Karl Heim, and he draws on all of them in order to achieve his final distinction between eros and agape. All things, says D'Arcy, exist according to two principles which will be called different things in different spheres of existence. The two may be paired on one level as dominant and recessive, on another as male and female; psychologically they may be called aggressive and regressive, or egotistical and effacing. On the level of brute creation, they will be the principles according to which the

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[80] Love in the Western World, p. 60.

species survives: the receptiveness of the female complementing the urge of the male. On the spiritual level they will be the desire for self-perfection and the desire for self-sacrifice. On the philosophical level, they will be act and potency, form and matter, essence and existence. The human person, according to D'Arcy, like all other things, is composed of these two principles, and so is his love. One kind of love is eros, the assertive, possessing, dominating love which is associated largely with the intellect; it "has a desire to know all things," as Aristotle said, and this desire to know essences (meanings) is largely self-regarding and egotistical. This relationship is the one that Buber calls the "I-It" relation, in which the object is not regarded existentially as a "Thou" but only essentially as a thing to be understood. This is eros, or, in D'Arcy's phrase, the animus. Complementing this kind of love in all humans is the anima, the agape. This is the other side of the coin--the desire for self-sacrifice, the passivity, the desire to be done to, to be used, to be made into something else. This is the non-intellectual love which desires not essences but existence; this is the love which constitutes for Buber the "I-Thou" relationship; it does not seek to see the other person as an "It," an essence to be understood; it sees the person existentially as a being who must be received as himself.

Now these two principles of love operate together in any human love, whether it be the love of a man for a woman or the love of a man for God. "A person...has to include both the human essence and the existence of that essence if it is to be properly and adequately defined.

The self-regarding love preserves the integrity of the self and prevents the other love from getting out of hand and being too prodigal."[81] In human affairs, that is, in love of humans for each other, the animus, the intellect, nearly always has to be in charge of the anima, lest the anima give itself up foolishly to something unworthy of the self. "Were our loves enlightened we could say: ama et fac quod vis. But it is not until the searchlight of truth has played upon the many shapes which hold our attention and the many loves which beckon to us, that we can give ourselves wholeheartedly to another....[82] The love of a man for a woman, then, is wary love; it has to be prudent because it is fallible and may be misinformed. But in the case of agape, love of man for God, this wariness is put away:

> ...in one case, and one only, that of divine love, the self may and must drop all its self-regard, strip itself and say, 'all that I am and have is yours.' The primary act of the creature is not to possess God but to belong to Him. The essential self is not, indeed, dead--that could not be so long as a person remains a person--but it is the existential self, the anima, which goes forth to greet the divine lover. No doubt the essential love prepares the way. The mind has for a long or short while to direct and fortify the anima. The true God may be hidden and have to be discovered, and when he is discovered there must be so much to be learnt about him, either by the mind's own effort or from God's own communications about himself. ... The mind, then, will have constant work to do, but nevertheless so far as the primary relation to God is concerned,

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[81] Mind and Heart of Love, p. 365.

[82] Mind and Heart of Love, p. 367.

> love dictates all, and the love is one of homage and sacrifice and self-giving.[83]

In brief, then, for Nygren, eros is wholly different from agape. The finite cannot love the infinite except by a capacity specially infused by the infinite itself so that, as it were, the infinite loves itself through a finite medium. In this way God remains the Wholly Other. For de Rougemont, agape differs from eros in that the end of human love (mankind, one's neighbors) has been essentially changed by the Incarnation. To love God means to love one's redeemed neighbors in obedience to God's command. For D'Arcy, one loves both God and man by means of the same capacity for love, but the mixture of the animus and anima changes radically as the loved object is either man or God. Man gives himself over to God as he is never safe in doing in a merely human relationship. Thus, for all three men there is some sort of distinction between the loves of man, distinction either of kind or of degree.

But this distinction seems not to exist in Williams's Romantic Theology. It is true that there are two kinds of love: that of Palomides ("untheologized") and that of Dante ("theologized"). But on

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[83] Mind and Heart of Love, p. 368. D'Arcy's view is substantially the same as that of Aquinas. Aquinas held that, generally speaking, the intellect is superior to the will, and it is also superior as regards sensible things. But "with respect to divine things, higher than the soul: now thus it is better to love them than to understand them; it is better to love God than to know about him, for the divine goodness is most perfectly in God, which is how it is desired by the will, than it is as shared in us or conceived by the mind." Disputations, XXII de Veritate, II; quoted from T. Gilby, Saint Thomas Aquinas: Philosophical Texts (New York, 1960), p. 257.

analysis these seem to be not so much two kinds of love, which we might call eros and agape, as simply love as distinguished from lust or love as distinguished from passing infatuation. Where the other writers draw their distinctions is exactly where Williams does not. If Williams is right, then Dante loved, not Beatrice, or not only Beatrice, but God-in-Beatrice; more accurately perhaps, in view of Williams's insistence on the Athanasian Creed, Dante loved Beatrice-in-God. Bluntly, he loved both woman and God at the same time in seemingly the same way. Eros and agape merge, and the specter of pantheism arises because a single human affection may encompass both God and man. Dante saw the circle of Christ painted with the image of man; but he saw it in heaven, and even in heaven it was a symbol. Beatrice's eyes mirrored the two-natured gryphon who is Christ; her eyes did not contain it. The ingodding of man at the Incarnation seems, in Williams, to have blurred any distinction between the kinds (and even the objects) of human love. One of Williams's frequent remarks is that the motto of the Affirmative Way is, "This also is Thou; neither is this Thou." All things are God's image, God's manifestation, but no things are God. But of caritas as induced by romantic love it seems possible to say, "This is Thou; and this is also in some sense I." Even if we distinguish as carefully as the Athanasian Creed does between substance and person, the inclination to a kind of pantheism seems apparent.

Nor do the examples of romantic love in Williams's novels do anything to clarify Romantic Theology. There, where one might hope to

find some sort of explication of the particular duties of the romantic lover acting in accord with the Beatrician vision, one finds generally that the union of thought and feeling with a particular vision has produced, not the good life arrived at in a new way, but sheer power. The girl in The Greater Trumps who created matter by holding the Tarot cards did so because she was really in love. The hero of The Place of the Lion saved the world because, through the power which he had gained by being in love, he was able to recall the animals of the earth to their archetypes before they could devastate the earth. In short, the occultism of the novels prevents their being taken seriously as examples of Romantic Theology or of "theologized" true love.

Then there is the question of Dante and the function of Beatrice in his work. The question is important to Williams's view of romantic love because, for him, Dante is the prime example of the Way of Romantic Love, and in fact, as I have said, a great part of his Romantic Theology reads like a gloss on Dante. So far as it may be shown that Williams finds a more explicit system of love as beatitude in Dante than is really there, then so far Williams's system seems disabled. Now Williams holds, as we have seen, that Dante began this system in the Vita Nuova and enlarged upon it in his later work; he makes much of Dante's encounter with Beatrice in the streets of Florence, and the fact that Dante said that his beatitude had come upon him. But it is a commonplace that the medieval habit of thought was incurably analogical: it saw most earthly things as analogues of heavenly things,

and it saw in this way as a matter of course without, as it were, premeditation. One need only point to the microcosm-macrocosm analogy and the medieval notion of the "signatures" on things. And if Dante's caritas in the Vita was meant to be taken as serious theology, then any number of other similar protestations of the poets of the dolce stil nuovo must also be so taken. Cavalcanti's ballata Veggio negli occhi, for example, says almost exactly what Dante says in the Vita in the passage which Williams has quoted as the beginning of the Way of Romantic Love:

> In my lady's eyes I see a light full of spirits of love which brings wonderful delight into my heart, so that it is filled with joyous life;
>
> Such a thing befalls me when I am in her presence that I cannot describe it to the intellect: It seems to me that as I gaze at her there issues from her semblance a lady of such beauty that the mind cannot grasp it, and from this at once another is born of wondrous beauty out of which it seems that there issues a star which says: 'Behold, your blessedness is before you.'
>
> When this beautiful lady appears, a voice goes forth before her which celebrates her meekness so sweetly that if I try to repeat it, I feel that her greatness is such that it makes me tremble, and in my soul stir sighs which say: 'Lo, if you gaze at this one you will see her virtue ascended into heaven.'[84]

In short, what Williams seems to ignore in his continual citation of Dante as a teacher of the Way of Romantic Love is that Dante, in treating love philosophically and even theologically, was doing no more

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[84]Quoted from Maurice Valency, In Praise of Love, An Introduction to the Love Poetry of the Renaissance (New York, 1958), p. 229.

than the other writers of his school. Thus the image of the lady in the Cavalcanti poem just quoted would strike the poet, as Beatrice struck Dante, in the vegetative and sensitive soul, but in the rational soul it would give him

> another sort of experience, neither joyous nor sad, but wonderful. There the image of the lady was rendered intelligible as an essence of wondrous beauty and, glowing in the intellect as a celestial intelligence, a star, it foretold the salvation of the poet if he could but follow this beauty to its source in heaven. Of all the *stilnovisti*, only Dante attempted such an excursion, and that effort led into another kind of poetry, in which the beauty of the lady became a progressive revelation until at last it was quenched in a greater beauty still, the ineffable beauty of God.[85]

In other words, it was the fashion of the school of the sweet new style to prescind from the beauty of the real lady and dwell on the essence of beauty, to talk, in short, not of romantic love as a way of salvation, but of the Idea of Love. Of the ladies in the poems, Beatrice included, "We have no idea...where they come from or where they go; their very nature is in doubt, whether human or divine."[86]

Further, Dante was careful to insist in the *Convito* that Beatrice was not only Beatrice in the Paradiso; according to his fourfold interpretation, she was also theology. Williams seems to feel too that she is both, but that so long as she is in some sense still Beatrice, Dante is showing the way of Romantic Love. But just so far as Beatrice becomes

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[85] *In Praise of Love*, p. 229.

[86] *In Praise of Love*, p. 210.

anything but Beatrice, so far is she an assertion that Dante was not erecting a personal experience into a theological system. And if he was not doing this, then Williams's prime example of the Romantic Way is gone.

But perhaps the most cogent objection to Romantic Theology is one from the purely human and natural point of view. It seemed at the outset to promise so much. It seemed to indicate that the one truly unforgettable experience in human life could be licitly raised to a way of life, and even a way of sanctity. But it can account for the fading of the romantic vision only by saying that it is one's duty to see all things in love, "as to the Lord." But that is exactly what every Christian has always known and always found so difficult. Worse, it is exactly what most Christians have discovered to be the most humdrum part of the religious life. What can be drearier than to act as if you love your neighbor merely because you know you should? The trouble is that Romantic Theology promised somehow to be exciting, because it deals with the most exciting thing in the world. But it has nothing to say about the "time being," just as Lewis's novels have nothing to say about the time being. By theologizing the experience of romantic love Williams seemed to promise an explanation of the experience. But the experience remains as enigmatic as when Williams took it up. In the world we know it often leads to obvious evil; and Milton thought it played a great part in, was the efficient cause of, the fall itself. One may be a Christian and yet think the experience to be

nature's subterfuge for continuing the species; and one may think so still when Williams's theology is understood. Housman's description of the experience seems no more refutable for one's having read Williams: the boy was quite himself again after he had fallen out of love, and everyone understood that he had recovered from an interesting and typical but not lasting disease.

However, I am concerned not so much with the validity of the theology as with the religious cast of mind which produced it. And it is abundantly clear that this cast of mind can hardly be called anything but romantic, for a number of reasons.

First, so far as he is a transcendentalist, Williams belongs in the great tradition of English, American and German thought that includes Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Carlyle; Melville, Emerson, and Whitman; Goethe, Kant, and Schiller. This kinship is too obvious to require comment. Second, so far as he is an occultist he belongs to what might be called the tradition of decadent romanticism, the members of which dabble to some degree in magic and various secret ways to knowledge. This tradition includes such figures as Shelley, Baudelaire, Poe, and Yeats--not to mention Barfield and Rudolf Steiner. This too is too apparent to dwell on. I am concerned especially with a further reason for calling Williams a romantic in the matter of religion; it is a reason neither as neat nor as easily said as the others, one which I have already tried to suggest.

Williams, like Lewis and Barfield, has made a conscious attempt

to bring the matter of romanticism within the province of religion, to combine a literary bent with religious beliefs. And, like Lewis and Barfield, he has succeeded to such a degree that it is impossible to separate his romanticism from his religion. But it is most accurate and most useful to call Williams a romantic religionist in the special sense that we think of Wordsworth's Prelude as romantic naturalism. What both Wordsworth and Williams illustrate is the other side of the Kant-Coleridge coin, that is, the creative side. Coleridge talks much of the creative imagination, but most of his own creative work may fairly be called assimilation rather than creation, as Lowes' monumental work has shown.[87] What one hardly ever finds in Coleridge is what one often finds in Wordsworth: the actual creation of a kind of vision into which the poet steps and according to the laws of which he then composes. This is in great part the explanation of Wordsworth as a poet: we find in him the monumental faith in his vision, the absolute fidelity to an experience, and the determination to make the experience meaningful. Reason is in its most exalted mood when it is in accord with the vision; the intellect and the imagination are in perfect union when the vision may be shown to be intelligible enough not

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[87]Cf. Basil Willey: "The difference between his 'great three' poems and most of his other verse is so extraordinary that it can only be called a difference in kind, and only accounted for on the supposition that in them he was using faculties and powers which lay dormant at other times. Professor Lowes has demonstrated that in the 'great three' poems the images stored in Coleridge's mind had undergone alchemical change by being plunged in the deep well of his subconscious, whereas elsewhere they are merely produced by a deliberate choice of the will, and rhetorically juxtaposed." Nineteenth Century Studies (London, 1949), p. 26.

to be called a dream and a delusion. Wordsworth is, in Williams's terms, a true romantic, a reflective romantic. He is not content with the experience of the passionate apprehension of the life in Nature. He is always turning it around, observing it, making it meaningful by speaking of it in terms of Hartley or Plato or Spinoza. And this is the case with Williams. He too begins with the experience and the reaction to it; he too reflects upon the experience; he too is faithful to the vision and is determined to make it meaningful. But where Wordsworth is naturalistic, Williams is a Christian. For him the union of thought and feeling is the union in experience of the two sacred modes of God's manifestation in body and spirit. To reflect upon the romantic experience is, for a Christian, to theologize it; it is to see truly in the vision that love, that co-inherence, which is the law of the world: man ingodded in the body and spirit of Christ.

CHAPTER V

J. R. R. TOLKIEN AND THE EUCATASTROPHIC FAIRY STORY

Tolkien, as I mentioned in the introductory chapter, needs no introduction in the world of scholarship. Over the years he has published in the fields of Old and Middle English and in philology; his work has always been highly respected, and his interpretation of Beowulf as a "heroic-elegaic poem"[1] instead of an epic is, I believe, generally regarded as a landmark in the scholarship on the poem and the problems it presents. But his introduction to the non-scholarly public has been more recent. Lewis, in his preface to That Hideous Strength, informed his readers that there existed a work which had relevance to his own: "Those who would like to learn further about Numinor and the True West must (alas!) await the publication of much that still exists only in the MSS. of my friend, Professor J. R. R. Tolkien."[2] The next year saw the publication of the collection of essays in honor of Charles Williams (who had died two years before) to which Tolkien contributed a long discussion of fairy stories, about which I will have

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[1]"Beowulf, the Monsters and the Critics," Proceedings of the British Academy, XXII (1936), p. 33.

[2](New York, 1946), p. viii. Dr. Dimble, the authority on Arthurian myth in the novel, may also be modeled partly on Tolkien.

much to say later. Lewis mentioned Tolkien again in print in 1948 in his discussion of Williams's Arthurian poetry: Williams had read the manuscript of his retelling of the Arthurian legend to Lewis and Tolkien. But until 1954 Tolkien was known beyond the world of scholarship largely for a children's story called The Hobbit, published in 1937.

In 1954 appeared the first volume of the trilogy entitled The Lord of the Rings; the second volume appeared that same year, and the third a year later. It is a tale, Tolkien says in his Foreword to the first volume, "which has grown to be almost a history of the great War of the Ring," and it was taken from the memoirs of two famous hobbits, memoirs "preserved in the Red Book of Westmarch."[3] It is, he says, a continuation of the earlier tale recorded in The Hobbit, but it "speaks more plainly of those darker things which lurked only on the borders of the earlier tale, but which have troubled Middle-earth in all its history. It is, in fact, not a book written for children at all...." (p. 7) The trilogy, the reader learns, was fourteen years in the making. It contains maps, an appendix of the family trees of the major characters of the story, and appendices which contain "some brief account... of the languages, alphabets, and calendars that were used in the Westlands

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[3]Foreword to The Fellowship of the Ring (Boston, n. d.), p. 7. Houghton Mifflin has published the trilogy in the U. S. Volume II is The Two Towers; Volume III, The Return of the King. None of the volumes is dated in the American printing; original publication dates were respectively 1954, 1954, 1955. Hereafter all page references to the trilogy will be by volume and page in the text.

in the Third Age of Middle-earth." (p. 8) So equipped, the reader may then turn to the story proper.

It is on this anomalous work that Tolkien's non-scholarly reputation rests, and understandably it is a work only partly understood by its friends as well as its foes. I hope to show the work for what it is: a fairy story in Tolkien's meaning of that term and, beyond that, an excursion into the realm of what has been called in this study romantic religion.

I must now try to retell the story of the trilogy, and in so doing I will mutilate it, for, more than most stories, it suffers from redaction. The length of Tolkien's imagined events (the trilogy runs nearly 1200 pages) and the complexity of his imagined world give his trilogy an atmosphere and a reality that no recapitulation can capture. For one thing, a retelling necessarily puts into straightforward order events and knowledge which the reader of the trilogy comes by, as it were, haphazardly, by indirection, as in real life. The world of the trilogy, the strange imagined backdrop against which the story moves, is revealed to the reader only in bits and snatches. He hears half stories out of the dim past, bits of gossip, parts of songs; he pieces out the world of the trilogy as the reader of Beowulf pieces out the dim tribal world of the poem from shreds of knowledge gleaned from Hrothgar's description of the mere-wife's den, or Beowulf's mention of Breca, or the author's passing allusion to the coming destruction of Heorot. This patchwork creation of the world is, in fact, a great part

of the story's fascination, and the technique is one which Tolkien, who described it so well as it was used in Beowulf, consciously uses. What is a web of story in the trilogy becomes, necessarily, a straight line in recapitulation. Further, the pleasure of following the twists and turns of the adventures on the maps which are provided is necessarily lost in summary, as is the fascination at the linguistic pyrotechnics provided in the differing languages of the elves, the dwarves, the trees, and the other speaking beings of the story. All I can hope to do, then, is to sketch out the world of the trilogy analytically and to retell the major plot of the story, resorting to quotation occasionally as a feeble means of trying to convey something of the tang of Tolkien's imagined reality.

The story proper really begins, as I have said, before the trilogy itself, in one of Tolkien's fairy stories for children entitled The Hobbit. There we are introduced to the creatures called hobbits--manlike little beings of some three feet in height, with furry feet. They live in burrows, are in general a good natured lot, and have the general mannerisms and speech habits of the English. The hero of this early story is a hobbit named Bilbo Baggins. Together with Gandalf, who is a Man and a wizard, and several dwarves, Bilbo undertakes a quest to a dragon's lair to recover the stolen treasure of the dwarf kings which is hidden "beneath Erebor in Dale, far off in the East." (I, 21) The quest is successful; but what is important for the trilogy is an event that happens at the end of this early story. Bilbo becomes lost

in a cavern under the mountains and there finds a ring which belongs to a creature named Gollum, who lives there in the dark. They play a riddle game for Bilbo's life, and Bilbo wins when Gollum cannot tell what Bilbo has in his pocket (the ring). But Gollum finds his ring missing, realizes that he has been tricked, and pursues Bilbo. Bilbo accidentally discovers that by putting the ring on he can become invisible, and so he escapes.

The first volume of the trilogy opens in the Third Age of Middle-Earth, and like the era of Lewis's Till We Have Faces, it is an era of Die Gotterdamerung. The elves are a declining race, and continually pass from east to west, embarking at Grey Havens for the lands far out in the western sea. There are men in this world, but it is not yet the era of men; at the end of the Third Age the elves, the dwarves, the hobbits, the orcs, the trolls, and other miscellaneous species will disappear, but for the period of the story man is only one of many beings capable of will and rationality. Man had originally come "over the Sea out of Westernesse" (I, 14) and was taught to speak by the elves. In the west of this world, near the Great Sea, is the district called simply The Shire (which may be thought of as England before it was separated from the Continent), the present home of the hobbits. It is here that the story of the trilogy opens.

Bilbo has been back from his adventures for many years and has adopted his nephew Frodo as his heir. Bilbo gives a birthday party for himself, the climax of which is his disappearance by means of the ring,

which he has kept carefully hidden all these years. His intention is to leave the Shire and spend his declining days among the elves, whom he had come to know and admire during his earlier adventures. But now the nature of the ring begins to become apparent. He means to leave it to Frodo, along with his other possessions. But suddenly he finds it almost impossible to give it up, and it is only through Gandalf's help that he is able to do so. He leaves then, and Frodo becomes master of the house and owner of the ring. He lives a pleasant and commonplace existence, except that he retains something of Bilbo's spirit and curiosity; he walks by moonlight and visits the elf bands passing through the Shire. Years pass, and Frodo hears nothing from Gandalf; but he learns from the elves and other travellers that the Enemy is growing in power, that his kingdom (which had once been overthrown in Mirkwood by the power of the White Council) is on the rise again in the South, in the Land of Mordor.

Presently Gandalf returns with alarming information about the ring. It is an elven ring, dangerous to all mortals; it grants its owner endless life as well as invisibility, but ultimately its owner will fade, become shadowy. Worse, its owner will sooner or later lose his strength and will to the dark power of which the ring is the outer manifestation. Gandalf reveals secret elven writing on the ring by casting it into the fire. The ring contains two lines of verse, part of a larger verse which is:

> Three Rings for the Elven-kings under the sky,
> Seven for the Dwarf-lords in their halls of stone,
> Nine for Mortal Men doomed to die,
> One for the Dark Lord on his dark throne
> In the Land of Mordor where the Shadows lie.
> One Ring to rule them all, One Ring to find them,
> One Ring to bring them all and in the darkness bind them
> In the Land of Mordor where the Shadows lie. (I, 60)

Frodo's ring is the Master-ring lost by Sauron, the Dark Lord of Mordor. Gandalf explains the meaning of the verse:

> The Enemy still lacks one thing to give him strength and knowledge to beat down all resistance, break the last defences, and cover all the lands in a second darkness. He lacks the One Ring.
> The Three, fairest of all, the Elf-lords hid from him, and his hand never touched them or sullied them. Seven the Dwarf-kings possessed, but three he has recovered, and the others the dragons have consumed. Nine he gave to Mortal Men, proud and great, and so ensnared them. Long ago they fell under the dominion of the One, and they became Ringwraiths, shadows under his great Shadow, his most terrible servants. Long ago. It is many a year since the Nine walked abroad. Yet who knows? As the Shadow grows once more, they too may walk again. (I, 60-61)

Gandalf suggests that Bilbo's finding the ring was part of a design, and that thus Frodo's possession of it now is also part of the design; but the design is not Sauron's. But now the situation has grown crucial. Gollum, searching the world over for his ring, has been taken to Mordor, and now the Dark Power knows the whereabouts of the ring. The ring must be destroyed, and this can only be done by throwing it into "the Cracks of Doom in the depths of Orodruin, the Fire-mountain." (I, 70) Thus Frodo, full of self-doubts, leaves the Shire with a few friends and makes his way East; though they have left secretly, they are followed by a Black Rider whom they can barely elude

by using their hobbit wood-lore.

They travel through the dense Old Forest, where they are rescued from voracious trees by Tom Bombadil, a kind of Nature guardian, "Master of wood, water, and hill," (I, 135) who takes them to his home in the forest where he lives with Goldberry, "daughter of the River." (I, 134) He tells them stories of when the world was young, for he is the "Eldest"; he "remembers the first raindrop and the first acorn";

> He made paths before the Big People, and saw the Little People arriving. He was here before the Kings and the graves and the Barrow-wights. When the Elves passed westward, Tom was here already, before the seas were bent. He knew the dark under the stars when it was fearless--before the Dark Lord came from Outside. (I, 142)

They leave the forest and become lost in a fog crossing the Barrow-Downs. They are captured by a Barrow-wight and laid in his burrow along with his treasures, but Tom Bombadil comes like sunlight into the cold barrow and frees them.

They reach the town of Bree, where they meet Strider, one of a strange group of men called Rangers. He reveals himself as Aragorn, a friend of Gandalf's and leads them East. But they are caught at night by the Black Riders, the Ringwraiths, those nine mortals drained of flesh and blood by the rings of Sauron. They come, drawn by the scent of blood and by the ring which Frodo bears. Frodo yields to the temptation to use the ring, and is wounded by one of the Riders; the wound refuses to heal properly and leaves his shoulder partly paralyzed, for he "has been touched by the weapons of the Enemy." (I, 216)

After another desperate encounter with the Riders, they reach the Elf city of Rivendell, where Frodo is healed, and where he finds Bilbo. A great council is held, and Elrond, Lord of Rivendell, recounts part of the history of the recurring war with the Enemy:

> Of Numenor he spoke, its glory and its fall, and the return of the Kings of Men to Middle-earth out of the deeps of the Sea, borne upon the wings of storm. Then Elendil the Tall and his mighty sons, Isildur and Anarion, became great lords; and the North-realm they made in Arnor, and the South-realm in Gondor about the mouths of Anduin. But Sauron of Mordor assailed them, and they made the Last Alliance of Elves and Men, and the hosts of Gil-galad and Elendil were mustered in Arnor. (I, 255-6)

Aragorn is revealed as the heir of the last Kings of the West, and he carries a broken sword which, by prophecy, will be remade in the time of great war. It is resolved to attempt to destroy the ring, and the fellowship of the ring is formed. The company includes Gandalf; the hobbits; a dwarf, Gimli; an elf, Legolas; Aragorn and Boromir, a man from the embattled southern land of Gondor which is hard pressed by the forces of Mordor. Aragorn's sword is remade, Frodo receives an elf knife, and the company moves toward the South. They are spied on by flocks of birds, by clouds, are caught in a blizzard in the high pass of Caradhras, attacked by wolf packs, and are forced to take the route that goes to the dwarf Mines of Moria under the Misty Mountains, where no one has been since the last of the great wars. There they are set upon by orcs (semi-human, barbaric creatures), and Gandalf, in a duel of power with a great Balrog (part shadow, part fire, and winged

like a bat) is dragged into an abyss of flames.

Escaping, the rest of the company come to one of the last of the strongholds of the elves. the golden forest of Lothlorien. where "bloom the winter flowers in the unfading grass: the yellow elanor, and the pale niphredil." (I, 365) There they meet the rulers of Lothlorien the Lord Celeborn and the Lady Galadriel the last and greatest of the elf rulers: "no sign of age was upon them, unless it were in the depths of their eyes; for these were...profound, the wells of deep memory." (I, 369) Frodo discovers that the Lady Galadriel wears one of the three remaining elf rings; and she tells him that if the Enemy acquires the Master-ring, then all of elfdom is lost, for the elf rings will bow to the power of the Master-ring. And even if the Master-ring is destroyed, the elves are doomed, for when the power of the Master-ring is dispersed, the derivative power of all the other rings will fade. Either way, the end of the Third Age will mean the passing of the elves. "...Lothlorien will fade," she tells him "and the tides of Time will sweep it away. We must depart into the West, or dwindle to a rustic folk of dell and cave, slowly to forget and to be forgotten." (I, 308) And as the company leaves Lothlorien to sail down the broad Anduin Frodo looks at Galadriel and she seems to him "a living vision of that which has already been left far behind by the flowing stream of Time." (I, 389)

They sail to the South, and at the Falls of Rauros they must

decide whether to turn West and go to the aid of Boromir's city, Minas Tirith, or turn East and pursue the ring-quest towards Mordor. Over this decision the first dissension in the company occurs: Boromir sees it as sheer duty to help his city, Frodo cannot justify any deviation from the quest. Boromir tries to take the ring by force, but Frodo uses it to escape. He decides to make for Mordor alone, but his servant Sam catches up with him and they leave together. Just before they go, Frodo climbs a great peak and looks at the panorama of the country around them, and the first book ends on the foreboding note of what he sees:

> Horsemen were galloping on the grass of Rohan; wolves poured from Isengard. From the havens of Harad ships of war put out to sea; and out of the East Men were moving endlessly: swordsmen, spearmen, bowmen upon horses ....All the power of the Dark Lord was in motion. Then turning south again he beheld Minas Tirith. Far away it seemed, and beautiful: white-walled, many-towered, proud and fair upon its mountain-seat; its battlements glittered with steel, and its turrets were bright with many banners. Hope leaped in his heart. But against Minas Tirith was set another fortress, greater and more strong. Thither, eastward, unwilling his eye was drawn. It passed the ruined bridges of Osgiliath, the grinning gates of Minas Morgul, and the haunted Mountains, and it looked upon Gorgoroth, the valley of terror in the Land of Mordor. Darkness lay there under the Sun. Fire glowed amid the smoke. Mount Doom was burning, and a great reek rising. Then at last his gaze was held: wall upon wall, battlement upon battlement, black, immeasurably strong, mountain of iron, gate of steel, tower of adamant, he saw it: Barad-dur, Fortress of Sauron. All hope left him. (I, 417)

In the second volume, which begins after the breaking up of the fellowship, the lines of the story diverge; one book follows the adventures

of Aragorn's party, the other those of Frodo. The major events of the first line I will note only briefly. Gandalf has returned from seeming death, and is now the White Rider; as such he replaces the traitor Saruman of Isengard as Chief of the Great Council. The great Tree-folk (the Ents) join with Gandalf in attacking the tower of Saruman and subduing it. Thus the forces in the coming war will be those of Mordor and those of Minas Tirith, though Boromir is now dead.

Frodo and his servant Sam are overtaken by Gollum, who has been following them all the way from Lothlorien. Frodo partly draws Gollum out of his evil and he becomes their guide into the Land of Mordor. He leads them across the Dead Marshes, which are lighted dimly by what seem to be moving and flickering candles. They slog through the swamp and foul pools, the graveyard of an ancient battle; and down through the murky pools they can see "pale faces, deep deep under the dark water...grim faces and evil, and noble faces and sad. Many faces proud and fair, and weeds in their silver hair. But all foul, all rotting, all dead." (II, 235)

Gollum leads them to Morannon, the Black Gate of Mordor, but it proves impassable. They move south towards what Gollum promises is a secret entry through the mountain pass Cirith Ungol, the Spider's Pass. They climb slowly upward through the loathsome pass, where even the occasional pale flowers give off the stench of death. Amid

thunder and lightning, as they crouch in fear, the first of the great armies of Mordor marches out, with a Black Rider at its head, to make war on the West. They move on and come finally to a cave entrance in the wall of the pass; out of it comes a hideous stench. They go in and up a long dark tunnel in which the stench worsens. Totally lost and exhausted, and noting that Gollum has disappeared, they stop when they hear a sound "in the heavy padded silence: a gurgling, bubbling noise, and a long venomous hiss." (II, 328) Frodo holds up his gift from the Lady Galadriel, a phial of white elvish fire, which radiates the blackness. The many-eyed thing that is watching them retreats into the shadows. Their way out is barred by a gigantic spider-web, which Frodo hacks down with his elvish sword, but they have not escaped Shelob, "bloated and grown fat with endless brooding on her feasts, weaving webs of shadow; for all living things were her food, and her vomit darkness." (II, 332)

Frodo races up the pass, Sam some distance behind; and Shelob comes out of a black hole in the passage wall behind Frodo and moves after him on great knobbly spider's legs. As Sam tries to warn Frodo he is set upon by Gollum, who has sent Frodo to Shelob's lair in hope of getting the ring back. Sam frees himself, but Shelob has Frodo. In a desperate battle reminiscent of both The Faerie Queene and Beowulf, Sam wounds the monster; armed with Frodo's sword and Galadriel's light, he shouts at Shelob the elvish cry

O Elbereth Gilthoniel
o menel palan-diriel,
le nallan si di'nguruthos!
A tiro nin, Fanuilos! (II, 339)

And Shelob crawls off to her lair. But Frodo is dead, so far as Sam can tell. As he mourns there in the pass by Frodo's side the words of the Council at Lothlorien come back to him: "And the Council gave him companions, so that the errand should not fail." (II, 341) He takes the ring from Frodo and goes on. Orc-guards appear, and he puts the ring on to disappear. The orcs find Frodo and carry him off to their tower; Sam, following, overhears that Frodo is not dead but stunned by Shelob's poison. The second volume ends with Frodo captured by the enemy.

The last volume, like the second, falls into two parts; in the first the great battles between Mordor and the West are told, Gandalf, Aragorn and the rest of the company playing crucial parts. In the second, in events which occur at the same time as the battles, the final stages of the ring quest are shown. As before, I will deal only briefly with the secondary plot.

The war for the ring has begun in earnest, and the black cloud of Mordor darkens all the southern lands, hovering over even Minas Tirith, the last stronghold of the West. A series of battles are fought, skirmishes of attrition before the great battle of Minas Tirith. Before one of these Aragorn is forced to march his troops along the Paths of the Dead, and as they near the end of the region Legolas the elf looks

behind them. "The Dead are following," he says. "I see shapes of Men and of horses, and pale banners like shreds of cloud, and spears like winter-thickets on a misty night. The Dead are following." And his companion replies, "Yes, the Dead ride behind. They have been summoned." (III, 61-62) And the dead and the living ride into battle together. Gandalf and Aragorn march their troops to the Black Gate of Mordor to challenge the enemy; they are met by a messenger from Sauron, a being so lost in evil that he has no name but "the mouth of Sauron." He shows them Frodo's clothes and armor as evidence of Frodo's death and the failure of the ring quest. They see their cause as finally hopeless, and are attacked from all sides by the armies of Mordor.

Sam rescues Frodo from the orc tower, and they move through a series of desperate adventures towards Mount Doom. The ring itself becomes heavier and heavier, so that Frodo can hardly move with it. Worse than its weight is the spiritual pressure it puts upon him: he sees it always in his mind's eye as a wheel of fire, and it begins to deaden his mind. He has forgotten most things of the past, he tells Sam. "No taste of food, no feel of water, no sound of wind, no memory of tree or grass or flower, no image of moon or star...and there is no veil between me and the wheel of fire." (III, 215) They move snail-like up the great ash heap of Doom, Sam carrying Frodo, who by now is wholly spent except for his driving will and the sense of his mission as part of a pattern. Gollum leaps suddenly off a crag and attacks Frodo, but is beaten off. Sam cannot bring himself to kill Gollum even

now. Frodo arrives at the precipice overhanging the abyss of fire in the heart of Mount Doom, and then cannot throw the ring in. "I have come," he said. "But I do not choose now to do what I came to do. I will not do this deed. The Ring is mine!" (III, 223) At that moment he is attacked again by Gollum; Gollum wrenches the ring away from him and in a mad dance of victory totters over the edge into the flames, the ring with him.

The towers and battlements of Mordor fall in ruins, and the armies of Mordor, deprived now of their will, bolt or destroy themselves. The Third Age is at an end, and the Fourth Age, the Age of Men, is at hand. Aragorn becomes King of Gondor, "Aragorn son of Arathorn, chieftain of the Dunedain of the North, Captain of the Host of the West, wielder of the Sword Reforged, victorious in battle...." (III, 245) The company disbands, and the hobbits return to the Shire. But after three years, Bilbo comes back to the Shire with the elf people--Elrond and Galadriel and their kindred. Frodo and Gandalf join Bilbo and the elves and go to Grey Havens to take ship for the land far out in the western sea. Frodo has saved the Shire, has saved the world in fact, but not for himself. "It must often be so...," he says, "when things are in danger: some one has to give them up, lose them, so that others may keep them." (III, 309) And here the trilogy ends, "for the Third Age was over, and the Days of the Rings were passed, and an end was come of the story and song of those times." (III, 309)

I have called the work anomalous, and perhaps even such brief and

sketchy recapitulation as I have given shows the justice of the term. On first glance, it is certainly not a realistic novel, not a symbolic novel, perhaps not even a novel at all as we usually understand the term. It would seem closest to "myth," except that we generally think of myth as some sort of adumbration of what was once either fact, or felt to be fact, or desired to be fact. But here there is no question of fact at all. It is clearly sheer invention, and that is the sharp edge of the razor which both friendly and hostile estimators of the work have had to get over. In fact, the trilogy, more than perhaps any other recent work, poses the question of the value of invention in our time. And it follows, of course, that to ask the value of invention is to assume a knowledge of, and a judgment of, reality; and to ask how far, and in what way, and for what reason, this invention departs from reality--and whether this departure is justifiable. Most of the essential criticism of the work resolves itself to this fundamental question; and I mean now to deal with some of this criticism as a means of leading up to my own interpretation of the work, which is that it is wholly understandable only if seen as an example of romantic religion.

There can be no doubt as to the leader of the hostile criticism: it is vast understatement to say that Edmund Wilson does not like the trilogy; he feels insulted at being asked to review it. He could accept it as "a philological curiosity,"[4] but the fact that grown people could

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[4]"Oo, Those Awful Orcs!" Nation, CLXXXII (April 14, 1956), 312.

take it seriously as literature, and even morality, goads him beyond the bounds of civility. He castigates the reviewers who have commended this "hypertrophic sequel to The Hobbit":[5] Richard Hughes, who mentioned The Faerie Queene in connection with it; Naomi Mitchison, who took it as seriously as she does Malory; Lewis, who compared Tolkien to Ariosto and found Tolkien the better; and Louis Halle, who thought it had the same meaning as the Odyssey, Genesis, and Faust. The only way he can explain such tastes is to conclude "that certain people ...have a lifelong appetite for juvenile trash."[6] And though he deprecates both the prose and verse of the work, which "are on the same level of professorial amateurishness,"[7] the crux of his dislike is that the work is "imaginary." If he must read of imaginary kingdoms, he prefers Cabell's Poictesme. "He at least writes for grown-up people, and he does not present the drama of life as a showdown between Good People and Goblins."[8]

And another critic, Mark Roberts, echoes (more courteously) Wilson's accusation: the work has no "relevance to the human situation."[9] What is essentially wrong with it is that it is "contrived." "It does

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[5]"Oo, Those Awful Orcs!" Nation, 312.

[6]"Oo, Those Awful Orcs!" Nation, 313.

[7]"Oo, Those Awful Orcs!" Nation, 313.

[8]"Oo, Those Awful Orcs!" Nation, 314.

[9]"Adventure in English," Essays in Criticism, VI (Jan., 1956), 458.

not issue from an understanding of reality which is not to be denied; it is not moulded by some controlling vision of things which is at the same time its raison d'etre."[10]

The more friendly estimates turn largely on the same pole. But in these the invention is held to have a moral significance, and thus relevance to the human condition. Michael Straight, who regards the work as one of the "very few works of genius in recent literature,"[11] holds that there is a theme in the trilogy, and that the theme is essentially a moral one: personal responsibility, as symbolized by Frodo and his relationship with the ring. "In the presence of limited good, and of corruptible man, what is the responsibility of the ring-bearer? Is it to use present evil on behalf of present good and thereby to ensure the continuation of evil? Or is it to deny present gain in an effort to destroy evil itself?"[12] Thus the work is not escapist; it "illuminates the inner consistency of reality."[13]

And another critic refutes Wilson by pointing out the ethical character of the trilogy; it is not a matter of Good People versus Goblins: "...the force and complexity of its moral and theological

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[10]"Adventure in English," Essays in Criticism, 459.

[11]"The Fantastic World of Professor Tolkien," New Republic, CXXXIV (Jan. 16, 1956), 26.

[12]"The Fantastic World of Professor Tolkien," New Republic, 24.

[13]"The Fantastic World of Professor Tolkien," New Republic, 26.

scheme provide the fundamental power of The Lord of the Rings."[14] Frodo and Sam are clearly endowed with free will, and free will "entails a necessarily structured universe...."[15] The overall pattern of the work illustrates one of man's fundamental problems--his relation to the universe. Frodo and Sam's sense of dedication to the quest shows a sense of duty not merely to themselves; it shows also a "cosmic responsibility, justified by the existence of some vast, unnamed power for good."[16] Tolkien has rejected realism in order "to talk more forcefully about reality."[17]

Douglass Parker reminds the reader of Tolkien's interpretation of Beowulf, and holds that what Tolkien has done in the trilogy is to recreate the world, and world-view, of the poem. The words that Tolkien took from Widsith to apply to Beowulf can as well be applied to the trilogy: Lif is laene: eal scaece, leoht ond lif somod, "Life is fleeting: everything passes away, light and life together."[18] There hangs over the tale, he thinks, the same cloud of determinism that hung over Beowulf. The end of an age is coming, and nothing that men or hobbits or elves can do will forestall that end. In the face of inexorable

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[14]Patricia M. Spacks, "Ethical Pattern in The Lord of the Rings," Critique, III (Spring-Fall, 1959), 30.

[15]"Ethical Pattern in The Lord of the Rings," Critique, 34.

[16]"Ethical Pattern in The Lord of the Rings," Critique, 35.

[17]"Ethical Pattern in The Lord of the Rings," Critique, 41.

[18]"Hwaet We Holbylta...," Hudson Review, No. 9 (Spring 1956-Winter 1956-7), 609.

extinction the only answer that man or hobbit can make is to be heroic. Tolkien has gone to fantastic lengths to make his world "a prodigious and...unshakable construct of the imagination"[19] in imitation of the world of the Beowulf poem because Tolkien feels "that only in this way can he attain what the author of Beowulf (also an antiquary) attained: a sense of man's Verganglichkeit, his impermanence, his perishability."[20] And this imaginary world has relevance to the real one. His borrowings from, or re-working of, myths from the Anglo-Saxon, Celtic, and Norse provide a bridge from his world to ours; they make "the implicit statement that our world, in the Age of Men, the Fourth Age, is a continuation of his, and will recapitulate its happenings in new terms, as the Third Age recapitulated the Second, and the Second the First."[21]

Lewis, too, sees the meaning of the trilogy as heroism, the heroism necessary to a man if he is simply to live. He does not like to extract a moral from a work which he finds "good beyond hope," but if there must be a moral, then that is it, "that our victory is impermanent."[22] The work serves to recall us "from facile optimism and wailing pessimism alike, to that hard, yet not quite desperate, insight into Man's unchanging predicament by which heroic ages have lived."[23]

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[19]"Hwaet We Holbylta...," Hudson Review, 605.

[20]"Hwaet We Holbylta...," Hudson Review, 608.

[21]"Hwaet We Holbylta...," Hudson Review, 606.

[22]"The Dethronement of Power," Time and Tide, XXXVI (October 22, 1955), 1374.

[23]"The Dethronement of Power," Time and Tide, 1374.

Most of the criticism, as I have said, comes down to the question of whether the book is relevant to life, whether (in Parker's terms) there is a bridge between its invented reality and the accepted reality of our world. Can a tale which is totally "made up" be important? The implicit agreement among all the critics noted above is that the work can be relevant to life, and can be taken seriously, only if it is in some way allegorical or symbolical. The hostile critics deny allegory of any sort, or find the allegory childish and oversimplified. The friendly critics find the allegory serious, complex, and moral. It is almost as if Tolkien had held a mirror up to, not life, but to critical attitudes (which presuppose philosophical attitudes), and in it each critic had seen himself.

And against all these opinions we must set Tolkien's own remarks on the work, made in a statement to his publisher. Wilson quotes these with tremendous relish, regarding them as the last evidence he needs to show the inanity of those reviewers who found serious value in the work. Tolkien himself has confessed, Wilson thinks, that the work is only "a philological game."[24] Tolkien has said, "The invention of languages is the foundation. The 'stories' were made rather to provide a world for the languages than the reverse. I should have preferred to write in 'Elvish'."[25] When people ask him "what it is all about," he

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[24]"Oo, Those Awful Orcs!" Nation, 312.

[25]"Oo, Those Awful Orcs!" Nation, 312.

replies that it is an essay in "linguistic esthetic." "It is not 'about' anything but itself. Certainly it has no allegorical intentions, general, particular or topical, moral, religious or political."[26] This last disclaimer is for Wilson the end of the matter; his mood is that of Aquinas when he pounded his fist on King Louis's table and exclaimed, "That will settle the Manichees!"

For my purposes, it does not matter much whether Tolkien is being ironic or not, or whether artists' remarks on their own work are to be taken as final evidence as to the nature and meaning of their work. The aim of the critic, as Chesterton once remarked, is to show what the artist did, whether the artist meant to do it or not. But in the interest of truth it should be pointed out that Wilson makes the matter far too simple, and the internal evidence in the work shows this quite clearly. The trilogy may have begun as a philological game easily enough, but other things have grown beneath their makers' hands. And if it were relevant to my purpose I could cite innumerable passages in the trilogy which are clearly not part of any game, philological or otherwise--passages in which the heart of the author is laid bare for all to see who read them. No one ever exposed the nerves and fibers of his being in order to make up a language; it is not only insane but unnecessary. Whether or not Tolkien is to be taken literally in his remarks, there is something in the trilogy, and I hope to show now what

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[26]"Oo, Those Awful Orcs!" Nation, 312.

that something is.

The genre and the meaning of the trilogy are to be found in Tolkien's essay on fairy stories, published in 1947, seven years before the appearance of the first volume of The Lord of the Rings. The essay has not been completely ignored in discussions of the trilogy. Straight, for example, points out briefly that the trilogy accords generally with the specifications that Tolkien has laid down for the fairy tale. And Lewis's review of the second and third volumes spends some time defending the work on a basis which is really Tolkien's, though Lewis does not mention this. But the total relevance of the essay to the trilogy, and the nature of the theory set forth in the essay have not, I think, been sufficiently examined.

Tolkien's essay attempts to determine the nature, origin, and use of fairy stories. As to the nature of them, no definition can be arrived at on historical grounds; the definition must rather deal with "the nature of Faerie: the Perilous Realm itself, and the air that blows in that country."[27] But this is exactly what cannot be either defined or accurately described, only perceived. Faerie may be roughly translated as Magic, but not the vulgar magic of the magician; it is rather magic "of a particular mood and power," (p. 43) and it does not have its end in itself but in its operations. Among these operations

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[27]"On Fairy-Stories," in Essays Presented to Charles Williams (London, 1947), p. 43. Page references to the essay will be in the text.

are "the satisfaction of certain primordial human desires" such as the desire "to survey the depths of space and time" and the desire "to hold communion with other living things." (p. 44) Travellers' tales are not fairy stories, and neither are those stories which utilize dream machinery to explain away their marvels; if a writer attaches his tale of marvels to reality by explaining that it was all a dream (as in the old medieval tradition, for example), "he cheats deliberately the primal desire at the heart of Faerie: the realization, independent of the conceiving mind, of imagined wonder." (p. 45)

Now these remarks throw much light on the trilogy. It is a fairy story in the sense just described: it concerns itself with the air that blows through the Perilous Realm of Faerie. It attempts to satisfy "certain primordial human desires." It surveys the depths of time, as Lewis's trilogy surveys the depths of space (and in Tolkien's sense, Lewis's trilogy is thus a fairy story). The story itself is of the Third Age, but the story is full of echoes out of the dim past; in fact, the trilogy is in great part an attempt to suggest the depths of time, "which antiquates antiquity, and hath an art to make dust of all things." The Third Age is, for the reader, old beyond measure, but the beings of this age repeatedly tell stories out of ages yet deeper "in the dark backward and abysm of time," and in fact often suggest that these stories recount only the events of relatively recent times, and that the oldest things are lost beyond memory. All this is to satisfy that primordial desire to explore time, for "antiquity has an appeal in itself."

(p. 57) Fairy stories, Tolkien's among them, "open a door on Other Time, and if we pass through, though only for a moment, we stand outside our own time, outside Time itself, maybe." (p. 57)

And the trilogy attempts to satisfy the other desire, "to hold communion with other living beings," just as Lewis's trilogy does. The Ents, for example, whom I have mentioned only briefly, are the great trees of the Third Age, and are among the oldest living things. They speak to the hobbits in a language as old, as slowly and carefully articulated, as the earth itself. And when Tom Bombadil speaks, it is as if Nature itself--non-rational, interested only in life and in growing things--were speaking. The elves, the dwarfs, even Gollum and the orcs, are gradations--either up or down--from the human level; they are "other living beings" with whom the reader holds communion in the trilogy world of imagined wonder.

Lewis, we recall, had much to say of the books of Beatrix Potter; it was in these that he found early traces of the thing he called Joy. And Tolkien finds something in them of Faerie. They are mostly beast fables, he thinks, but they "lie near the borders of Faerie" because of the moral element in them, "their inherent morality, not any allegorical <u>significatio</u>." (p. 46) Here, perhaps, is a partial answer to the question which, as we have seen, all the critics of the trilogy have dealt with: the relevance of the work to human life. It is not only through allegory that invented characters and actions may have significance. Allegory is ultimately reducible to rational terms; and in this sense

there is no allegory in The Lord of the Rings. But there runs throughout the work an "inherent morality" which many critics have discerned, and which some have tried to reduce to allegory. It is the element of the numinous that is to be found throughout the work of George Macdonald and in Lewis's novels. It is the sense of a cosmic moral law, consciously obeyed or disobeyed by the characters, but existing nowhere as a formulated and codified body of doctrine. Patricia Spacks has commented that Tolkien has included in the trilogy "all the necessary materials for religion."[28] It is even more accurate to say that he has included Conscience, which may be defined, for the purposes of the trilogy, as an awareness of natural law. But it is not a rational awareness; that is, rationality plays almost no part in it. It is rather an emotional or imaginative awareness; the doctrine does not exist, but the feeling normally attached to the doctrine does. The value of this inherent morality, as we shall see, comes under Tolkien's heading of "Recovery," which is one of the uses of the fairy story.

Fairy stories, then, are those which utilize Faerie, "the realization of imagined wonder," and which have, or may have, an "inherent morality." Their nature is "independent of the conceiving mind," or, as Lewis said of Macdonald's myth-making, it comes to us on a level deeper and more basic than that of the conceptual intellect, and must be perceived with the imagination.

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[28]"Ethical Pattern in The Lord of the Rings," Critique, 36.

Tolkien's views of the origins of fairy stories take us a step closer to the heart of the matter. The history of fairy stories is "as complex as the history of human language." (p. 49) In this history three elements have figured in the creation of "the intricate web of Story" (p. 49): invention, diffusion, and inheritance. The latter two lead ultimately back to the first and do nothing to clear up the mystery of invention. For diffusion is merely "borrowing in space" (p. 50) from an inventor, and inheritance is merely "borrowing in time." (p. 50) Both presuppose an inventive mind, and it is to the nature of the inventive mind that Tolkien now turns.

> The incarnate mind, the tongue, and the tale are in our world coeval. The human mind, endowed with the powers of generalization and abstraction, sees not only green-grass, discriminating it from other things, ...but sees that it is green as well as being grass. But how powerful, how stimulating to the very faculty that produced it, was the invention of the adjective: no spell or incantation in Faerie is more potent. And that is not surprising: such incantations might indeed be said to be only another view of adjectives, a part of speech in a mythical grammar. The mind that thought of light, heavy, grey, yellow, still, swift, also conceived of magic that would make heavy things light and able to fly, turn grey lead into yellow gold, and the still rock into swift water. If it could do the one, it could do the other; it inevitably did both. When we can take green from grass, blue from heaven, and red from blood, we have already an enchanter's power--upon one plane; and the desire to wield that power in the world external to our minds awakes. It does not follow that we shall use that power well upon any plane. We may put a deadly green upon a man's face and produce a horror; we may make the rare and terrible blue moon to shine; or we may cause woods to spring with silver leaves and rams to wear fleeces of gold, and put hot fire into the belly of the cold worm. But in such 'fantasy,' as it is called, new form is made; Faerie begins; Man becomes a sub-creator. (pp. 50-51)

Barfield might well have written this passage; but, more important, behind the passage, as behind the work of Barfield, there is the romantic doctrine of the creative imagination. Faerie is a product of the "esemplastic" imagination, a product of the Secondary Imagination, which is an echo of the Primary Imagination that creates and perceives the world of reality.

Nor is the creative imagination to be taken lightly, or metaphorically, in Tolkien's theory of the fairy story. The writer of the story is really a sub-creator; he creates a "Secondary World" (p. 60) which the mind of the reader really enters. Further, the reader's state of mind is not accurately described in the phrase "willing suspension of disbelief," which indicates a kind of tolerance or tacit agreement. When the story is successful, the reader practises "Secondary Belief," (p. 60) which is a positive thing. So long as the artist's art does not fail him, "what he relates is 'true': it accords with the laws of that world. You therefore believe it, while you are...inside." (p. 60)

Tolkien elaborates, and slightly qualifies, the doctrine of the creative imagination in his discussion of the use of fairy stories. He begins with a dictionary distinction between the Fancy and the Imagination. According to this distinction, the Fancy is the image-making faculty, what Coleridge called "a mode of memory emancipated from the order of time and space";[29] the imagination is "the power of giving to

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[29] Biographia Literaria, Chapter XIII.

ideal creations the inner consistency of reality." (p. 66) Coleridge thought of the two capacities as wholly distinct faculties, the Fancy being analogous to the understanding, and the Imagination analogous to the Reason. Tolkien would re-combine them because he believes "the verbal distinction philologically inappropriate, and the analysis inaccurate. The mental power of image-making is one thing, or aspect; and it should appropriately be called Imagination. The perception of the image, the grasp of its implications, and the control, which are necessary to a successful expression, may vary in vividness and strength; but this is a difference of degree in Imagination, not a difference in kind." (p. 66) What gives "the inner consistency of reality" or Secondary Belief is not properly Imagination but Art, which is "the operative link between Imagination and the final result, Sub-creation." (p. 67) Needing a term to express both the "Sub-creative Art" and "a quality of strangeness and wonder in the Expression, derived from the Image," (p. 67) he chooses to use the word Fantasy. For the term, in the sense in which he means it, "combines with its older and higher use as an equivalent of Imagination the derived notions of 'unreality' (that is, of unlikeness to the Primary World), of freedom from the domination of observed 'fact', in short of the fantastic." (p. 67)

He is aware, he says, of the implications of the word fantastic, that it implies that the things with which it deals are not to be found in the "Primary World." In fact, he welcomes such implications, for that is exactly what he means by the term, that the images which it describes

are not extant in the "real" world. That they are not "is a virtue not a vice." (p. 67) (We are reminded of Barfield's use of Shelley's lines: "Forms more real than living man, / Nurslings of immortality.") Just because Fantasy deals with things which do not exist in the Primary World, Tolkien holds, it is "not a lower but a higher form of Art, indeed the most nearly pure form, and so (when achieved) the most potent." (p. 67) It is relatively easy to achieve "the inner consistency of reality" in realistic material. But good Fantasy is very difficult to write. Anyone, Tolkien points out, can say "the green sun," but

> To make a Secondary World inside which the green sun will be credible, commanding Secondary Belief, will probably require labour and thought, and will certainly demand a special skill, a kind of elvish craft. Few attempt such difficult tasks. But when they are attempted and in any degree accomplished then we have a rare achievement of Art: indeed narrative art, story-making in its primary and most potent mode. (p. 68)

The fairy story, then, of which the trilogy is an example, uses Fantasy, and so far as it is successful is "story-making in its primary and most potent mode." That is to say, in dealing with fantastic things rather than with real ones it attempts the purest form of narrative art, and succeeds to the extent that it induces in the reader the state of mind called Secondary Belief. In short, invented or created stories, if successful, are better than, on a higher level than, stories which merely manipulate the materials of the Primary World. Now this is so not only because such invented stories are harder to make but because they offer certain things to the reader which realistic stories do not offer, or do not offer to the same degree. These things Tolkien calls

Recovery, Escape, and Consolation.

"Recovery (which includes return and renewal of health) is a re-gaining--re-gaining of a clear view." (p. 74) Recovery is a means of "seeing things as we are (or were) meant to see them...." (p. 74) All things become blurred by familiarity; we come to possess them, to use them, to see them only in relation to ourselves. In so doing we lose sight of what the things themselves really are qua things--and "things" here includes people, objects, ideas, moral codes, literally everything. Recovery is recovery of perspective, the old Chestertonian lesson which Tolkien calls "Mooreefoc, or Chestertonian Fantasy," (p. 74) which Chesterton borrowed from Dickens. Fantasy provides the recovery necessary to those of us who do not have humility; the humble do not need Fantasy because they already see things as not necessarily related to themselves; their vision is not qualified by selfishness or egotism. Lewis, as I have said, defends the trilogy's relevance to life, and he does so in terms of what Tolkien means by Recovery:

> The value of the myth is that it takes all the things we know and restores to them the rich significance which has been hidden by 'the veil of familiarity.' ... By putting bread, gold, horse, apple, or the very roads into a myth, we do not retreat from reality: we rediscover it. As long as the story lingers in our mind, the real things are more themselves. This book applies the treatment not only to bread or apple but to good and evil, to our endless perils, our anguish, and our joys. By dipping them in myth we see them more clearly.[30]

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[30]"The Dethronement of Power," Time and Tide, 1374.

We re-discover the meaning of heroism and friendship as we see the two hobbits clawing their way up Mount Doom; we see again the endless evil of greed and egotism in Gollum, stunted and ingrown out of moral shape by years of lust for the ring; we recognize again the essential anguish of seeing beautiful and frail things--innocence, early love, children --passing away as we read of the Lady Galadriel and the elves making the inevitable journey to the West. We see morality as morality by prescinding from this or that human act and watching the "inherent morality" to which all the beings of the Third Age--the evil as well as the good--bear witness. And, perhaps, the devouring nature of time itself is borne in on us, as it was for the Elizabethan sonneteers, and we learn again from the trilogy that all things are Time's fools, that all comes within the compass of his bending sickle.

If Tolkien is right, if Recovery is what he claims it is, and if Fantasy provides Recovery, then it follows that Fantasy, far from being irrelevant to reality, is in fact terribly relevant to moral reality. And the trilogy, so far as Tolkien's art does not fail him, is an example of the dictum, so favored by the Renaissance critics and the ancients, that literature is both dulce and utile, that Spenser, as Milton said, could be a better teacher than Aquinas.

Finally, the fairy story, by the use of Fantasy, provides Escape and Consolation, two elements which are, as Tolkien notes, very closely connected. In fact, Escape brings about Consolation as its end or effect. Now the fact that the fairy story is "escapist" is the very

crux of most of the accusations brought against it (as we have seen in regard to the trilogy). But Tolkien will not admit that Escape is a bad thing. The word, he thinks, has fallen into disrepute because its users too often confuse "the Escape of the Prisoner with the Flight of the Deserter." (p. 76)

> Why should a man be scorned, if, finding himself in prison, he tries to get out and go home? Or if, when he cannot do so, he thinks and talks about other topics than jailers and prison-walls? The world outside has not become less real because the prisoner cannot see it. (p. 77)

Thus Escape from Hitler's Reich is not desertion, it is really rebellion, a refusal to be identified with Hitler. And, Tolkien thinks, this is often the nature of Escape. A man may refuse to write about the world in which he lives not out of cowardice (which is the usual accusation) but because to write about it is in a sense to accept it. He may, like Thoreau, simply secede. And this, for him, is not desertion; it is war, "real Escape, and what are often its companions, Disgust, Anger, Condemnation, and Revolt." (p. 77)

But fairy stories provide other Escapes, and these bring about Consolation of various kinds. Fairy stories, like other kinds of literature and like many other things as well, can provide a kind of solace in a world of "hunger, thirst, poverty, pain, sorrow, injustice, death." (p. 79) And this kind of solace or respite is necessary; it is not refusal to face reality, it is a time needed to regroup one's forces for the next day's battle. Thus the poets talk of "Care-charmer sleep" and the sleep that knits up the ravelled sleeve of care; but they do not

advocate sleeping one's life away. Further, fairy stories, as we have seen, provide a kind of Consolation in their satisfaction of "primordial human desires."

But the major Consolation that the fairy story has to offer is one which it contains to a degree that no other kind of literature can equal. It is "the Consolation of the Happy Ending":

> Almost I would venture to assert that all complete fairy-stories must have it. At least I would say that Tragedy is the true form of Drama, its highest function; but the opposite is true of Fairy-story. Since we do not appear to possess a word that expresses this opposite--I will call it Eucatastrophe. The eucatastrophic tale is the true form of fairy-tale, and its highest function. (p. 81)

What the fairy story pre-eminently presents is "the joy of the happy ending," (p. 81) and it is in this respect that the fairy story, for Tolkien, is related to reality. But the reality is not the reality of this world, the world of flux and opinion; rather the eucatastrophe "denies...universal final defeat and in so far is <u>evangelium</u>, giving a a fleeting glimpse of Joy, Joy beyond the walls of the world, poignant as grief." (p. 81) The good fairy story, by means of its eucatastrophe, gives the reader "a catch of the breath, a beat and lifting of the heart, near to (or indeed accompanied by) tears," (p. 81) for in the eucatastrophe, or happy ending, the reader gets "a piercing blimpse of joy, and heart's desire, that for a moment passes outside the frame, rends indeed the very web of story, and lets a gleam come through...." (p. 82) The relevance of the fairy story to reality lies in this "gleam," which is a "sudden glimpse of the underlying reality or truth." (p. 83)

Thus there are two answers to the question, Is the fairy story true? The first, and obvious answer is, it is true if it induces Secondary Belief, if the Art has successfully translated the image of the "created wonder." But that is merely a question of art. The nature of the eucatastrophe suggests that the second answer is infinitely more important, for "in the 'eucatastrophe' we see in a brief vision that the answer may be greater--it may be a far-off gleam or echo of evangelium in the real world." (p. 83) It is in this second truth that the fairy story, for Tolkien, ceases to be merely literature, and becomes explicitly a vehicle of religious truth, becomes what Man is for Barfield, Joy is for Lewis, and Love is for Williams.

God has redeemed man in all his capacities, and one of his capacities is that of telling stories, especially fairy stories. As Redemption has once more made man in the image and likeness of God, so the capacities of man to some degree echo the capacities of God. In this sense, this second truth of the fairy story is "only one facet of a truth incalculably rich," (p. 83) for in all spheres of human activity there is necessarily something like the signature of God. The eucatastrophic fairy story, a product of redeemed man, echoes the Gospels, which contain a story "which embraces the essence of all fairy-stories." (p. 83) For the Gospels contain not only marvels, as the fairy story does; they contain the birth of Christ, which is "the greatest and most complete conceivable eucatastrophe," "the eucatastrophe of Man's history." (p. 83) And they contain the Resurrection, which is "the eucatastrophe of the

story of the Incarnation." (p. 83)

The joy which the happy ending of the fairy story gives, says Tolkien, is of the same quality, though not the same degree, as the joy which we feel at the fact that the great fairy story of the Gospels is true in the Primary World, for the joy of the fairy tale "has the very taste of primary truth." (p. 84) This is the justification of the fairy story (and thus of the trilogy), that it gives us in small--in the beat of the heart and the catch of the breath--the joy of the infinite good news. For "Art has been verified. God is the Lord, of angels, and of men--and of elves. Legend and History have met and fused." (p. 84)

It is perhaps not too much to say that Tolkien's view of the fairy story has made explicit Coleridge's claim for the worth of the creative imagination. The Secondary Imagination, which created literature, was for him an "echo" of the Primary Imagination, which is "the living Power and prime Agent of all human Perception, and...a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite I AM."[31] For the fairy story, as Tolkien insists, is sheer creation, the making of a Secondary World out of, and by means of, the Imagination. That is the special activity of the fairy story maker, and the one by which he becomes, not a writer, but a sub-creator of a kind of literature analogous--or more than analogous--to the universe created _ex nihilo_

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[31] _Biographia Literaria_, Chapter XIII.

by the true Creator. In his degree he creates joy--or creates what gives joy--as God, in the purposeful drama of creation, has created what also gives joy, the world with the Christian happy ending. Tolkien's defense of Fantasy, in doggerel in which there is perhaps more truth than poetry, is also a defense, and, it may be, the last defense, of the doctrine of the creative imagination, which brings the making of God and the making of man so close that they nearly touch:

> Although now long estranged,
> Man is not wholly lost nor wholly changed.
> Dis-graced he may be, yet is not de-throned,
> and keeps the rags of lordship once he owned:
> Man, Sub-creator, the refracted Light
> through whom is splintered from a single White
> to many hues, and endlessly combined
> in living shapes that move from mind to mind.
> Though all the crannies of the world we filled
> with Elves and Goblins, though we dared to build
> Gods and their houses out of dark and light,
> and sowed the seed of dragons--'twas our right
> (used or misused). That right has not decayed:
> we make still by the law in which we're made. (71-72)

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

In the light of the evidence arrived at in the preceding analytical chapters, it is now possible to comment upon and sum up the phenomenon that I have called romantic, or transcendental, religion. The evidence, I believe, reveals two broad truths about the phenomenon which may be described roughly as follows: first, Barfield may be thought of as the philosopher of the group, the one in whose work the most important notions of romantic religion are to be found in their most radical and exciting form; second, underlying the work of the other three is the pervasive notion that the "romantic experience" is somehow connected with, or leads to, the Christian God.

The present study, as I have said, is not a study in influences; it is not thus primarily concerned with the ideas of these men from the point of view of priority in time, or cause and effect. If it were such a study, Barfield might well be thought of as the intellectual wellspring of the group--though beyond the obvious and admitted influence of Barfield on Lewis, the evidence becomes rather tenuous. But it is clear that, influence aside, the naked ideas of the religious attitude, ideas unclouded and ummodified by any attempt to express them creatively, are to be found in the work of Barfield. It is, in fact, Barfield's

determination to get at the ideas themselves, and at their logical implications, that gives his work the peculiar character that it has, a character that I must try to describe briefly.

In reading Barfield, one has the distinct and not entirely pleasant feeling that he is being led at a gallop up the steep hill of truth but that the slightest misstep will send him plunging into depths of occultism and crankism. The excitement of the chase keeps him going, but he cannot forget at what peril he advances. There are dark places in Barfield, nooks and crannies of occultism, which Lewis, for one, has been careful to steer clear of. If a critic were learned enough, he might make a study of Barfield's work in which he tried to separate out its component parts, and decide which were valid and which only cultish or exciting. Such a study would lead him along that shadowy frontier between occultism and "legitimate" philosophy. He would find that none of the elements of Barfield's work is new, but that they have been put together in new combinations and with new emphases, and for ends which their former users did not always intend. Mechanical analysis of his work will reveal indebtedness to such strange bedfellows as Philo Judaeus, Kant, Jung, Aquinas, and Coleridge, not to mention the individuals and the traditions to which the above-named are in turn indebted. But it is the amalgam of all these, the total blending of these for specific ends, that makes up the work of Barfield. There lingers about this eclecticism some trace of "the night-side" of man's search for truth, something of the obsession with secret ways to God to be found in

Apuleius, the medieval Gnostics, and such modern occultists as Madame Blavatsky and Steiner.

It is tempting to try to discriminate between Barfield's methods and his ends, and this, I believe, is what Lewis has attempted to do. But I doubt that it can logically be done. It is probably safer to admit that there is much in Barfield's Anthroposophy that is curiously attractive and curiously like both the attempts and the results of "licit" transcendental philosophy. The difference between the two, as I have tried to suggest, is the emphasis that Barfield places on certain aspects of that philosophy and the determination with which he proceeds to radical positions which he considers to be implicit in that philosophy. This is most clearly seen in the romantic doctrine of the creative imagination, a doctrine which figures prominently in the work of all four--indeed, in the work of any romantic--but which is to be seen in its most spectacular form in the work of Barfield.

We recall that for Barfield the aim of the creative imagination is "final participation." And by this he means something almost incredibly literal. Barfield holds that man, by means of what Coleridge called the Primary Imagination, participates in the creation of the universe. The key word here is <u>participates</u>. It is not to be taken analogously or metaphorically, but literally. In the beginning, man participated unconsciously in God's unceasing creation by virtue of the fact that man was contained in God; he existed as potency in the divine Unconscious. This is what Barfield means by "original participation."

Now the rise of self-consciousness and correlary emergence of the rational intellect have led man to think of himself as cut off from God, as existing substantially on his own. But this is because he does not understand the nature of the creative imagination. Coleridge, and Kantian philosophy in general, do not go beyond the position that the sensations and the intellect "represent" the outer world to the consciousness of man; by a combined act of perception and intellection, man gives shape, color, size, and meaning to the basic "unrepresented" stuff of the universe. He half perceives and half creates, gives phenomenal existence to the ultimately unknowable noumena. But Barfield goes through Kant and Coleridge and out the other side. For Barfield the noumena of the universe are not "out there," waiting to be represented to the consciousness <u>by</u> the consciousness. The noumena are "in there," in the unconscious of man, which is the same as saying they are in the divine Unconscious. The twin acts of perception and intellection necessary, for Kant, to give phenomenal existence to the noumena are for Barfield an act of the creative imagination. Barfield's world is mental, and in it only two "things" or "principles" exist: to do and to suffer, act and potency, active and passive, consciousness and unconsciousness. The one actuates the other. Phenomenal existence is the effect of the rational consciousness speaking a Word, <u>informing</u> the "pure, unindividuated meaning" of the unconsciousness.

Now all this is only a long way of saying that God (the Word, the World-Soul) creates through, and by means of, man's creative imagination. For God exists only in man's consciousness; there is literally

no other place He could be. God becomes aware of Himself, potency becomes act, God incarnates Himself in human consciousness. It is the creative imagination which brings into being all things; or, said differently, God, through the instrumentality of human consciousness, conceives of Himself and thus actuates Himself, moves from potential to actual existence. Now in a mental world that only exists which someone is conscious of. But the only consciousness is human consciousness, which may be defined as God in act. It follows that what the human consciousness becomes conscious of, God creates. What man can imagine, God makes; in fact, the terms human imagination and divine creation are interchangeable.

Thus man can change the "appearances" of things. "Brooding on things to come," he makes them come. Thus the awful necessity of deciding rightly the kind of world he wants, for the world he wants is the world he will have. No one, I submit, could make the doctrine of the creative imagination more important than to say that God emerges in it and creates by means of it. Barfield's creative imagination is no mere "finite echo" of divine creation. It is divine creation.

Such a position necessarily emphasizes the immanence of God in man, and involves, for a Christian, the doctrines of the Incarnation and Redemption. Barfield's position is radically simple: God exists only in man, brought into existence by the human imagination. To repeat the words of Angelus Silesius: "I know that without me God can live no instant; if I become nothing, He must of necessity give up the ghost."

None of the other three men, being Christians, can go so far. But the doctrine of the creative imagination clearly involves the problem and hints at an awful closeness of God to man. Thus, as we have seen, both Williams and Lewis make much of the Athanasian Creed, which holds not so much that God was made man as that man was taken up into God. From Barfield's ultimate implication of the doctrine of the creative imagination both Lewis and Williams retreat. Yet Lewis, we recall, speaks of our logic as participating in the Word; and Williams holds, in effect, that the lover sees Christ in his beloved, seeing in the "Beatrician vision" the "ingodding" of man. But it is that ultimate implication of the theory of the creative imagination--God's complete immanence in man--at which Lewis, Williams and Tolkien balk, for to step over that threshold is to believe in Man-God, Anthroposophy. From such logic they are saved by Christian doctrine. Thus they must maintain the efficacy and value of the Secondary Imagination without attempting to specify the real nature of the Primary Imagination.

But if they necessarily refuse Barfield's doctrine of God's total immanence in man, they do not abandon certain positions which Barfield sees as following from it--positions which it is rather difficult to explain on grounds other than Barfield's. Thus, according to Williams, it is possible to establish relationship with God through man, or through woman. Something like the beatific vision occurs in romantic love, Williams thinks; something of the immanence of God in man becomes apparent to the romantic lover in that moment of vision. It is what puts

the lover in a state of caritas, in which he sees all things in love. For Barfield, the relation between man and God is both simpler and clearer. He looks within himself, and there is God. Barfield has made the problem of God's immanence radically simple: by the traditional transcendental means of the creative imagination, he has done away with the transcendence of God. Williams, like all Christians, is at pains to preserve both the immanence and the transcendence of God, though, as has been suggested, his near identification of eros with agape leads him very close to Barfield's position.

Again, in the matter of myth, Barfield has much to say, and his view of myth follows from his basic philosophical position. Myth is "the ghost of concrete meaning." And by "concrete meaning" Barfield means the cosmic unconscious which is God and which will become conscious of itself in the self-consciousness of man. Barfield explains myth as pre-logical thought on the part of the divine Unconscious, the Word slowly working toward rational statement in the mind and myth of primitive man. It follows that myth is "truth" of some sort, spoken as it is by the Word in the mind of man. Lewis, as we have seen, adopted from Barfield a "more respectful" attitude toward myth after his discussions with Barfield, and speaks of myth as "a real if unfocused gleam" of truth, a theory which I have compared to the theory of scriptural accommodation. And both Lewis and Tolkien speak, more than wistfully, of the possibility of all myth being true. Again Barfield has said straight out what the others, unable to accept his basic

position, can only hint at or hold to be desirable.

Now I do not mean to imply that Lewis, Williams and Tolkien have plundered Barfield's work, have picked and chosen what they wanted, and then retreated into Christian doctrine, at whatever cost to their logic. It is rather more likely that the ideas which all four share to some extent are a result of what Tolkien, in connection with myth, calls inheritance and diffusion. There is no question here of the invention of ideas, only the use of them. The notion of the creativity of the imagination is, after all, at least as old as Plato. My point has been to maintain that these ideas are most radically expressed in the work of Barfield, and to suggest in passing that this radicalism is a part of Barfield's occultism, that, in fact, the radicalism _is_ his occultism. It may be hinted that Barfield's use of these ideas is more logical than the others' use without implying that Barfield's logic leads to truth. Faith is a fine invention, as Emily Dickinson remarked, for those who cannot see. And Barfield presumes to see what no Christian, mystics excepted, has ever professed to see--God. Hints, cautious analogies, an awed awareness of correspondences between God and man--these are, for the Christian, not cowardice, not failure in logic, but humility.

Indeed, the major difference between Barfield and the other three men in their use of romantic doctrine is that Barfield seeks knowledge partly by means of Gnostic secret ways and the others do not seek knowledge at all. Lewis, Williams, and Tolkien are concerned, not with

knowledge, but with experience, the romantic experience which in various ways brings them closer to God. Here it is necessary to distinguish between the romantic experience, as these men mean it, and what we generally call the mystical experience; for none of the three professes to be a mystic, though, as we have seen, Williams's friends attributed to him both sanctity and various states of mystical vision. None of the three claims to have experienced the sort of mystical state which Edwyn Bevan describes:

> ...in the mystical experience a man's ordinary consciousness of temporal sequence is suspended and he seems to apprehend by direct contact, or even by identification, some tremendous Reality which is above, or below, or behind, the multiplicity of things or psychical events, a Reality which reduces this multiplicity of things to an unreal appearance. It involves an apprehension which seems knowledge in a supreme degree, even if it is knowledge without any conceptual content.[1]

Now Williams especially talks often of the Unity behind the multiplicity of things, and of the unity of Man; but when he does so he does not speak of his own experience, but of that of the Lady Julian, of Evelyn Underhill, or of The Cloud of Unknowing. And Lewis's fictional hero, who undergoes a kind of mystical experience at the end of Perelandra, describes his experience in terms borrowed from Ezekiel or from any of a number of mystics who have described the ultimate reality as a great dance. The experience that Lewis, Williams and Tolkien are concerned with is not the mystical experience, and they are too honest and

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[1]Edwyn Bevan, Symbolism and Belief (Boston, 1957), p. 349.

too humble to attempt to confound them. Their concern is with the value and the meaning of the romantic experience, an experience undergone by everyone at some time or another. In their various ways, all three writers see in this experience some sort of religious and moral significance.

Lewis has spelled out explicitly both what the romantic experience is for him and the meaning that he has attached to it. His phrase "the baptism of the imagination" is a perfectly accurate description of the phenomenon. The romantic experience is, for him, spilt religion; it is God-sent. A great part of his character and life was formed for him by the visitation of a longing over which he had no control, which he did not make for himself and which he could not explain until he had been reconverted to Christianity. The painful pleasure of this thing that he called Joy took on meaning for him only when he found that it was to be gained from reading Macdonald, in whose work Joy and holiness were nearly indistinguishable. Ultimately, from within the framework of Christianity, he could see that the romantic longing--the stab and pang felt at the notions of far-off lands and remote pasts--was really longing for God. The romantic desire for fairy land mantled the ultimate desire for heaven; fairy land was, when seen rightly, a preview of the land of spices. In the last analysis, all longing has God for its final cause. In Aquinas's words: "In the perfect happiness of heaven nothing more will remain to be desired; in the full enjoyment

of God man will obtain whatever he has desired in other thing."[2]

Williams, too, has tried to make the romantic experience meaningful, to make it, like Lewis's Joy, the beginning of a religious experience. He has tried, as Lewis has said, to theologize the romantic experience, to make of it the basis for the "romantic theology" which we have already examined. He has tried to make the experience of falling in love a beginning of the Positive or Affirmative Way, the way of life which consists, not in withdrawal from the world, but in acceptance of the world, the way by which one who has been granted grace by the falling-in-love experience may affirm the goodness of God's creation. The lover is awarded the power of seeing all things in caritas, in effect, of seeing them as God sees them. Further, the love experience is only one mode of the romantic experience. The romantic experience of nature, as Wordsworth lived it, is another of the modes; and from that experience, as from the love experience, the spiritual power or grace proceeds. What the romantic experience provides is an awareness of the relationship between God and man and between God and nature. But the awareness is not knowledge; it is a feeling, an intelligible emotion "felt along the heart," a thought "steeped in feeling," (Prelude, II, 399) an awareness of

> the sentiment of Being spread
> O'er all that moves and all that seemeth still;
> O'er all that, lost beyond the reach of thought
> And human knowledge, to the human eye
> Invisible, yet liveth to the heart.... (II, 401-405)

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[2]Summa Theologica, 2a-2ae. xxviii. 3. Quoted from Gilby, Saint Thomas Aquinas, Philosophical Texts, p. 279.

The romantic lover and the lover of nature, in the moment of the romantic experience, see all things as unfallen, see all things reflecting God, all things looking

> Towards the Uncreated with a countenance
> Of adoration, with an eye of love. (413-414)

Finally, Tolkien, combining the religious value of the romantic experience with an explicitly Christian interpretation of the creative imagination, sketches out with clarity and boldness a form of romantic religion which in some ways sums up and brings into focus the beliefs of both Lewis and Williams. The version of the romantic experience that he is concerned with is the peculiar throb and thrill felt at the good "turn" in the eucatastrophic fairy story. This Joy is qualitatively the same as the Christian Gloria, the beatitude of the blessed; and this Joy is brought about primarily by a kind of literature which is wholly the work of the Secondary Imagination. Man, the sub-creator, creating in the image of and as an echo to the primary creator, brings into being essentially the same spiritual state as does the Almighty when He bestows the gift of final beatitude. This qualitative identity between Tolkien's Joy and beatitude is, I believe, the position which Lewis's Joy and Williams's caritas assume when they are set down in explicit terms. Longing, love, the joy of the man-made eucatastrophe--in short, the romantic experience as these men define it--these are best explained by the fact that the romantic experience is in quality, but not in quantity, identical with Christian beatitude. The lesser experience is not an echo of the greater; it is not analogous to the greater;

it is not a reflection nor a shadow of the greater. The romantic experience is beatitude, in however small a portion. It is a tiny room, but it belongs to the many-mansioned house of bliss.

The nature of what I have called romantic religion is by now fairly clear. It is both romantic and religious, the beliefs and methods of romanticism consciously brought within the province of religion. As such, it has nearly nothing to do with religious dogma or sectarian differences; it is a kind of non-denominational adjunct to formal religion--and thus provides a meeting ground for men whose formal religions differ in important ways. It assumes what unity it has partly from the fact that Barfield, Lewis, Williams, and Tolkien share the belief that romantic tastes are significant beyond the sphere of literature, and partly from the fact that it is embattled. It is what it is, a fusion of both romanticism and religion, in order to defend both these things against their natural enemies--naturalism, realism, classicism, irreligion. Barfield attacks naturalistic evolution, showing it to be an evolution of "idols," and opposing to it "real" evolution, in which phenomenal change is dependent on the evolution of human self-consciousness and the consequent emergence of God. And as a sub-division of his argument, he attacks the logical positivists and traditional philologists, who do not understand the literally sacred nature of meaning. Lewis defends the validity of the romantic experience against the coldness and intellectualism of the classicism of Eliot, and in his planetary fiction sets Christianized romance over against "the new goetia" of

naturalistic scientism. Williams rescues romantic love from the Freudian naturalists by holding it to be God-sent and the beginning of the Affirmative Way to God. Tolkien's fiction prescinds from the Primary World both in order to condemn that world and to show that faerie effects a pre-vision of the Christian Gloria. Against the forces of anti-romanticism the Oxford romantics close ranks. As Chesterton said, no one ever went into battle shouting a distinction in terms; if romantic religion were less militant it might be more distinguishable. But this can not be so in wartime, and what is being defended is very precious: not classroom romanticism; not self-pity, or sentimentality, or gushiness, or any of the thousand other things that romanticism is often accused of. What is being held against the enemy is the last bastion of romance--the experience itself as seen sub species aeternitatis--seen as Vaughan saw Sundays, as

> The milky way Chalkt out with Suns; a Clue
> That guides through erring hours; and in full story
> A taste of Heav'n on earth; the pledge, and Cue
> Of a full feast; And the Out Courts of glory.

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