
PETER J. SCHAKEL, “INTRODUCTION”

Peter J. Schakel, [*Reason and Imagination in C. S. Lewis: A Study of Till We Have Faces*](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1984), 1–8.

Introduction: The Background

THOSE who come to *Till We Have Faces* after reading the *Chronicles of Narnia* or *Out of the Silent Planet* and wanting more of the same are always surprised and often disappointed. The story lacks, or seems to lack, the simplicity of plot and style and clear embodiment of Christian themes they expect of Lewis. **There is no doubt that this story is different. It offers more to readers than his earlier stories, because of its greater maturity and sophistication in technique and style, but it also demands more of readers, who may therefore require some guidance and helps in dealing with it.** A relatively small amount of background information will do a great deal toward removing apparent difficulties and permitting full enjoyment and appreciation of the work.

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Lewis first expects his readers to know the story of Cupid and Psyche. From its earliest known version, by the Latin author Apuleius¹ two centuries after Christ, the tale has often delighted readers and has been retold again and again throughout the centuries. Lewis’s book is another retelling of the story, one which brings out far more of its

¹ Stephen J. Harrison, “Apuleius” in *Oxford Classical Dictionary*: “Apuleius, Writer and Orator, born around 125 CE - Apuleius was born of prosperous parents (Apol. 23) at Madaurus in Africa Proconsularis, and educated in Carthage, Athens, and Rome (Flor. 18, 20, 16); at Athens he gained enough philosophy to be called *philosophus Platonicus* by himself and others. He claims to have travelled extensively as a young man (Apol. 23) and was on his way to Alexandria (1) when he arrived at Oea, probably in the winter of 156 CE.... Of Apuleius’s undisputed writings, only the *Apologia* and the *Florida* can be dated with any accuracy; scholars disagree on whether the *Metamorphoses* is a late or early work, though more think it late than early.”

significance and power than any of the earlier versions. Lewis takes for granted that his readers will know the basic plot of his story and will notice and appreciate the points at which he makes changes in the original. A summary of “Cupid and Psyche” may be useful as an introduction to or reminder of the myth his story is retelling:

Stephen J. Harrison in the *Oxford Classical Dictionary* at “**Apuleius**” – “The *Metamorphoses*, sometimes called the *Golden Ass*, is the only Latin novel which survives whole. On an epic scale (eleven books) and full of narratological cleverness, erotic, humorous, and sensational by turns, it is a remarkable and fascinating work. The basic story is that of the young man Lucius, who through his curiosity to discover the secrets of witchcraft is metamorphosed into an ass and undergoes a variety of picaresque adventures before being retransformed through the agency of the goddess Isis. This plot is punctuated by a number of inserted tales, which have in fact a close thematic relation to the main narrative; **the most substantial and best-known of them is that of Cupid and Psyche** (‘Soul’ in Greek, see *psyche*), which parallels the main story of Lucius by presenting a character (*Psyche*) whose disastrous curiosity causes troublesome adventures before her rescue through divine agency.”

First, we must learn to think mythologically. Powerful things happen when we touch the thinking which myths, fairy tales, and our own dreams bring to us. The terms and settings of the old myths are strange; they seem archaic and distant to us, but if we listen to them carefully and take them seriously, we begin to hear and to understand. Sometimes it is necessary to translate a symbolic meaning, but this is not difficult once we see how it can be done. [Johnson, Robert A. *She*. HarperCollins. Kindle Edition.]

Our tale begins with the line – Once there was a Kingdom. From this we know that **we will be given vision and insight into that kingdom, which is our own inner world.** If you listen to the old language of the tale you will see into that inner realm, seldom explored by the modern rational mind. A gold mine of information and insight is promised by a few words – Once there was a Kingdom. [Johnson, Robert A. *She* (p. 1). HarperCollins. Kindle Edition.]

William Hansen at “**Folktale**” in the *Oxford Classical Dictionary* - Although there are several ancient narratives of magic and wonder that may be classified as fairytales – for example, the tale of the woodcutter and the golden axe¹ – **there is only one, the tale of Cupid and Psyche, that fits the classic profile of what is today thought of as that of the fairytale. The story appears in the *Metamorphoses*, or *The Golden Ass* (4.28–6.24), by the Roman novelist Apuleius.** The tale of Cupid and Psyche is generally agreed to be an ancient version, somewhat allegorised, of an international folktale.²

Once upon a time there lived a king and queen who had three daughters, two of them beautiful, but the third, the youngest, so beautiful that people worshipped her as a goddess and neglected the worship of Venus² for her sake. Therefore, although her sisters were married to kings, Psyche (the youngest) had no suitors; because of her beauty and supposed divinity, no man dared aspire to her hand. Her father consulted the oracle of Apollo³ about her marriage and was told that she was not to marry a human: rather, she was to be exposed on a mountain where a dire serpent would take her as his bride. With great sorrow and funeral rites, Psyche was abandoned on the mountain.

² John Scheid at “**Venus**” in the *Oxford Classical Dictionary* – “The debate over the original nature of this goddess, who does not belong to Rome's oldest pantheon but is attested fairly early at *Lavinium, has been partly resolved (Schilling 1954). It is now accepted that the neuter †*venus*, ‘charm’, cannot be separated from the terms *venia*, *venerari*, *venenum* (‘gracefulness’, ‘to exercise a persuasive charm’, ‘poison’, against Radke, Götter 311 ff.)). How this neuter was transformed into a feminine, a process attested for the Osco-Umbrian goddess Herentas (cf. oscans; umbrians), is ill-understood in the absence of evidence. Schilling thinks that it took place at the federal sanctuary of Lavinium, a city with old and well-attested links with the Greek world and the legend of *Troy. **Whatever the case, from the 3rd cent. BCE, Venus was the patron of all persuasive seductions, between gods and mortals, and between men and women (Venus Verticordia).** Because of her links with the extraordinary power of *wine, Venus is presented in the rites and myth of the *Vinalia as a powerful mediatrix between *Jupiter and the Romans. The first known temple is that of Venus Obsequens (‘Propitious’), vowed in 295 BCE and built some years later. During the *Punic Wars, the tutelary and diplomatic role of Venus grew continually, in proportion to the process of her assimilation to Greek ***Aphrodite.**”

³ Fritz Graf at “**Apollo**” in the *Oxford Classical Dictionary* – “Apollo (Ἀπόλλων, Dor. also Ἀπέλλων), Greek god, son of Zeus and Leto, brother of Artemis, for many ‘the most Greek of Greek gods’ (W. F. Otto). **Among his numerous and diverse functions healing and purification, prophecy, care for young citizens, for poetry, and music are prominent** (see Plat. Cra. 404d–405e). In iconography, he is always young, beardless, and of harmonious beauty, the ideal *ephebe* (see *epheboi*) and young athlete; his weapon is the bow, and his tree the laurel.... **Apollo's interest in music and poetry could derive from the same source, music and poetry having an educational role in Greece** (see education, greek). **Apollo's instrument is the lyre whose well-ordered music is opposed to the ecstatic rhythms of flute and drums which belong to Dionysus and Cybele; according to the Homeric Hymn to Hermes, he received it from Hermes, its inventor.** He is, together with the Muses, protector of epic singers and cithara-players (Hes. Theog. 94); **later, he is Musagetes, ‘Leader of the Muses’,** in Pindar (fr. 91c Snell-Maehler) and on Archaic images. When philosophy takes over a similar educational function, he is associated with philosophy, and an anecdote makes him the real father of Plato (1).... **Apollo's supreme wisdom is beyond human rationality....** In Archaic and Classical Greece, Delphi was the central oracular shrine (see the quest of Croesus, Hdt. 1. 46).”

Venus, jealous of Psyche's beauty and of the honor given to her, had a different fate in mind for her; she ordered her son Cupid to use his magic arrows to cause the girl to fall in love with the most deformed and ignoble man he could find. Cupid set off to do so, but upon seeing Psyche, fell in love with her himself. When she was left on the mountain, therefore, he had the West-wind carry her to his palace. Invisible servants welcomed her, bathed her, sang to her, and brought her a sumptuous banquet.⁴ That night Cupid came to her and made her his wife, but left before daybreak, having forbidden her to see his face.

After some days, Psyche longed to see her sisters and begged that they might visit her. The god consented reluctantly, warning her of possible consequences, and had the West-wind waft them to the palace. Psyche entertained them with baths, music, and divine delicacies; when they inquired about her husband, Psyche said he was a handsome young man who spent most of his time in the hills, hunting. She loaded their arms with jewels and treasures as they left and urged them to return.

Although to Psyche they expressed delight at her good fortune, inwardly they were consumed with envy, for Psyche's palace, wealth, and spouse were superior to their own. They conspired to destroy her happiness, and found the means upon their next visit, for the simple Psyche (now pregnant, and forewarned that her sisters intended her harm) forgot her earlier story and said that her husband was a middle-aged merchant with grey hair. Realizing that Psyche had not seen her husband and suspecting that she was married to a god, the sisters returned the next day and persuaded Psyche that her mysterious husband must actually be a monstrous serpent who devoured pregnant women. They instructed her to hide a lamp and a

⁴ This reminds me of "imaginary lovers" that we conjure, especially when we are young, daydreaming about how it would be with him or her. They are "invisible"; we are not allowed to know them "in the flesh". There is something thrilling about so disembodied a "relationship" in the imagination, and there is nothing of the hard work of friendship involved.

sharp knife in the room and, when her husband was sleeping, to take out the lamp and by its light to cut off his head.

All this the gullible Psyche, terribly frightened by their words, promised to do. That night she brought out the lamp and saw not a monster but Cupid, sweetest and most beautiful of gods. She gazed on him with insatiable love, until a drop of hot oil from her lamp fell on his shoulder and woke him. He, injured by the burning oil and wounded by her lack of faith, rebuked her, and vanished from her sight.

Psyche, wretched and desolate, first attempted to drown herself; but the river would not let her drown and the god Pan warned her never to try again. Psyche wandered on and came to the city where one of her sisters lived. She told her sister that her husband was Cupid, that he had turned her out for her disobedience, and that he had said he would marry the sister instead. At this the sister hastened to the mountain and flung herself over the cliff from which she had been wafted down before; but the West-wind did not aid her this time, and she was dashed to pieces on the rocks. After doing the same to her other sister, Psyche traveled about the country seeking her husband. She was refused shelter by the goddesses Ceres and Juno, because of Venus's anger toward her.

In despair, Psyche finally decided to seek out Venus, hoping to be reconciled to her. Venus, however, beat her, had Sorrow and Sadness torment her, and set her a series of seemingly impossible tasks. The first, of separating a great heap of wheat, barley, millet, poppy-seed, peas, lentils, and beans into separate piles, was carried out for her by a host of sympathetic ants. Next, she had to get a handful of golden wool from some man-killing sheep; a reed by the river whispered to her that this could be achieved by plucking the wool off the briars amongst which the sheep had been grazing. Then she had to fetch a cupful of water from a fountain fed by the river Styx, at the top of a sheer and slippery rock face guarded by dragons who never slept;

but an eagle came to her, took the cup from her, filled it with the water, and returned it to her.

Finally, Psyche was sent to the world of the dead and told to bring back to Venus a box containing beauty from Persephone, Queen of the Underworld. A mysterious voice told her how to enter the Underworld, make her way through it, and return; it warned her in particular that three times she would be asked for help by people who would seem to deserve her pity, but she must refuse them all. And when Persephone gave her the box, she must above all things not open it to look inside. Psyche obeyed all this and returned to the upper world with the box; but curiosity overcame her, and she looked into it. It contained only an infernal and death-like sleep, which overcame her at once.

Cupid, his injury now healed, and searching for Psyche, found her, put the sleep back into the box, woke her, and sent her on to Venus. He then interceded with Jupiter, who agreed to permit him to marry Psyche and made her a goddess. Venus, no longer having reason to be jealous of Psyche, was reconciled to her, "and thus Psyche was married to Cupid, and after in due time she was delivered of a child, whom we call Pleasure."¹

Readers have always sensed that deeper meaning lay under the simple story. The names invite such a response, of course. *Psyche* is the Greek word for "soul"; **the story from the first has been allegorized as the human soul's quest for love**. It readily lent itself to Christian meanings. The Italian writer Boccaccio, in the fourteenth century, saw Psyche as the rational function of the soul needing to reject the sisters (the lower, physical functions) and be joined to noble love or God himself. William Warburton, in the eighteenth century, interpreted the story as tracing "the progress of the soul to perfection, in the possession of divine love, and the reward of immortality." And Robert

¹ The text and a reliable translation may be found in *The Golden Ass, being the Metamorphoses of Lucius Apuleius*, with an English translation by W. Adlington, Loeb Classical Library (London: Heinemann, 1915), pp. 184-99. I have drawn here upon the selective summary of Apuleius's story which Lewis appended to the American edition of *Till We Have Faces*.

Graves, in the twentieth century, calls it “a neat philosophical allegory of the progress of the rational soul towards intellectual love.”²

This tale frustrated Lewis, partly because he saw that such interpretations miss the real point and vastly oversimplify the story, and partly because he saw that Apuleius missed the whole point himself. The story was the sort out of which the great myths are made; and myth for Lewis, of course, meant not “a fictitious story or unscientific account,” **but a use of narrative structure and archetypal elements to convey through the imagination universal or divine truths not accessible to the intellect alone.**³

Apuleius had failed to develop the story’s mythical potential. In particular, he had failed to give the tale the sense of divine mystery or awe – Lewis, using Rudolf Otto’s term, called it “numinousness”⁴ – which is characteristic of myth: for Lewis this failure was epitomized by the fact that the sisters could *see* the palace of the god. From his first reading of the story, he thought that could not have been the way it was.

So, he tried to retell the story the way it should have been told. In his youth he tried to write “a poem on my own version of the Cupid and Psyche story in which Psyche’s sister would not be jealous, but unable to see anything but moors when Psyche showed her the Palace.”⁵ Fragments of two such attempts in couplets remain.⁶ In 1922,

² Boccaccio, *The Book of Theseus*, trans. Bernadette M. McCoy (New York: Medieval Text Association, 1974), p. 201; William Warburton, *The Divine Legation of Moses Demonstrated* (1738; rpt. London: Thomas Tegg and Son, 1837), I, 324 (original in italics); Robert Graves, “Introduction,” *The Golden Ass* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1951), p. xix.

³ For Lewis’s ideas on myth, see pages 122–26 and 137–39. Also Peter Macky, “Myth as the Way We Can Taste Reality: An Analysis of C. S. Lewis’s Theory,” *The Lamp-Post of the Southern California C. S. Lewis Society*, 6 (July 1982), 1–7; Dean Loganbill, “Myth, Reality, and *Till We Have Faces*,” *Man’s ‘Natural Powers’: Essays for and about C. S. Lewis*, ed. Raymond P. Tripp, Jr. (n.p.: The Society for New Language Study, 1975), pp. 55–58. Also, Don D. Elgin, “True and False Myth in C. S. Lewis’ *Till We Have Faces*,” *South Central Bulletin*, 41 (1981), 98–101.

⁴ Otto, *The Idea of the Holy: An Inquiry into the Non-rational Factor in the Idea of the Divine and its Relation to the Rational*, trans. John W. Harvey (1920; London: Oxford University Press, 1923). Lewis summarized Otto’s points in the first chapter of *The Problem of Pain* (London: Geoffrey Bles – Centenary Press, 1940), and more briefly in his reply to H. H. Price’s paper “Is Theism Important?,” *Socratic Digest*, No. 5 (1952), 49–50 (reprinted in *God in the Dock: Essays on Theology and Ethics*, ed. Walter Hooper [Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1970], pp. 174–75; in Britain, *Undeceptions: Essays on Theology and Ethics*, ed. Walter Hooper [London: Geoffrey Bles, 1971], pp. 140–41).

⁵ From Lewis’s diary entry for 9 September 1923, included in volume VIII, page 150, of the unpublished *Memoirs of the Lewis Family, 1850–1930*, compiled and typed from original documents by Warren Lewis, now in the Wade Collection, Wheaton College, Wheaton, Illinois. Used by permission of C. S. Lewis PTE Limited and the Wade Collection.

⁶ *Memoirs of the Lewis Family*, VIII, 163–64.

according to his diary, he was considering how to make a masque or a play of the story.⁷ Not until three decades later, however, was he able to rewrite the story, and then not as a poem but as *A Myth Retold*, as his subtitle puts it. In a paragraph prefaced to the first British edition, Lewis accounted for it this way: **“This re-interpretation of an old story has lived in the author’s mind, thickening and hardening with the years, ever since he was an undergraduate. That way, he could be said to have worked at it most of his life. Recently, what seemed to be the right form presented itself and themes suddenly interlocked.”**⁸

What interlocked for Lewis was a profound picture of the central elements of Christianity, presented not in the apologist’s form of his early works, enabling readers to “see,” or understand, truths through the reason, **but in mythical form, giving a “taste” of Reality through the imagination.** This represents a significant change in Lewis’s attitude toward and ideas about myth, which will be discussed in the final five chapters of this book: **Lewis, who in his thirties put his fullest trust in reason, came in his fifties to regard myth as one of the best means available for embodying and conveying the Truth.**

2

Other difficulties which readers encounter in *Till We Have Faces* involve the style. A few readers are put off by the sentence structures and word choice. These are, indeed, less simple and direct than those of the Narnian Chronicles or even the Ransom trilogy. The extent to which they are, however, is largely part of the total fiction Lewis is creating. **We are to imagine not Lewis writing this in the twentieth century, but the character Orual writing it more than 2,200 years ago. And we are to imagine she is writing it in Greek, which is a second language for her, and a language for conducting business and legal matters, thus more formal and less flowing for her than if she were writing in her native language.** To give some sense that one is reading an ancient document, in Greek, Lewis slips into a slightly stiff, artificial tone. It may at first require a bit of extra attentiveness in reading, but it is clear and direct and soon should give no difficulty.

Potentially a larger barrier, initially, is the use of an **“unreliable narrator.”** The story is told, or narrated, in the first person by the person to whom it happened. This is a major change from the ancient myth Lewis is retelling. In Apuleius’s version the story was told by a third-person storyteller, an objective reporter who simply described things the way they occurred. **In a brilliant move, Lewis has one of the participants relate the story, which gives a more intimate view of the events. Orual aims to be wholly**

⁷ Lewis, diary entry for 23 November 1922, in *Memoirs of the Lewis Family*, VII, 281.

⁸ Lewis, *Till We Have Faces: A Myth Retold* (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1956), p. [1].

truthful in her account, but it is very important to realize that she fails to understand a good many things about herself and those around her. She will report honestly, reliably, what happens to her; but her interpretation of the meaning of what happens, and her knowledge and understanding of what is happening to other characters, cannot fully be relied on. We are, therefore, required to read critically, to observe to ourselves “She’s rationalizing” or “That may be the way it seems to her, but ...” – as we do when listening to an acquaintance complain of how badly he or she has been treated. **Of course, all the mistakes and self-deceptions are made clear in the end – that in one sense and at one level is the purpose of the book, and part of its greatness: it is the story of a character coming to know herself, to understand how she has treated those around her, and to take the steps needed to put herself right with her god.** For the alert and careful reader, however, the revelations at the end are no surprise: he or she has already seen in Orual what she will come to see for herself.

A final difficulty involves the book’s references to names and ideas which may be unfamiliar – Iphigenia, Antigone, or Stoicism, for example. Their unfamiliarity is to a great extent the result of narrowness, or perhaps shallowness, in modern education; in using such references, Lewis was not attempting to make the book difficult or obscure. For a person with even a much less rigorous education than Lewis had in the classics, literature, and philosophy, the references are generally familiar. Often the meaning of such allusions will be clarified in the text of this study, as part of the explanation of the background or meaning of the section at hand. Other times I will identify them in the notes to avoid interrupting the flow of the text or turning the study into a handbook of entries pertaining to the story.

In sum, one must expect that *Till We Have Faces* will make slightly heavier demands than Lewis’s earlier stories. It requires more alertness, more involvement in the narrative process, more willingness to become informed so that material will be meaningful. It requires, then, an adult level of reading (which, it must be added, some people reach at a very early age, and others never reach), but it will yield, therefore, adult-level understandings of Lewis, of life, and of oneself.⁵

⁵ Peter J. Schakel, [*Reason and Imagination in C. S. Lewis: A Study of Till We Have Faces*](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1984), 1–8.

GANZ NOTES - THE FABER SESSIONS, SERIES 7, PART II MONDAY, 7 MARCH 2022

Series 7 – *Portrait of a Literary Artist* – C.S. Lewis

Location: in the homes of the auditors via ZOOM

Presider: Mary Edmonds

Speaker: Rick Ganz

Date: Monday, 7 March 2022, 6 PM to 7:30 PM

Text: *Till We Have Faces: A Myth Retold* (1956)¹

QUOTES

Walter Hooper offers this quote of C.S. Lewis in a letter Lewis wrote, in reply, to Anne Scott on 26 August 1960 – “You gave me much pleasure by what you said about *Till We Have Faces*, for that book, which I consider far and away the best I have written, has been my one big failure both with the critics and with the public.”

What Lewis wrote in the first English edition of TWHF – “This re-interpretation of an old story has lived in the author’s mind, thickening and hardening with the years, ever

¹ *Wikipedia* - *Till We Have Faces: A Myth Retold* is a 1956 novel by C. S. Lewis. It is a retelling of Cupid and Psyche, based on its telling in a chapter of *The Golden Ass* of Apuleius. This story had haunted Lewis all his life because he realized that some of the main characters' actions were illogical. As a consequence, his retelling of the story is characterized by a highly developed character, the narrator, with the reader being drawn into her reasoning and her emotions. This was his last novel, and he considered it his most mature, written in conjunction with his wife, Joy Davidman.”

since he was an undergraduate. That way, he could be said to have worked at it most of his life.”²

“The human loves can be glorious images of Divine love. No less than that: but also, no more – **proximities of likeness** which in one instance may help, and in another may hinder, **proximity of approach**. Sometimes perhaps they have not very much to do with it either way.” [Lewis, C. S. *The Four Loves* (1960; originally radio addresses) (pp. 11-12). HarperCollins. Kindle Edition.]

Psyche speaking to Orual, Chapter 7 – ‘This,’ she said, ‘I have always – at least, ever since I can remember – had a kind of longing for death.’ ‘Ah, Psyche,’ I said, ‘have I made you so little happy as that?’ ‘No, no, no,’ she said. ‘You don’t understand. Not *that* kind of longing. It was when I was happiest that I longed most. It was on happy days when we were up there on the hills, the three of us, with the wind and the sunshine . . . where you couldn’t see Glome³ or the palace. Do you remember? The colour and the smell, and looking across at the Grey Mountain in the distance? 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 of its kind are flying home.’ [Lewis, C. S. *Till We Have Faces: A Myth Retold* (1956). HarperCollins. Kindle Edition.]

Psyche speaking to Orual, Chapter 7 - But they chose me. And I am the one who has been made ready for it ever since I was a little child in your arms, Maia⁴ [Orual]. The sweetest thing in all my life has been the longing – to reach the Mountain, to find the place where all the beauty came from – ‘... – my country, the place where I ought to have been born. Do you think it all meant nothing, all the longing? The longing for home? For indeed it now feels not like going, but like going back. All my life the god of the Mountain has been wooing me. Oh, look up once at least before the end and wish me joy. I am going to my lover. Do you not see now –?’ [Lewis, C. S. *Till We Have Faces: A Myth Retold* (1956). HarperCollins. Kindle Edition.]

² See Walter Hooper’s wonderful work *C.S. Lewis: Companion and Guide* (1996), and especially his chapter on *Till We Have Faces* (TWHF) starting on page 243.

³ The *Oxford English Dictionary* at the noun, attested around 1000 CE, “**gloaming**” – “Evening twilight.”

⁴ Alan H. Griffiths in the *Oxford Classical Dictionary* at “**Maia**” – “Maia (1) (Μαῖα or Μαῖας), daughter of Atlas, and one of the Pleiades (Od. 14. 435; Hes. fr. 217. 2 M-W Simonides fr. 555 Page, PMG; see Pleiad); her name means simply ‘mother’ or ‘nurse’, and she may once have been a goddess of the Kourotrophos type; but apart from conceiving Hermes/Mercury with Zeus and bringing him to birth in a cave on Mt. Cyllene in Arcadia (*Homeric Hymn to Hermes*), she retains little independent identity.”

Gerard Manley Hopkins, SJ (born at Stratford, Essex on 28 July 1844, the eldest of nine children; died in Dublin, Ireland, 8 June 1889) from his “The Blessed Virgin Compared to the Air We Breathe” (1882) –

Mary Immaculate,
Merely a woman, yet
Whose presence, power is
Great as no goddess’s
Was deemèd, dreamèd; who
This one work has to do -
Let all God’s glory through,
God’s glory which would go
Through her and from her flow
Off, and no way but so.⁵

“If I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world.” [C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, bk 3, ch. 10.]

PUCCINI’S TURANDOT, ACT III

Giacomo Puccini (born 22 December 1858; died 29 November 1924). *Wikipedia* notes: “His most renowned works are *La bohème* (1896), *Tosca* (1900), *Madama Butterfly* (1904), and *Turandot* (1924), all of which are among the most frequently performed and recorded of all operas.”

This opera in three Acts was Puccini’s last and left uncompleted by his death, but then completed by Franco Alfano in 1926. The opera was then performed for the first time in the Teatro alla Scala in Milan on 25 April 1926. *Wikipedia* notes: “Though Puccini first became interested in the subject matter when reading Friedrich Schiller’s 1801

⁵ See: <https://hopkinspoetry.com/study-guides/individual-poems/study-guide-the-blessed-virgin/> - “This poem was written in Stonyhurst in May 1883, where Hopkins had returned to teach Greek and Latin to the Jesuits preparing for exams at the University of London. The poem originally was intended to be hung near the statue of the Virgin Mary along with other poems in other “tongues” or languages, in celebration of May Day, a feast dedicated to the Virgin Mary. Hopkins wrote his poem in English in the same meter as “Blue in the mists all day” – iambic trimeter couplets – written by his friend Canon Richard Watson Dixon. Instead of couplets, Hopkins, however, sometimes uses triplets. In this poem Hopkins contends that just as the atmosphere sustains our physical life and tempers the power of the sun’s radiation, so Mary sustains our spiritual life and mediates our relationship to God.”

adaptation, he based his work more closely on the earlier play *Turandot* (1762) by Count Carlo Gozzi. **The original story is one of the seven stories in the epic *Haft Peykar* – a work by twelfth-century Persian poet Nizami (c. 1141-1209).** Nizami aligned his seven stories with the seven days of the week, the seven colors, and the seven planets known in his era. This particular narrative is the story of Tuesday, as told to the king of Iran, Bahram V (r. 420–438), by his companion of the red dome, associated with Mars. **In the first line of the story, the protagonist is identified as a Russian princess.** The name of the opera is based on Turan-Dokht (daughter of Turan), which is a name frequently used in Persian poetry for Central Asian princesses.”

Performances: Zubin Mehta, *Puccini: Turandot*, Orquestra de la Comunitat Valenciana: Andrea Bocelli sings “Nessun Dorma”. Also see: Charles K. Davis, *Puccini’s Turandot*, Stadium Symphony of New York, Wilfred Pelletier sings “Nessun Dorma”; Zubin Mehta, *Puccini: Turandot* with Dame Joan Sutherland, Luciano Pavarotti, London Philharmonic Orchestra (1973), Disc 2, Track #6, “Nessun Dorma”.

THE UNKNOWN PRINCE

No one must sleep!
 No one must sleep...
 You, too, o Princess,
 in your cold room
 look at the stars, that tremble
 with love and with hope!
 But my mystery is shut within me;
 no one will know my name!

No, I will say it on your mouth
 when the daylight shines!
 And my kiss will break the silence
 that makes you mine!

IL PRINCIPE IGNOTO

Nessun dorma!
 Nessun dorma...
 Tu pure, o Principessa,
 nella tua fredda stanza
 guardi le stelle che tremano
 d’amore e di speranza!
 Ma il mio mistero è chiuso in me,
 il nome mio nessun saprà!

No, no, sulla tua bocca lo dirò
 quando la luce splenderà!
 Ed il mio bacio scioglierà il silenzio
 che ti fa mia!

WHY WRITE THIS NOVEL?

THE INCONSOLABLE LONGING

The *Oxford English Dictionary* at the German noun *sehnsucht* [ZANE – zookt] –
 “Yearning; wistful longing.”

“As dark subjectivism was a pitfall, illumined subjectivism – he often called it romanticism – **could awaken the desire for truth. Lewis would often refer to this desire as joy.** Just as hunger says, “I want food” and thirst says, “I want water,” so informed joy pleads within a man saying, “I want God.” **Theology for C.S. Lewis was more than rational activity; it was *the very burning of the soul not merely to define and explain God but to know Him, to enjoy Him, and yet to remain constantly in awe of Him.*** He comments, “This hunger is better than any other fullness; this poverty better than all other wealth.” **Lewis not only sought to explain Christianity to others, but he also sought to practice it himself.** At the heart of this practice was his own personal devotion to God.”⁶

“In speaking of **this desire for our own far-off country**, which we find in ourselves even now, I feel a certain shyness. I am almost committing an indecency. **I am trying to rip open the inconsolable secret in each one of you – the secret which hurts so much that you take your revenge on it by calling it names like Nostalgia and Romanticism and Adolescence.... Our commonest expedient is to call it beauty and behave as if that had settled the matter.** Wordsworth's expedient was to identify it with certain moments in his own past. But all this is a cheat. If Wordsworth had gone back to those moments in the past, he would not have found the thing itself, but only the reminder of it; what he remembered would turn out to be itself a remembering. **The books or the music in which we thought the beauty was located will betray us if we trust to them; it was not in them, it only came through them, and what came through them was *longing.*** These things – the beauty, the memory of our own past – are good images of what we really desire; but if they are mistaken for the thing itself, they turn into dumb idols, breaking the hearts of their worshippers. **For they are not the thing itself; they are only the scent of a flower we have not found, the echo of a tune we have not heard, news from a country we have never yet visited....** The sense that in this universe we are treated as strangers, the longing to be acknowledged, to meet with some response, to bridge some chasm that yawns between us and reality, is part of *our inconsolable secret....* Our lifelong nostalgia, our longing to be reunited with something in the universe from which we now feel cut off, to be on the inside of some door which we have always seen from the outside, is no mere neurotic fancy, but the truest index of our real situation.”
[C.S. Lewis from *Transposition and Other Addresses*, ch. 2.]

⁶ Jerry Root, “[Following That Bright Blur](#),” *Christian History Magazine-Issue 7: C.S. Lewis: His Life, Thought & Theology* (Worcester, PA: Christian History Institute, 1985).

“INTRODUCTION”, THE FOUR LOVES (1960)

STORGĒ – Affection; empathy; fellow-feeling; duty; love of siblings for each other, for parents, and parents for their children

PHILÍA – Friendship secured in mutual love of a third thing – “You love that too?!”

ERŌS – “Being in love”; preciousness found not in the third thing but in the other

AGÁPĒ – God’s way of loving; distinctly of/from/because of God; **charity**; one of the Theological Virtues; loving others because God loves them ... period

Wikipedia – “*The Four Loves* is a 1960 book by C. S. Lewis which explores the nature of love from a Christian and philosophical perspective through thought experiments. The book was based on a set of radio talks from 1958 which had been criticised in the U.S. at the time for their frankness about sex.”

“And much of what I was going to say still seems to me to be true. **I still think that if all we mean by our love is a craving to be loved, we are in a very deplorable state.** But I would not now say (with my master, MacDonald) that if we mean only this craving, we are mistaking for love something that is not love at all. [Lewis, C. S. *The Four Loves* (1960; originally radio addresses) (p. 2). HarperCollins. Kindle Edition.]

“The human loves can be glorious images of Divine love. No less than that: but also, no more – **proximities of likeness** which in one instance may help, and in another may hinder, **proximity of approach.** Sometimes perhaps they have not very much to do with it either way.” [Lewis, C. S. *The Four Loves* (1960; originally radio addresses) (pp. 11-12). HarperCollins. Kindle Edition.]

“But when the *craving*⁷ went, nearly all that I called myself went with it. It was as if my whole soul had been one tooth and now that tooth was drawn. I was a gap. And now I thought I had come to the very bottom and that the gods could tell me no worse.” [Lewis, C. S. *Till We Have Faces: A Myth Retold*. At the end of Part II, Chapter 1. HarperCollins. Kindle Edition.]

⁷ The *Oxford English Dictionary* at “**to crave**” – “**5. transferred.** Of persons (their appetites, etc.): To long or yearn for, to desire earnestly; to call for or demand, in order to gratify a desire or appetite; to have a craving for.”

NEED-LOVE

“But thirdly, we come to something far more important. Every Christian would agree that a man’s spiritual health is exactly proportional to his love for God. **But man’s love for God, from the very nature of the case, must always be very largely, and must often be entirely, a Need-love.** This is obvious when we implore forgiveness for our sins or support in our tribulations. **But in the long run it is perhaps even more apparent in our growing – for it ought to be growing – awareness that our whole being by its very nature is one vast need; incomplete, preparatory, empty yet cluttered, crying out for Him who can untie things that are now knotted together and tie up things that are still dangling loose.** I do not say that man can never bring to God anything at all but sheer Need-love.” [Lewis, C. S. *The Four Loves* (1960; originally radio addresses) (pp. 3-4). HarperCollins. Kindle Edition.]

“Thus, one Need-love, the greatest of all, either coincides with or at least makes a main ingredient in man’s highest, healthiest, and most realistic spiritual condition. A very strange corollary follows. *Man approaches God most nearly when he is in one sense least like God.* For what can be more unlike than fullness and need, sovereignty and humility, righteousness and penitence, limitless power and a cry for help? This paradox staggered me when I first ran into it; it also wrecked all my previous attempts to write about love.” [Lewis, C. S. *The Four Loves* (1960; originally radio addresses) (pp. 4-5). HarperCollins. Kindle Edition.]

“And this of course is what we ought to expect. **Our loves do not make their claim to divinity until the claim becomes plausible. It does not become plausible until there is in them a real resemblance to God, to Love Himself.** Let us here make no mistake. Our Gift-loves are really God-like; and among our Gift-loves those are most God-like which are most boundless and unwearied in giving. All the things the poets say about them are true. Their joy, their energy, their patience, their readiness to forgive, their desire for the good of the beloved – all this is a real and all but adorable image of the Divine life. In its presence we are right to thank God ‘who has given such power to men’. We may say, quite truly and in an intelligible sense, that those who love greatly are ‘near’ to God. **But of course, it is ‘nearness by likeness’. It will not of itself produce ‘nearness of approach’.** The likeness has been given us. It has no necessary connection with that slow and painful approach which must be our own (though by no means our unaided) task. Meanwhile, however, the likeness is a splendour. **That is why we may mistake Like for Same. We may give our human loves the unconditional allegiance which we owe only to God. Then they become gods: then they become demons. Then they will**

destroy us, and also destroy themselves. For natural loves that are allowed to become gods do not remain loves. They are still called so but can become in fact complicated forms of hatred." [Lewis, C. S. *The Four Loves* (1960; originally radio addresses) (pp. 9-10). HarperCollins. Kindle Edition.]

APULEIUS DID NOT UNDERSTAND THE MYTH

Orual speaking in Chapter 21 - "That moment I resolved to write this book. For years now my old quarrel with the gods had slept. I had come into Bardia's way of thinking; I no longer meddled with them. Often, though I had seen a god myself, I was near to believing that there are no such things. The memory of his voice and face was kept in one of those rooms of my soul that I didn't lightly unlock. Now, instantly, I knew I was facing them – I with no strength and they with all; I visible to them, they invisible to me; I easily wounded (already so wounded that all my life had been but a hiding and staunching of the wound), they invulnerable; I one, they many. In all these years they had only let me run away from them as far as the cat lets the mouse run. Now, snatch! and the claw on me again. Well, I could speak. I could set down the truth. What had never perhaps been done in the world before should be done now. The case against them should be written." [Lewis, C. S. *The Four Loves* (1960; originally radio addresses), Chapter 21. HarperCollins. Kindle Edition.]

ON UNGIT (THE FALSE SELF)

The demon within. The *Oxford English Dictionary* at "**demon**" – "**Etymology:** < ancient Greek *δαίμων* god, goddess, divine power, deity, destiny, fate, good or evil genius of a family or person, in Hellenistic Greek also spiritual or semi-divine being, evil spirit < *δαίεσθαι* to divide (see [geodetic n.](#)) + *-μων*, suffix forming nouns."

March 11th, in just four days from now, the COVID Mask Mandate will end in Oregon and Washington. Have you pondered what our nation, or region, our city has been like or felt like during the two years of mask-wearing? Without question, the masks (the right kind) had a significant ability to protect us, and to protect others, from the *unseen* COVID virus. We could be harmed (now six million human beings on Earth were mortally harmed) by something unseen. Yet, have you considered the harm that is caused to us when are false selves more than real selves? False selves make demands on us, sometimes terrible demands on us, such that we cause harm to others and we are *unseen* to ourselves doing it.

She is the goddess of Gloam associated/identified with an ugly stone set in her Temple.

But what finally she represents in *Till We Have Faces* is the “hardened” human heart – the “heart” of the countless false selves and their ways of doing relationships. But without divine grace, without some “showing” or “epiphany” (e.g., an experience of Beauty, or, far more painfully, an experience of oneself as “false”, a “murderer”, a “manipulator”, a “demon”), the false self is not aware of who he or she is.

That is why in the novel, Orual is **both** Ungit (the false self) and Psyche (the real self).

And remember how false selves create and defend false religions and false gods.

“Lightly men talk of saying what they mean. Often when he was teaching me to write in Greek **the Fox would say, ‘Child, to say the very thing you really mean, the whole of it, nothing more or less or other than what you really mean; that’s the whole art and joy of words.’** A glib saying. When the time comes to you at which you will be forced at last to utter the speech which has lain at the centre of your soul for years, which you have, all that time, idiot-like, been saying over and over, you’ll not talk about joy of words. **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?” [Lewis, C. S. *Till We Have Faces: A Myth Retold* (1956) From Part II, Chapter 4. HarperCollins. Kindle Edition.]

Ezekiel 36 (NJB) -

²¹ But I have been concerned about my holy name, which the House of Israel has profaned among the nations where they have gone. ²² And so, say to the House of Israel, “The Lord Yahweh says this: I am acting not for your sake, House of Israel, but for the sake of my holy name, which you have profaned among the nations where you have gone. ²³ I am going to display the holiness of my great name, which has been profaned among the nations, which you have profaned among them. And the nations will know that I am Yahweh—declares the Lord Yahweh—when in you I display my holiness before their eyes.* ²⁴ For I shall take you from among the nations and gather you back from all the countries, and bring you home to your own country. ²⁵ I shall pour clean water over you and you will be cleansed; I shall cleanse you of all your filth and of all your foul idols.* ²⁶ I shall give you a new heart, and put a new spirit in you; I shall remove

* 16:60–63; Ps 115:1; Is 48:11; Mt 6:9

* Jn 3:5; 4:1a

the heart of stone from your bodies and give you a heart of flesh instead.* ²⁷I shall put my spirit in you, and make you keep my laws, and respect and practise my judgements.^f ²⁸You will live in the country which I gave your ancestors. You will be my people and I shall be your God.* ²⁹I shall save you from everything that defiles you, I shall summon the wheat and make it plentiful and impose no more famines on you. ³⁰I shall increase the yield of tree and field, so that you will never again bear the ignominy of famine among the nations. ³¹Then you will remember your evil conduct and actions. You will loathe yourselves for your guilt and your loathsome practices.* ³²I assure you that I am not doing this for your sake—declares the Lord Yahweh. Be ashamed and blush for your conduct, House of Israel. ⁸

Psalm 51 (NJB) –

¹ Have mercy on me, O God, in your faithful love,
in your great tenderness **wipe** away my offences;*
² **wash** me clean from my guilt,
purify me from my sin.

³ For I am well aware of my offences,
my sin is constantly in mind.*
⁴ Against you, you alone, I have sinned,
I have done what you see to be wrong,

that you may show your saving justice when you pass sentence,
and your victory may appear when you give judgement,^{b*}
⁵ remember, I was born guilty,

* 11:19f; Jr 4:4a

* Jr 31:31f; Ga 5:22–25; 1 Jn 3:23–24

* 16:61–63

⁸ [The New Jerusalem Bible](#) (New York; London; Toronto; Sydney; Auckland: Doubleday, 1990), Eze 36:21–32.

* Ezk 18:23+

* Is 59:12; Ezk 6:9

* Is 59:12  Rm 3:4

a sinner from the moment of conception.^{c*}

⁶ But you delight in sincerity of heart,
and in secret you teach me wisdom.^d

⁷ **Purify** me with hyssop^e till I am clean,
wash me till I am whiter than snow.*

⁸ Let me hear the sound of joy and gladness,
and the bones you have crushed will dance.*

⁹ **Turn away** your face from my sins,
and **wipe away** all my guilt.*

¹⁰ God, create^f in me a clean heart,
renew within me a resolute spirit,*

¹¹ do not thrust me away from your presence,
do not take away from me your spirit of holiness.^{g*}

¹² Give me back the joy of your salvation,
sustain in me a generous spirit.

¹³ I shall teach the wicked your paths,
and sinners will return to you. ⁹

ON DEATH: DIE BEFORE YOU DIE

Till We Have Faces, Part II, Chapter 2 – ‘Do not do it,’ said the god. ‘You cannot escape Ungit by going to the deadlands, for she is there also. **Die before you die.** There is no chance after.’

* Jb 14:4c

* Ex 12:22j; Jb 9:30; Is 1:18; Ezk 36:25; Heb 9:13–14

* 6:2; 35:10

* Is 43:25; 44:22

* Ezk 11:19f; Ep 4:23–24, 24k

* Ws 1:5; 9:17; Is 57:15seq. Rm 8:9, 14–16

⁹ [*The New Jerusalem Bible*](#) (New York; London; Toronto; Sydney; Auckland: Doubleday, 1990), Ps 51:1–13.

The death of Ungit in each of us is a death that we are not able to accomplish on our own – a kind of suicide, by which we kill our false self. The false self is too powerful. And so, God sends us divine help.

Till We Have Faces, Part I, Chapter 7 – “‘I see,’ said Psyche in a low voice. ‘You think it devours the offering. I mostly think so myself. **Anyway, it means death. Orual, you didn’t think I was such a child as not to know that? How can I be the ransom for all Glome unless I die? And if I am to go to the god, of course it must be through death. That way, even what is strangest in the holy sayings might be true.** To be eaten and to be married to the god might not be so different. *We don’t understand.* There must be so much that neither the Priest nor the Fox knows.’ This time I bit my lip and said nothing. Unspeakable foulness seethed in my mind; did she think the Brute’s lust better than its hunger? To be mated with a worm, or a giant eft, or a spectre? ‘And as for death,’ she said, ‘why, Bardia there (I love Bardia) will look on it six times a day and whistle a tune as he goes to find it. We have made little use of the Fox’s teaching if we’re to be scared by death. **And you know, sister, he has sometimes let out that there were other Greek masters than those he follows himself; masters who have taught that death opens a door out of a little, dark room (that’s all the life we have known before it) into a great, real place where the true sun shines and we shall meet –**’ ‘Oh, cruel, cruel!’ I wailed. ‘Is it nothing to you that you leave me here alone? Psyche, did you ever love me at all?’”

Till We Have Faces, Part I, Chapter 7 – “‘This,’ she said, ‘I have always – at least, ever since I can remember – **had a kind of longing for death.**’ ‘Ah, Psyche,’ I said, ‘have I made you so little happy as that?’ ‘**No, no, no,**’ she said. ‘**You don’t understand. Not that kind of longing. It was when I was happiest that I longed most.** It was on happy days when we were up there on the hills, the three of us, with the wind and the sunshine . . . where you couldn’t see Glome or the palace. Do you remember? The colour and the smell, and looking across at the Grey Mountain in the distance? **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 of its kind are flying home.**’ She kissed both my hands, flung them free, and stood up. She had her father’s trick of walking to and fro when she talked of something that moved her. And from now till the end I felt (and this horribly) that **I was losing her already,** that the sacrifice tomorrow would only finish something that had already begun. She was (how long had she been, and I not to know?) out of my reach, in some place of her own. Since I write this book against the gods, it is just that I should put into it whatever can be said against myself. So let me set this down: as she spoke, I felt, amid all my love, a bitterness.”

ON TIME

One of the clearest signs that “the world is too much with us” (Wordsworth) is that we begin to notice Time, that it presses us, binds us.

It is considered an insight of exceptional importance how the “imaging” of Time changed with the Hebrews/Jews. In classical culture, Time circles. In biblical culture, Time moves forward in a straight line.

But the real insight that finally we need is that **Time runs in both directions**, forward and backward. This happens without us noticing it, usually.

ON TWO WORLDS INTERWOVEN

Read from *Till We Have Faces*, Part I, Chapter 7.

Matthew 6 (NJB) –

⁸ Do not be like them; your Father knows what you need before you ask him. ⁹ So you should pray like this:^d

Our Father in heaven,
may your name be held holy,*

¹⁰ your kingdom come,
your will be done,

on earth as in heaven.*

¹¹ Give us today our daily^e bread.*

¹² And forgive us our debts,

* Rm 8:26–27, 27m; Ilk 11:2–4; Ezk 36:23; Jn 17:6, 26

* 26:39, 42par.; Dn 4:32

* Pr 30:8–9; Jn 6:32, 35

as we have forgiven those who are in debt to us.*
13 And do not put us to the test,
but save us from the Evil One.¹⁰

Plato, *Republic*, Book VII – on the allegory of the cave. Notice in this allegory how the false world is *nested* inside of the real world. Lewis in *The Great Divorce* will speak of the false world as a kind of existence so insubstantial that to the real world it is as smoke or diaphanous cloud. And in another place in that book, he describes it as a “world” so vastly tiny such that a “vast canyon” in the false world is in fact in the real world the tiniest slit on the surface of the earth.

OVERVIEW – PETER SCHAKEL (1984)

This book examines the place of reason and imagination in the thought of C. S. Lewis and shows that a shift, not in basic positions or theory but certainly in emphasis and practice, occurs, not at the time of his conversion but in the late 1940s or early 1950s. Prior to that – in *Mere Christianity* and the Ransom trilogy, for example – Lewis relied heavily upon, or put his ultimate trust in, reason (the capacity for analysis, abstraction, logical deductions), with imagination (the image-making, fictionalizing, integrative power) playing a valued but limited supporting role.² **After that, Lewis’s confidence in**

* 18:21–35; Ep 4:32

* 26:41par.; Jn 17:11, 15; 2 Th 3:2

¹⁰ [The New Jerusalem Bible](#) (New York; London; Toronto; Sydney; Auckland: Doubleday, 1990), Mt 6:8–13.

² Lewis nowhere defines **imagination** explicitly, and he uses the term in a number of ways: as the image-making power (“imagine two books lying on a table”), the creative or inventive power (“fired the imagination of the *hrossa*”), the power to make up things (“of course one can imagine things”), the power to create fiction (“solely an imaginative supposal”), the mysteriousness and adventurousness of romance (“almost everything the imagination craves – irony, heroism, vastness, unity in multiplicity, and a tragic close”), and “‘Imagination’ in some high Coleridgean sense.”

The essential concept, however, is that expressed by **Tolkien in “On Fairy-Stories”**: “The human mind is capable of forming mental images of things not actually present. The faculty of conceiving the images is ... called Imagination” (*Essays Presented to Charles Williams* [London: Oxford University Press, 1947], p. 66). **That emphasizes imagination’s involvement with the concrete in contrast with reason’s concern with abstractions; with fiction rather than fact; with making up, “creating,” rather than**

imaginative methods increases, and imagination becomes the more striking feature of his work from 1950 on – in the *Chronicles of Narnia*, for example. My purpose is to chart the changes briefly, account for them as fully as possible, and show that in some of his later works, such as *Till We Have Faces* and *Letters to Malcolm*, reason and imagination are, at last, reconciled and unified.

Till We Have Faces has a crucial place in this study. **Not only is it Lewis's finest imaginative work, but it also explores the tension between reason and the imagination as a central theme. Furthermore, *Till We Have Faces* is the culmination of efforts Lewis made in a number of works throughout his life to use similar images and imaginative structures to resolve that tension. One cannot fully understand or appreciate Lewis's thought and work as a whole without a sound understanding of *Till We Have Faces*.** But *Till We Have Faces* is also the most difficult of Lewis's works, one which constantly gives the sense that "something more is going on here than I am comprehending fully." Many readers who enjoy Lewis's other apologetic and fictional works are perplexed and discouraged by *Till We Have Faces*. Because of these difficulties, many readers are denied access to the motif which is the most helpful in pulling together the diverse threads of Lewis's thought and work.¹¹

MYTH

Even one consummate value may redeem an otherwise poor writer. Lewis joyfully spoke of George MacDonald as his literary "master" despite a whole array of faults he found in him. One such fault was the quite common one of unnecessary sermonizing. What Lewis found valuable in MacDonald was "fantasy – fantasy that hovers between the allegorical and the mythopoeic." **Lewis believed that ultimate meanings tend to**

observing; with integration rather than analysis and identification. In a recent article Owen Barfield gives as imagination's concerns "resemblance" rather than a logical nexus, "metamorphosis" rather than sequence and aggregation, "interpenetration" rather than a fixed shape or pattern. The resemblance of these qualities to the "mishmash" of modern relativism and philosophical subjectivism, Barfield believes, accounts for some of Lewis's reluctance to commit himself to a theory of imagination. **Barfield sees a bifurcation between Lewis the logician and Lewis the imaginative writer similar to what I describe but explains Lewis's attitude toward imagination not as distrust but as a "desire to protect ... and insulate imagination, so that it could continue to live its own pure and chaste life" ("Lewis, Truth and Imagination," *Kodon* [Wheaton College], Winter 1978, pp. 17-26).**

¹¹ Peter J. Schakel, [*Reason and Imagination in C. S. Lewis: A Study of Till We Have Faces*](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1984), ix-x.

fall into metaphor, allegory, and myth, types in which a Christian writer should feel he is on “home ground.” Lewis calls myth at its best “a real though unfocused gleam of divine truth falling on human imagination.” He had such an ideal in view in all his creative works, particularly in what he considered his best story, *Till We Have Faces*. Myth, he says, “deals with the permanent and inevitable.”¹²

Robert Johnson, *She* (2009) -

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Myths are rich sources of psychological insight. Great literature, like all great art, records and portrays the human condition with indelible accuracy. **Myths are a special kind of literature not written or created by a single individual but produced by the imagination and experience of an entire age and culture and can be seen as the distillation of the dreams and experiences of a whole culture.** They seem to develop gradually as certain motifs emerge, are elaborated, and finally are rounded out as people tell and retell stories that catch and hold their interest. Thus, themes that are accurate and universal are kept alive, while those elements peculiar to single individuals or a particular era drop away. **Myths, therefore, portray a collective image; they tell us about things that are true for all people.** This belies our current rationalistic definition of myth as something untrue or imaginary. “Why, that is only a myth; its not true at all,” we hear. **The details of the story may be unverifiable or even fantastic, but actually a myth is profoundly and universally true. A myth may be a fantasy or a product of the imagination, but it is nonetheless true and real. It depicts levels of reality that include the outer rational world as well as the less understood inner world.** [Johnson, Robert A. *She*. HarperCollins. Kindle Edition.]

First, we must learn to think mythologically. Powerful things happen when we touch the thinking which myths, fairy tales, and our own dreams bring to us. The terms and settings of the old myths are strange; they seem archaic and distant to us, but if we listen to them carefully and take them seriously, we begin to hear and to understand. Sometimes it is necessary to translate a symbolic meaning, but this is not difficult once we see how it can be done. [Johnson, Robert A. *She*. HarperCollins. Kindle Edition.]

¹² Clyde Kilby, [“Into the Land of the Imagination,”](#) *Christian History Magazine-Issue 7: C.S. Lewis: His Life, Thought & Theology* (Worcester, PA: Christian History Institute, 1985).

FOLKTALE - A WONDER TALE

From William Hansen, “**Folktale**” in the *Oxford Classical Dictionary*.

Wonder Tale

The kind of tale that is commonly known as the *fairytale* is termed *magic tale* or *wonder tale* by folk-narrative scholars, since magic and an atmosphere of wonder are characteristic of the genre, whereas fairies appear infrequently. In the familiar plot of a wonder tale, a young protagonist sets out into the world, encounters the supernatural, overcomes various obstacles, and succeeds by virtue of good qualities such as kindness or perseverance. Marvelous elements such as talking animals, magic objects, witches, and ogres are commonplace, not to mention princes, princesses, and palaces. The wonder tale is the most complex form of the folktale.

Although there are several ancient narratives of magic and wonder that may be classified as fairytales—for example, the tale of the woodcutter and the golden axe¹—**there is only one, the tale of Cupid and Psyche, that fits the classic profile of what is today thought of as that of the fairytale. The story appears in the *Metamorphoses, or The Golden Ass* (4.28–6.24), by the Roman novelist Apuleius.** The tale of Cupid and Psyche is generally agreed to be an ancient version, somewhat allegorised, of an international folktale.² In this widely known tale, **a young woman weds a supernatural bridegroom.** He forbids her to do something, usually to look upon him, but she breaks the taboo, after which he departs. She sets out to find him, coming eventually to the house of his mother, a witch (or, in Apuleius’s novel, the goddess Venus, who behaves like one). The girl’s hostile mother-in-law assigns her a series of seemingly impossible tasks, which she manages to accomplish with the help of her husband and other beings such as kindly animals. In the end the bride and bridegroom are happily reunited.

THE FOX AND STOICISM

The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy – “The Stoic world is an ideally good organism, all of whose parts interact for the benefit of the whole. It is imbued with divine reason (logos), its entire development providentially ordained by fate and repeated identically from one world phase to the next in a never-ending cycle, each phase ending with a conflagration (*ekpyrosis*).... Conventionally, a second phase of the school is distinguished as Middle Stoicism. It developed largely at Rhodes under Panaetius and Posidonius, both of whom influenced the presentation of Stoicism in Cicero’s influential philosophical treatises (mid-first century B.C.). Panaetius (c.185–c.110) softened some classical Stoic positions, his ethics being more pragmatic and less concerned with the idealized sage. Posidonius (c.135–c.50) made Stoicism more open to Platonic and Aristotelian ideas, reviving Plato’s inclusion of irrational components in the soul. A third phase, Roman Stoicism, is the only Stoic era whose writings have survived in quantity. It is represented especially by the younger Seneca (A.D. c.1–65), Epictetus (A.D. c.55–c.135), and Marcus Aurelius (A.D. 121–80). It continued the trend set by Panaetius, with a strong primary focus on practical and personal ethics. Many prominent Roman political figures were Stoics. After the second century A.D. Stoicism as a system fell from prominence, but its terminology and concepts had by then become an ineradicable part of ancient thought. Through the writings of Cicero and Seneca, its impact on the moral and political thought of the Renaissance was immense. [The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy at “Stoicism, Middle Period”. Cambridge University Press. Kindle Edition.]