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## Sacred and Profane Loves: The Renaissance Influence in C.S. Lewis' Till We Have Faces

Kevin Corr

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SACRED AND PROFANE LOVES: THE RENAISSANCE INFLUENCE IN C.S. LEWIS' *TILL WE*

*HAVE FACES*

by

KEVIN CORR

(Under the Direction of Julia Griffin)

ABSTRACT

C.S. Lewis' last novel, *Till We Have Faces: A Myth Retold*, has often been regarded as his greatest work, but just as often as his most enigmatic work. The purpose of this thesis is to unveil much of the novel's mystery by considering the impact Renaissance literature had in shaping the novel, most notably Edmund Spenser's *Faerie Queene*. Although it is well-known that Lewis was Professor of Medieval and Renaissance Literature at Cambridge, current scholarship on Lewis has overlooked the Renaissance influence in the author's work, which particularly plays a vital role in *Till We Have Faces*. By considering Lewis' own scholarly work, such as his influential essay on Spenser's *Faerie Queene* in *The Allegory of Love*, and his evaluation on *The Four Loves*, this thesis seeks to elucidate Lewis' last novel by realizing that its major ideas are embedded in Renaissance literature.

INDEX WORDS: C.S. Lewis, *Till We Have Faces*, Edmund Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, Androgyny, Sacred and Profane Love, Renaissance, *The Four Loves*

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### INTRODUCTION: APULEIUS' REGRESS

*Till We Have Faces: A Myth Retold* is a novel over thirty years in the making. Lewis first discovered the myth of Psyche and Cupid in Apuleius' *The Golden Ass, or Metamorphoses* as an undergraduate, and as early as 1923, many years before he was a literary professor or a Christian, he had already decided that he would write his own version with one major alteration: "making Psyche's palace invisible to normal, mortal eyes" (*TWHF* 313). He would make three different attempts in writing the story with this alteration, experimenting with the form each time, writing "one in couplets, another in ballad form, and the third as a masque or play" (Sayers 383). It would not be until 1954 that he would make the novel his fourth and final form for the myth retold, and even though he is largely recognized as the novelist of the *Chronicles of Narnia* and the *Space Trilogy*, *Faces* stands out as Lewis' most enigmatic novel. Peter J. Schakel's explanation for this is that "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 [Apuleius'] original." Indeed, certainly readers familiar with the origins of Cupid and Psyche will appreciate how Lewis handles the myth, but Schakel's claim that "Lewis first expects his readers to know the story," is perhaps a step too far (2). In his "Note" that follows the novel, Lewis states that Apuleius is a "source" to his work, "not an 'influence' nor a 'model'" (*TWHF* 313). As such, Lewis only alters and adds to his source: he omits no essential plot points as he covers the entirety of the original tale. Furthermore, to have expected foreknowledge of his source would only obscure his work, something he condemns in an afterword to *The Pilgrim's Regress*, finding that one of the "chief faults" to his first novel is "needless obscurity, something that he "least easily forgive[s] in the books of other men"" (231).<sup>1</sup> As such, a summary of Apuleius' original tale, followed by an overview of the alterations and additions by Lewis, would be of benefit in highlighting how *Faces* does not necessitate foreknowledge of its source.

Lucius, narrator of *The Golden Ass*, has been turned into an ass by a witch and forced to travel with a band of robbers unaware of his humanity. One night, the robbers kidnap a wealthy girl to hold for ransom and Lucius overhears the maiden lamenting to an elderly woman, who then tries to cheer the girl up by telling her the story of Cupid and Psyche.

She tells of a king and queen who have three beautiful daughters, with the youngest daughter's beauty being "so perfect that human speech was too poor to describe or even praise it satisfactorily" (Apuleius 71). The youngest daughter's beauty was so highly praised that it was compared to the goddess

of beauty herself, Venus. The goddess becomes jealous that a mortal is compared to her, so she summons her son, Cupid, to punish Psyche by having her fall in love with the most wretched creature possible. Meanwhile, Psyche is already dismayed due to her astounding beauty, for rather than attracting suitors, it actually intimidates them. Her father makes sacrifices to Apollo for Psyche's sake, only the god divines that she will be taken up a mountain peak to be offered for "funeral wedlock" (74). Although reluctant and sorrowful, Psyche's parents follow the god's will; despite being sacrificed, Psyche provides words of comfort and reassurance to her parents, as she is beautiful both inside and out. After she is left on the mountain, Zephyr, god of the west wind, escorts her outside Cupid's palace.

Rather than being sacrificed to or punished by the gods though, Psyche gets to enjoy the splendor of the palace, the only condition being that her new husband Cupid will only visit her in bed at night and she is forbidden from looking upon his face. Despite the splendors of her new life, Psyche grieves at being unable to see her family. Cupid listens to her grievances and tells her that her sisters, believing she is dead, are traveling up the mountain, so he reluctantly agrees to let Psyche see them, cautioning her on their intentions. After the sisters have seen the palace and enjoyed a feast there, the elder sisters become jealous of Psyche's husband, as their husbands are either ugly or sick. They plot to meet with their youngest sister again, this time telling her that the reason she is forbidden from seeing her husband's face is because he is hiding the fact that he is a monster with the head of a serpent. Psyche, "simple and childish creature that she was," succumbs to her sisters' treachery (78). That night, while Cupid is asleep, Psyche looks upon his face with a lamp: instead of a serpent, she finds that his face has beauty as befitting for a god. She becomes enamored with his beauty and begins to devour his face with kisses, and in her carelessness, she lets the hot oil from her lamp drip on to his shoulder. Cupid awakes in a violent rage, rebukes Psyche's disloyalty, and, despite her pleading, flies off leaving her disconsolate. Psyche then attempts to drown herself in a river, but is talked out of it by the god Pan. She surrenders herself to Venus instead, and the goddess assigns her several seemingly impossible labors. First, she must sort out a pile of mixed seeds, which she only accomplishes with the help of ants. Next, she succeeds in retrieving golden wool from a herd of man-killing sheep due to a river reed advising her to take some from a thorny bush that the sheep would brush by. Thirdly, she gathers a cup full of water from the River Styx, which could only be reached by a treacherous climb over a mountain. Instead, the mighty eagle of Jove flies over the mountain to retrieve the water for her. Psyche gives the water to Venus, who then gives her a casket and sends her to the Underworld to receive Proserpine's beauty for her final task. However, Psyche must not look in the casket after the Queen of the Underworld returns it to her. Curiosity gets the best of Psyche though, for she looks inside the casket: rather than beauty, she finds a deep, Stygian sleep. Cupid is then restored to his former self, flies to his wife to awaken her, pleads to Jupiter to make Psyche a goddess, and Psyche and Cupid are given a proper wedding ceremony among the gods. Thus the elderly woman's story comes to an end and Lucius' story resumes.

After reading this story, Lewis felt so strongly that Apuleius had done it an injustice, that he thought his alteration to make the palace invisible "forced itself upon" him, rather than it simply being an interesting change to the myth. As such, Lewis sought out to write "the way the thing must have been," just as Orual does upon hearing the story of her beloved sister that she found to be cruelly erroneous (*TWHF* 313). Therefore, Lewis could not omit anything from Apuleius that would necessitate knowing the Roman poet; to do so would not only be a fault of Lewis' but, if she heard a story similar to Apuleius', it would also be an even greater fault of Orual's, who cannot afford any oversight in

composing her complaint to the gods and she knows this: “I must try at any cost to write what is wholly true” (117).

Likewise, to ensure that there is no oversight in the argument of this paper, let us first address the additions Lewis makes to his source’s story. The novel’s subtitle, *A Myth Retold*, is our indication that the myth is being retold by Lewis’ heroine, not Apuleius’, thus Psyche is completely absent in the first chapter. Therefore, the stories that are unique to the novel are necessary additions to accommodate the narrative shift from Psyche to her sister, requiring Lewis to innovate stories for Orual when Psyche is not present. Psyche’s absences consist of three segments: before she is born, when she is left on the mountain as a sacrifice, and when she is banished from her god/husband’s palace for breaking his command (which I shall henceforth refer to as Psyche’s Fall). In the first segment, the King of Glome (Orual’s father) purchases the Fox, a Greek slave, in anticipation of educating the son and heir he hopes will be born soon, but until then the Fox is told to practice on Orual. The Fox, much like the reader, is unfamiliar with the customs of Glome, so Orual informs us of the country’s chief deity, Ungit, which the Fox recognizes as “undoubtedly Aphrodite, though more like the Babylonian than the Greek” (8). Although Psyche would be the King’s last child and his last chance to produce a male heir for Glome, the Fox remains a slave to the King but goes on to mentor Orual and Psyche affectionately, causing the girls to think of him as a “grandfather” rather than a slave (17). The next segment of Psyche’s absence introduces Bardia, captain of the guards, specifically making his lasting impact on Orual by mentoring her with fencing lessons to cope with the loss of Psyche. He would also accompany Orual up the mountain to help her determine Psyche’s fate, a journey that is the first occasion Orual dons the veil that would become her identity, ironically wearing it as a disguise to ensure nobody prevents her undertaking. The last segment essentially consists of everything following Psyche’s Fall, but shortly after Orual returns to Glome having caused this event, Arnom succeeds the old Priest (who demanded Psyche be sacrificed to Ungit) as the Priest of Ungit. This segment is the fruition of things that have their beginning in the second segment, as Orual and eventually establishing herself as “the veiled Queen,” choosing to never again go barefaced (278).

As for the alterations Lewis makes from his source, many are subtle and not worth exploring other than to appreciate how he handles Apuleius' story (such as the fact that an elderly woman is the one that tells the original story and Orual's very first words are, "I am old now") (3). Any major alterations and their impact on how Lewis corrects Apuleius will be analyzed when pertinent to this paper.

With the general outline of *Faces* and the myth it is retelling addressed, the remainder of this paper will advance another likely "source" that shaped Lewis' last novel, a recognition and understanding of which will also fulfill the contiguous purpose of filling a gap in the current scholarship of *Faces*, and even Lewis' fictional oeuvre in general. Overall, the novel has sat in the shadow of Narnia and Lewis' Christian apologetics, causing critical material on the novel to be neglected. In my own research, I have come across only two books devoted entirely to *Faces*, Schakel's *Reason and Imagination* (quoted above) and Doris T. Myers' *Bareface*. Although I would consider both books scholarly and valuable resources, they are lacking in any devoted critical material. Instead, I have turned to essays for critical material, covering topics such as: the novel's demonstration of what Lewis evaluates in *The Four Loves* (which this paper will also consider),<sup>2</sup> psycho-analytical approaches,<sup>3</sup> arguments on allegorizing the novel,<sup>4</sup> and the influence of medieval literature on the novel.<sup>5</sup> The last of these topics undoubtedly made an impact on Lewis' last novel, since he was professor of Medieval and Renaissance literature at Cambridge University, yet this also brings us to the aforementioned gap: in my research, I did not come across even a mentioning of Renaissance inspirations in the novel, nor in Lewis' works in general.

It is surprising that the impact of Renaissance literature has been overlooked in scholarship on Lewis for so long, for his own scholarship in an essay from his critical book, *The Allegory of Love* "reawoke modern interest in" Edmund Spenser's *Faerie Queene* (Alpers 106). Lewis would even extend his Spenserian scholarship decades later with *Spenser's Images of Life* (published posthumously), and he also wrote *A Preface to Paradise Lost*, excerpts of which are still printed in the most recent Norton Critical Edition to Milton's epic. Perhaps medieval literature was a greater focus of Lewis' than that of the Renaissance, yet he still alludes to *Paradise Lost*, one of the last great works from the Renaissance, in the Narnia series' *The Magician's Nephew*. Digory, the main character of the novel, is tasked by Aslan to

retrieve a fruit from a tree in a Narnian parallel to the Garden of Eden. Upon arrival, Digory finds that he has been preceded by the Witch, who must have “climbed in over the wall” and is the only one to refer to the fruit as an apple (*Narnia* 93). These characteristics of the Witch are undoubtedly an allusion to Milton’s Satan, who likewise enters the Garden of Eden by leaping over the wall and is the only character that refers to the forbidden fruit as an apple (*Paradise Lost* IX.585, X.487). The allusion is subtly woven as mere details, but it is a clear demonstration of Lewis being inspired by a Renaissance work within his own work. Milton will have similar auxiliary throughout this paper but given that Lewis wrote a great deal more on Spenser, the sage and serious poet will be far more featured in unveiling *Faces*.

While Apuleius is explicitly stated by Lewis to be a source for his last novel, the aim of this paper is to demonstrate that Spenser and the Renaissance ideas the poet embodies in his allegorical epic are undeclared sources of the novel that are nearly as vital as Apuleius –perhaps even equally so. Lewis’ heroine will commence our inspection of the Renaissance influence, as her very name realizes its significance when we consider the Early Modern orthography of the period. Then, further examination of Orual’s life reveals many circumstances that parallel her with one of the most iconic figures of the English Renaissance, Queen Elizabeth I. This semblance will naturally lead into inspecting Edmund Spenser’s *Faerie Queene*, in which he “conceiue[s] the most excellent and glorious person of our most soueraine the Queene, and her kingdome in Faery land” (*Letter to Raleigh* 716). A comparison with this epic will unveil ideas that Lewis integrates into his novel, specifically the Renaissance conception of androgyny, which will conclude the first part of the paper and establish the basis of important Renaissance ideas in *Faces*. The second part of this paper will delve more into Lewis’ own critical insight from *The Allegory of Love* on Spenser and *Faerie Queene*, as well as his examination of *The Four Loves*. These texts will be considered alongside ideas that derive from Titian’s painting from the Italian Renaissance, *Sacred and Profane Love*, an equivocal title that relates to Orual’s own misperception of love and her problems that stem from this; Lewis certainly knew of Titian’s painting and there is strong evidence that he was aware of its critical reception as well. In applying all these ideas —androgyny and its portrayal in *Faerie Queene*, as well as the four loves and the sacred and profane practice of each— we

shall find that the key to the answer Orual seeks in writing her complaint was an answer Lewis regarded as a key concept in his own life: Joy. Let us begin by unveiling Orual.

CHAPTER 1: The Sword Between the Sexes

*Good and evil we know in the field of this world grow up together almost inseparably; and the knowledge of good is so involved and interwoven with the knowledge of evil, and in so many cunning resemblances hardly to be discerned, that those confused seeds which were imposed on Psyche as an incessant labor to cull out and sort asunder, were not more intermixed. It was from out the rind of one apple tasted that the knowledge of good and evil as two twins cleaving together leapt forth into the world. And perhaps this is that doom which Adam fell into of knowing good and evil, that is to say, of knowing good by evil.*

--Milton, *Areopagitica* (938-9)

In considering the Renaissance influence impressed upon *Till We Have Faces*, we need not look any further than the name of our heroine, especially given that the reader is likely mispronouncing it. This is no fault of their own though: Doris T. Myers, in her overview on the “Names of Glome,” has “found no letter from a fan asking Lewis about the pronunciation of ‘Orual,’ and most people seem to say either ‘Or’-u-àl’ (last syllable rhyming with ‘call’) or ‘Or-ru’al’” (she also notes a professor recommending “the pronouncement ‘OR-RULE’”). Likely, any of these might be the pronunciation any reader—myself included— would be inclined to with such an unorthodox name, but Myers also touches upon an unorthodox pronunciation for the modern tongue by also mentioning “‘Aw’val’” and noting that “Orual is a ‘written variant’ of Orval, the French name for the herb *Salvia Clerea*” (189-90). Myers does not provide a definitive answer to which pronunciation is correct and says nothing significant about the relation between Orual and “Orval.” My own proposal is that Lewis intended his heroine’s name be pronounced as Orval, the significance of which can be discerned with an awareness of Renaissance orthography.

First, searching “orual” in the *Oxford English Dictionary* results in the website instead automatically pulling up “orval,” yet most of the entries provided are all variations spelled with a “u.” For example, the first edition of *The Herball, or Generall Historie of Plantes* by John Gerard refers to “Oruall” in 1597. However, Gerard’s use of the word is the latest date in the *OED* that spells the word with a “u,” suggesting that Lewis chose an archaic variation for his heroines’ name. Furthermore, the word would apparently change to its now standardized spelling within half a century later, suggesting that even when it was spelled “orual,” it would have been pronounced with a “v,” as according to Renaissance

orthography. However, after spelling was standardized, literature from the period has long been printed with modern orthography, interchanging “u” and “v” in words accordingly. One important exception to this modernization is Spenser’s *Faerie Queene*: modern editions usually retain the original Early Modern spelling. That Lewis reverted to the archaic spelling of a word for his heroine suggests that he wanted her name to recall Spenser’s allegorical epic, being one of the most prominent texts that his audience likely would have encountered Renaissance orthography. Additionally, given Myers’ recognition that several names in Glome have common suffixes, such as Bardia and his son Ilerdia, the pronunciation “Orval” is supported by the fact that her full-blooded sister is named *Redival* (cf. Myers 189).

However, in addition to invoking Spenser, the name of Lewis’ heroine is quite significant to a characteristic of her and a theme of the novel. To discern this significance, let us not yet forget that Gerard’s use of the word in 1597 was in a botanical book, as is the first entry in the *OED* that spells it “orval,” a dictionary by Edward Phillips that states, “Orval [is] a certain herb otherwise called Clary or Clear-eye.” The *OED* then continues elucidating the word, as one of the definitions for “clary” is the plant now referred to as “*Salvia Sclarea*,” which Myers already noted is Orval in French (as mentioned above). Finally, there is also William Coles’ examination of clary to consider, as he expands upon why the herb might also be called clear-eye: “that it is good for the Eyes is, Clary, quasi Clear Eye, because the Seed put into the Eyes, doth clear them..The wild sort is known by the name of *Oculus Christi*.” The botanical significance of orual/orval would suggest that Lewis thought it also significant for his heroine, as it correlates her with the herb Clary or Clear-Eye, the latter spelling out what the plant was believed to do: clear the eyes. As such, clary should likely evoke the word “clarification,” a word that embodies one of the central themes of Lewis’ novel. *Faces* consists of two books written by Orual, but at the beginning of Book II, she tells her readers that her original intent was to only write the first book, to “accuse the gods” of the injustice she believes they caused her (3). However, as we begin to read the second book, it becomes evident that she continues writing because her eyes have been cleared of what clouded them: she has seen how she wronged those whom she loved. Orual recognizes this clarification herself when she writes in the opening of Book II, “I know so much more than I did about the woman who wrote it. What



began the change was the very writing itself” (253). In other words, her complaint to the gods was the first step to her eyes being cleared, allowing her to finally see the palace of Love Himself. One would almost think that Lewis was aware of Coles’ description of the “*wild* sort” of clary being known as “Oculus Christi,” as it is highly reminiscent of Aslan, the savior of Narnia who is repeatedly referred to being “wild,” “[n]ot like a *tame* lion” (*Narnia* 194).

Orual would also not have been regarded as a tame Queen, but she is also nothing like the King of Narnia. Rather, another aspect of Orual that evokes the *Faerie Queene* is the many similarities she shares with Queen Elizabeth I, effectively making the Queen of Glome an avatar of the Queen of England’s Golden Age. Lewis seems to have intentionally modeled his queen after Elizabeth, so much so that even the queens’ fathers resemble each other. Orual begins her tale on the day her own mother died; she had given birth to Orual and her sister while their father, King Trom, only cares about having a son. In fact, the only reason the King orders the Fox to educate Orual is for practicing until he “beget[s] a prince,” telling him, “‘If a man can teach a girl, he can teach anything’” (*TWHF* 7). However, when Trom’s new bride dies giving birth to Psyche, not even his new daughter’s resounding beauty can calm his fury. Instead, he declares his frustration as he yells, “‘Girls, girls, girls!... And now one girl more. Is there no end to it? Is there a plague of girls in heaven that the gods send me this flood of them?’” (16). King Trom’s obsession with having a male heir evokes Elizabeth’s father, King Henry VIII. Even the kings’ wives bear similarities, except that Lewis conflates aspects from Henry’s numerous wives into Trom’s two wives. For example, Henry’s first wife, Catherine of Aragon, was pregnant five times –three of them boys –but the only child that was not stillborn or dead in the first few weeks was a girl. Catherine’s barrenness and Henry’s quest for a son resulted in the annulment of their marriage, as her misfortunes were associated “with the wrath of God” by “an age accustomed to see[ing] the visitation of God” (Neale 2). Such was a view also expressed by the Priest of Ungit, as he tells Trom that the “barrenness of sons[...] is hateful to Ungit” (*TWHF* 45). In the same vein, both kings had their contentions with the church; Trom is much less radical, as he never rejects the Priest of Ungit, but he does express his contempt toward him after the birth of Psyche: “‘What have you to say for Ungit now?... You had better

recover what she owes me. When are you going to pay me for my good cattle?” (15). It can safely be assumed that the reason for Trom’s anger is that the Priest promised a son in his second marriage.

Likewise, Henry also had “physicians and soothsayers assure[ him] of a boy” in his second marriage to Anne Boleyn —she would instead give birth to Elizabeth (Neale 3).

The similarities between the kings cease there, however, as Trom fails to foresee that his second marriage establishing “the great alliance with Caphad” would prove “a snare”: the king of Glome would again try “to marry himself[...] into two royal houses among the neighbouring kings, and they would have none of him” (*TWHF* 26). Additionally, similarities between Orual and Elizabeth come to a halt once Psyche is born and the story begins to follow the original myth. Once Orual succeeds her father and becomes queen, her similarities then resume and complement Elizabeth’s queenship: they each succeed their father (at least, Elizabeth was the first to reign longer than five years after Henry) reigning for many years in patriarchal kingdoms, yet still winning the adoration of their people even though neither ever took a king. For Elizabeth, never marrying earned her the title of the Virgin Queen, which also engendered a mythic perception and cultic devotion: there were “spokesmen for the regime[...] who during the 1560s had developed a mythology of the Queen as national savior and quasi deity who could be properly represented only through cultic metaphors.” One of the most common forms of Elizabeth’s mythicism, “[g]iven Renaissance classicism,” was the

complex cult [of] a Diana-Venus or Virgo-Venus paradox nicely suited to a queen who projected conflicting images of herself, with its Virgo aspect enfolding a range of unspecified mythical allusions to virginal figures. Spenser makes frequent use of this cult (Cain 236).

Orual is not only a literal virgin queen, she also infers that she gained the sobriquet, “the veiled Queen,” for the veil that always hides her face throughout her reign of Glome. As a result, Orual’s veil inspires the same sort of mysticism that Elizabeth’s virginity did:

Some said... that [my face] was frightful beyond endurance; a pig’s, bear’s, cat’s, or elephant’s face. The best story was that I had no face at

all; if you stripped off my veil you'd find emptiness. But another sort...  
 said that I wore a veil because I was of a beauty so dazzling that if I let it  
 be seen all men in the world would run mad; or else that Ungit was  
 jealous of my beauty and had promised to blast me if I went bareface.  
 The upshot of all this nonsense was that I became something mysterious  
 and awful. (*TWHF* 228-9)

Thanks to the mystique spurred from these stories, Orual credits her veil as one of the “real strengths” in the success of her reign (227). Elizabeth would likely claim the same of her virginity: a component of her image as Roman and Greek goddesses was that she “must not only reflect but surpass each deity” such as “in the ‘Hampton Court’ painting (d. 1569) showing her astonishing and dismaying Juno, Minerva, and Venus—the deities of rule, political wisdom, and beauty.” Lastly, although Elizabeth’s virginity also produced a “fantasy of perpetual youth,” her virginity also meant that she produced no heir and the “mask of youth” meant to hide her aging in paintings also meant a recognition of it (Cain 236-7). Likewise, Orual’s veil may have hidden her aging, but it did not hide the fact that she also did not have an heir. As a result, each queen had to arrange a successor and they each chose their nephew: King James I in Elizabeth’s case and Daaran, Redival’s son, for Orual (*TWHF* 3, 238).

There is an irony that follows both queens’ mysticism, however, as the stories that they inspired all acknowledge and embrace their femininity, and yet they are ruling as kings, not queens, in patriarchal societies. This suggests that Orual’s and Elizabeth’s inherent femininity empowered them during their reign, yet they were assuming a traditionally male role, so they also needed to prove they had the masculinity that was considered necessary to rule. For Elizabeth, perhaps the best example of her expressing her right to rule as any king is in her famous “Speech to the Troops at Tilbury,” for which “she passed like some Amazonian empress through all her army” to tell them,

I know I have the body but of a weak and feeble woman, but I have the  
 heart and stomach of a king and of a king of England too... rather than  
 any dishonour shall grow by me, I myself will take up arms, I myself will

venter my roval blood; I myself will be your general, judge, and rewarder  
of your virtue in the field. (Neale 308; Elizabeth I 326)

Elizabeth may not have led her troops into battle as her speech almost suggests, but the “mighty shout” her men gave following it does indicate that, despite her woman’s body, she proved to her men that she was just as masculine internally as they were (Neale 308). That they won the battle proved the same to the rest of Britain, and her appearance in the ‘Armada’ portrait even suggested her right to imperial expansion given her hand’s placement upon a globe “after the manner of the Roman emperors” (Strong 132). Lewis has his queen instead go to action, rather than speech, in proving her right to rule Glome as Queen, as Orual literally does take up arms herself by defeating Argan, thus establishing Trunia’s right to rule Phars as king, along with her own right to rule Glome.

This parallel is perhaps the most likely reason Lewis sculpted his heroine with Elizabeth’s semblance, as the English queen describes herself as androgynous: she accepts her femininity —she even took advantage of it by playing “the game of sexual politics[...] with her courtiers”— yet she also lays claim to masculinity (Cain 236). Her androgyny was embraced by Spenser in *Faerie Queene* and expressed in his heroines that bear the image of Elizabeth: Britomart, the female knight of chastity destined to give birth to the British nation,<sup>6</sup> and Belpheobe, the huntress who expresses the part of Elizabeth that is “*a most vertuous and beautiful Lady*” (*Letter to Raleigh* 716). Androgyny then establishes a link between *Faces* and *Faerie Queene*, but before delving directly into these characters and the rest of the epic, we must first understand the Renaissance perception of androgyny.

The period’s contemporary perception was one of reverence, even though this may not be apparent: Edgar Wind voices how a modern reader would likely respond to Spenser’s favorable portrayal of an androgynous Venus:

It might be thought that[...] the Renaissance mystic had really  
surrendered to ‘the abominations of the heathen’: the barbarous belief,  
that the monstrous is higher and more divine than the normal, would

seem impossible to reconcile, even by the most dexterous of poetic theologians, with the Judeo-Christian code of propriety. (211-2)

However, whether the Renaissance mystic chose to conform to a Judeo-Christian or Classic approach on the origins of androgyny, it is represented as a state-of-being to be admired; that in fact, humanity's separate sexes are the true abominations of the heathen. This admiration is blatant in Aristophanes' story from Plato's *Symposium*, which sets out to describe the power of Love with man. The story relays the origin "of the nature of man and what has happened to it; for the original human nature was not like the present." Aristophanes says that there were then three sexes, "man, woman, and the union of the two," even admitting that the only name for this last sex, "Androgynous," is now "only preserved as a term of reproach" (Plato 106). These original beings were essentially two humans in one, as they possessed four hands and four feet, so they had such strength that they declared war against the gods; Zeus then dealt with their threat by tearing them in two, reducing them to the current state of humanity. This split caused humanity to feel incomplete and seek after another half, so the originally wholly male sex would seek after men, the wholly female sex after women, and the androgynous sex would become men seeking women, women seeking men. As a result, Aristophanes claims that "we must praise the god Love, who is our greatest benefactor, both leading us in this life back to our own nature, and giving us high hopes for the future, for he promises that if we are pious, he will restore us to *our original state*" (115; emphasis added). In short, humanity's rebellion against the gods crippled us to an imperfect state, thus the Renaissance mystic readily applied Aristophanes' story to the Fall of Adam and Eve. In fact, Leone Ebreo found "that Aristophanes' fable of the 'androgynous man' was 'translated' from the Bible," as can be seen from the opening chapter of Genesis, before the creation of Eve: "So God created *man* in his own image, in the image of God created he *him*; *male and female* created he *them*" (Wind 213; Genesis 1:27; emphasis added). This "mysterious and abrupt" transition of the singular to the plural in this verse suggested to Adam first being created as an androgyne. This state itself was the very image of God and was meant to be the natural state of humanity.

Spenser's own favorable portrayal of true androgyny suggests an awareness of Leone's perception of Aristophanes' fable, as is manifest in *Faerie Queene* when Nature is personified: "Whether she man or woman inly were,/ That could not any creature well descry" (VII.vii.5). That Nature is androgynous would indicate that androgyny was meant to be a natural state, especially given that Nature, and Venus, "are to be regarded as symbols of God" according to Lewis (*Images* 16). Nature and Venus aptly share this symbolism as the two mirror one another with both being true androgynes who conceal this very fact by wearing a veil (cf. *FQ* IV.x.40-41). Lewis connects the veiled androgynes as symbols of God by tracing Neoplatonic ideas found in *Faerie Queene*; accordingly, Spenser veils Nature and, in turn, Venus with the purpose of shrouding them in mystery because it "is distasteful to Nature [i.e., a symbol of God], who, just as she has withheld an understanding of herself from the vulgar notions of men... has also wished her secrets to be treated mythically... by the prudent" (qtd. in *Images* 43). True androgyny is found in *Faerie Queene* only among the divine because it is the image of God, meant to be discernable by man but not so readily understood. Indeed, Spenser upholds this Neoplatonist thought as Venus' Priests "labour'd to concele" the reason for the goddess' veil; Nature has no priests laboring for such, yet still "Whether she man or woman inly were,/ That could not any creature well descry" (*FQ* IV.x.41, VII.vii.5). Even aside her Priests' efforts and her veil, Venus's androgyny is further shrouded in mystery as it is portrayed in her statue in her Temple,

Whose substance vneath to vnderstand:

For neither preious stone, nor durefull brasse,

Nor shining gold, nor mouldring clay it was;

But much more rare and pretious to esteeme,

Pure in aspect, and like to christall glasse,

Yet glasse was not, if one did rightly deeme,

But being faire and brickle, likest glasse did seeme. (IV.x.39)

Exactly what substance the statue is made of, Scudamor (the knight telling of the Temple of Venus) is hesitant to declare, so he can only convey what it is like by litotes: describing what it is *not* like, rather than what precisely it *is*. Milton would also opt for this literary device to describe the prelapsarian Garden of Eden, for it is divine paradise, and “*Not* that fair field... *nor* that sweet grove... *nor* that Nysean isle... *Nor* where Abássan kings their issue guard” (*Paradise Lost* IV. 268-287; emphasis added). The divine is effectively conveyed by litotes because what is being described resembles something familiar, yet the hesitancy to actually declare it something belonging to our world implies it is something greater. Instead, what we are familiar with is actually a vulgar form of the divine and “that this visible world is but a picture of the invisible, wherein, as in a portrait, things are not truly but in equivocal shapes.” Although he says the statue’s substance is not glass, Scudamor says it is *like* glass twice, so his qualm to actually call it glass suggests that glass is only a “counterfeit [to] some real substance in that invisible fabrick” (qtd. in *Allegory* 45). Glass is only a vulgar form of its true image, that which the Venus statue is made of: a divine substance that is invisible, or at least not recognizable to man’s vulgar understanding. Thus, it is not quite invisible to Scudamor, but almost, as he is able to see through it; he understands that is not glass, but he cannot fully comprehend its divinity, so he is only able to describe what it is *like* and what it is *not*. As such, viewers of the Venus statue are each likely to see something different based on their own understanding, so we might say that the statue’s substance is likely to give it a thousand appearances.

This is what Orual says of the statue when she looks upon it, anyway, although she first describes the statue’s substance as simply “black stone,” but Glome’s chief deity “is undoubtedly Aphrodite[/Venus], though more like the Babylonian than the Greek,” and the old Ungit statue is undoubtedly the Venus statue (*TWHF* 4, 8). Throughout the novel, Ungit’s main appearance is that of a lifeless statue, yet this likeness of her is indicative of Spenser’s statue, manifesting the androgyne goddess in Glome. Unlike Scudamor, however, Orual details nothing that might suggest Ungit is androgynous: the black stone is not “couered with a slender veil” to conceal that she is both male and female; rather, she needs no veil because she has “no face; but that meant she had a thousand faces” (*FQ* IV.x.40; *TWHF* 270). Ungit’s mysterious face evokes the same effect as Venus’ mysterious substance: for Orual one day,

“Ungit is very like Batta [her old nurse],” invoking in her the same effect caused by litotes, seeing something that is *not*. Although Venus loses her veil in Glome, its purpose was to cover her face and body to conceal her androgyny: Ungit has no face and is “shapeless,” so she requires no veil (*TWHF* 234, 272, 294). However, as mentioned above, Orual’s veil hiding her face inspires many stories as to her appearance, so Ungit’s “face” replicates the same effect as a veil. In fact, Orual never suspects the goddess of androgyny, yet Scudamor seems to have no trouble discerning this fact about Venus, even though her Priests worked to keep this knowledge secret. It is, therefore, appropriate that the shapeless Ungit is made up of black stone rather than being “[p]ure in aspect”: her androgyny is not transparently clear, especially to Orual, who is obtuse to the truth of Ungit being wrapped “up in so strange a fashion,” (IV.x.39). Following the same Neoplatonist thinking found in *Faerie Queene*, Arnom explains to her, “doubtless to hide [Ungit’s truth] from the vulgar” (*TWHF* 271). Orual, never understanding “[w]hy must holy places be dark places,” is just as blind to the androgyny of Ungit as she is to Psyche’s palace (249). The black stone of Ungit functions the same as Venus’ veil hiding her androgyny, this divine aspect of her, from vulgar understanding. As we shall see, Orual’s perception of love is the basis to her vulgar understanding.

With this idea in mind, Orual’s vulgar understanding clouds her vision, but it specifically clouds her from seeing androgyny: she is unable to see Psyche’s palace so long as androgyny resides within, and so it does with Psyche and Cupid’s marriage. Scudamor so easily identifies Venus’ androgyny despite her Priests’ labors because his understanding of love is not as vulgar as many: after gaining the shield of Love, he defeats twenty knights and is the only one to confront “*Daunger*” (who everyone else either runs away from or tries to sneak past) in order to achieve androgyny himself by claiming his love, Amoret, from the goddess’ Temple (cf. *FQ* IV.x. 8-20). Indeed, in the original ending to Book III (the 1590 edition including only the first three books), after being rescued from Busyrane by Britomart, Amoret literally “in pleasure melt[s]” in union with Scudamor, so that,

Had ye them seene, ye would haue surely thought,

That they had beene that faire *Hermaphrodite*, (III.xii.45-6)



Thus, their union saved by Chastity, or “married love,” herself has Scudamor-Amoret also achieve androgyny, ranking them with Nature and Venus as “expositions, images, or beams of the *natura unialis*” –of God and of the divine (*Allegory* 340; *Images* 43). Likewise, Cupid also claims Psyche as his love but, rather than melting into each other, their union is based upon the paradisaal (almost Eden-like) palace: when Psyche Falls, she not only sunders her union with Cupid, she is also banished from Cupid’s palace. Therefore, the union of Scudamor-Amoret make up the final divine image of androgyny in *Faerie Queene* by resembling that fair Hermaphrodite, while the paradisaal palace is the divine image of androgyny for the union of Cupid-Psyche.

In witnessing their respective union, Orual and Britomart at first seem to already share a similarity, as they both perceive such an image with jealousy. Britomart, having actually witnessed Scudamor and Amoret’s resemblance to that faire Hermaphrodite, “halfe enu[ies] their blesse.../ And to her selfe oft wisht like happinesse,” but “In vaine she wisht” (*FQ* III.xii.46, 1590 edition). With Orual, she at first denies being jealous of Psyche (cf. *TWHF* 245), but after reading her complaint to the judge, she comes to accept that she was jealous of Psyche, as all are “in league to keep a soul from being united with the Divine Nature” (304). However, what rouses each heroines’ jealousy only distinguishes them. Britomart envies Scudamor-Amoret because she has been in search for the same union; for that reason, she only half envies them because she is only missing the other half necessary to achieve androgyny. The basis of Orual’s jealousy is not because she also desires the same union –in fact, she does not even want to restore her union with Psyche –she simply wants Psyche; as she expresses in her complaint,

Jealous of Psyche? Not while she was mine. If you'd [the gods] gone the other way to work - if it was my eyes you had opened - you'd soon have seen how I would have shown her and told her and taught her and led her up to my level. But to hear a chit of a girl who had (or ought to have had) no thought in her head that I'd not put there[...] how could anyone endure it? (291).

The distinction between the heroines' jealousy is of utmost importance, as one saves and restores an androgynous union, the other separates such a union due to her vulgar understanding.

What Orual wants is a doll: a lifeless human to paint, dress, and do as she—and only she—sees fit so that she may feel complete. Britomart is not only one of the most complete figures in the *Faerie Queene* on her own, a Lady “full of amiable grace,/ And manly terror mixed therewithall,” she also seeks the union she found with Scudamor-Amoret by finding Artegall, “her louer (loue far sought alas,)/ Whose image she had seene in *Venus* looking glas” (III.i. 46, 8). As the knight of Chastity, “Britomart is married love,” allowing her to maintain her androgynous power along with her virginity, only she ultimately seeks to obtain androgyny through marriage and thereby fulfilling her role as mother of the British nation, as well as recognizing her husband's role (*Allegory* 340). Book V then introduces Radigund and the Amazons who depict the vulgar form of Britomart's androgyny, embodying “the crueltie of womenkynd” when they have “shaken off the shamefast band,/ With which wise Nature did them strongly bynd,/T' obey the heasts of mans well ruling hand” (*FQ* V.v.25). The Amazons' wish to defy the hierarchy of sex by humiliating defeated knights, dressing them in the garb and assigning them the tasks of women. In doing so, rather than Artegall and other such knights also embodying androgyny in their female roles, they are regarded as “transvestite[s],” as they have moved down the hierarchy and away from divinity (Silberman 358). However, Radigund fails to realize that all she and her Amazons are doing is swapping gender associations: they want what is masculine to be associated with women and what is feminine to be associated with men. As such, they are unwittingly recognizing masculinity as superior and femininity, inferior. Radigund may appear as androgynous as Britomart, being a female assuming a male role, but the Amazons simply and solely want to be masculine; their aim is to cast all female roles on the men they have triumphed over, never having to fulfill these roles themselves. Nonetheless, Radigund and her handmaiden, Clarinda, are reminded that they cannot forgo all their female roles when they are wounded—just as Britomart was—with a love for Artegall. But this is a wound, we are told, that Radigund has experienced before and the catalyst for her cruelty toward knights, for she could not woo her former love Bellodant “by all the waies she could” (*FQ* V.iv.30). Despite her inversion of power

within the gender roles, Radigund is still blind to the fact that she has no power over love, yet she persists in exhibiting her power by ordering Clarinda (whose own love Radigund has no power over either) to increase both her efforts of persuasion and Artegall's labors (cf. V.v.49-51). Like Orual, Radigund wants Artegall to be her doll: a lifeless, hollow human that she can have do what pleases her. Instead, the female knight that seeks true androgyny must overpower the Amazon that profanes androgyny, and so Britomart restores Artegall to his role, yet still accepts his leaving of her immediately after.

With Britomart being a shadow Elizabeth, her androgyny would assumingly be applicable to Orual as well, given the parallels between the queens, but Radigund effectively demonstrates that the situation is not that simple. The androgynous appearance of Spenser's heroines is not simply achieved by their being females in male roles, but an acceptance of both male and female roles. Radigund abandons all female roles to usurp male roles, so even though her status is like Elizabeth's shadow, she does not assume androgyny as she does. Accordingly, Orual would instead be apt as a shadow of Radigund. The Queen of Glome may rule as a king like her semblance, Elizabeth, but Orual does so by adapting Radigund's approach, fully embracing masculinity while discarding the femininity she believes makes her weak. Due to her unrequited love for Bardia, Orual even admits —once she finally realizes it— to hollowing out her knight by constantly commanding him to do what pleased her all his life, just as Radigund would have done to Artegall had Britomart not saved him; just as Radigund is only like Britomart, not the same, Orual's likeness to Elizabeth does not equate her to the androgyny of the heroine the Queen inspired.

However, Orual does not only embody Radigund's antitype to Britomart's androgyny, for the Ungit statue's connection with Faerieland also establishes Orual as a false image to Spenser's androgynous Venus statue. Ungit's seeming lack of a veil has already been addressed above, yet this aspect of the Venus statue is one of the most central aspects of Lewis' heroine and his entire retelling, generating the significance of the novel's title. This similarity then elucidates the first of Orual's dream-visions, in which her father has her look upon her reflection and realize that it "was [she] who was Ungit" (*TWHF* 276). However, her reflection as Ungit and the veil she shares with Venus do not mean we should

immediately assume that Lewis is equating his heroine with the characteristics of the goddess. Indeed, as Orual is only like Spenser's heroines in her apparent androgyny, not the same, so already Orual is unlike the Venus statue, who is "couered with a vele" to conceal the truth that "she hath both kinds in one,/ Both male and female, both vnder one name." But this purpose for the veil is only conjecture, for "they [only] say" it is the reason Venus wears the veil; what is certain is the reason she does not wear the veil: "But sooth it was not sure for womanish shame,/ Nor any blemish, which the worke mote blame" (*FQ* IV.x.41). This false reason of Venus', however, is precisely why Orual does decide to remain constantly veiled, explaining that she would no longer go bareface as "a sort of treaty made with [her] ugliness" (*TWHF* 180-1). Granted, aside from referring to a time when she believed she could make her ugliness "more tolerable" as one of her "shames and follies," Orual does not explicitly state here that she is ashamed of her appearance. However, when Psyche asks her, "'Don't you think the things people are most ashamed of are the things they can't help?'" Orual immediately thinks of her "ugliness," so her veil likely is meant to hide this shame (111-2). Furthermore, her entire life, Orual hears the insults and comments from many about her ugliness, likely causing her to equate a woman's worth with their appearance.<sup>7</sup> In particular, two comments she hears that likely contribute the most to her view on women's worth come, first, from her father, when he commands the Fox, "'See if you can make her wise; it's about all she'll ever be good for,'" suggesting she has no purpose because she is not attractive (7). The second, comes from Bardia when Orual overhears him saying, "'Why, yes, it's a pity about her face. But she's a brave girl and honest. If a man was blind and she weren't the King's daughter, she'd make him a good wife.'" (92) These comments not so subtly convey the idea that a woman only has any worth in their society if she is considered attractive. Thus, Orual's appearance makes her believe that she is a failure as a woman; that she would have little value in her society. As a result, she remains constantly veiled not to just simply hide her ugliness, but to also hide her "womanish shame."

Orual as an antitype to Venus continues as she also bears a false image of one other aspect that is completely absent in the goddess' Glome counterpart. With the Venus statue, "both her feete and legs

together twyned/ Were with a snake, whose head and tail were fast combined,” yet no detail of the shapeless Ungit suggests anything resembling a serpent (*FQ* IV.x.40). It is certainly a significant aspect of the Venus statue though, as John Manning explains that “[t]he serpent whose tail is hidden by its head, or who bites its own tail, is an ancient hieroglyph of eternity”; by binding the androgynous goddess of love, the snake then evokes “an ancient symbol of marital concord” (Manning 248). Therefore, the serpent draws out of Venus the idea of androgyny achieved through “matrimonial fidelity; or of the union of the male and female genitals, as suggested by... Scudamor and Amoret embracing as ‘that faire *Hermaphrodite*’” (Hamilton et al. 488). However, as effective of a symbol as the serpent is for Venus, it is an unorthodox –although innovative –affiliation for Spenser to make. The serpent is no sacred animal to Venus/Aphrodite, and even less so from a Judeo-Christian perspective, given that it is “more crafty than any other beast of the field” and the form Satan assumes to cause the Fall. Satan’s serpent embodies the exact opposite idea of Venus’, as the craftiest beast is the instrument that brings death and ruins the eternity of Adam and Eve. In addition, Milton writes that their sin leaves them “To guilty Shame: he covered but his robe/ Uncovered more,” whereas before, “Innocence that as a veil/ Had shadowed them from knowing ill” (*Paradise Lost* IX.1054-9). Thus, they not only learn “good by evil,” but the fig leaves they use to hide their nakedness has them no longer recognizing themselves created as “man and woman”; instead, Adam hides his masculinity from his wife, and Eve hides her femininity from her husband.

Therefore, in the Fallen state of humanity,

There is, hidden or flaunted, a sword between the sexes till an entire marriage reconciles them. It is arrogance in us to call frankness, fairness, and chivalry ‘masculine’ when we see them in a woman; it is arrogance in them, to describe a man’s sensitiveness or tact or tenderness as ‘feminine’. But also what poor, warped fragments of humanity most mere men and mere women must be to make the implications of that arrogance plausible. Marriage heals this. Jointly the two become fully human. ‘In the image of God created He *them*.’ Thus, by a paradox, this

carnival of sexuality leads us out beyond our sexes. (*A Grief Observed*  
677)

Orual takes on the false image of Venus' serpent by playing the role of Satan's serpent to Psyche: she convinces Psyche to disobey the commandment of her god and husband, causing her Fall from her paradisaal home. Simply put, Orual separates Psyche from her husband, rather than binding them in their union. Following Psyche's Fall, Orual also demonstrates this arrogance toward gender Lewis writes of by regarding femininity as weak and masculinity as strong, even separating the genders within herself (more on this in the next chapter). Furthermore, Orual embodies another serpent notably absent, not from Ungit, but from her son and Psyche's husband, Cupid. In Apuleius' original, Psyche's sisters convince her to look upon her husband's face with reasoning much like Orual's, only they tell her that he is actually "an immense serpent" (Apuleius 85).<sup>8</sup> Orual, on the other hand, tells Psyche that her husband must be "[e]ither a monster... or a salt villain," but she never mentions anything about a serpent (*TWHF* 160). However, in Apuleius' story, the true monsters and villains are really Psyche's sisters; although her intentions are so different, in this scene, the same is true of Lewis's Orual.

Thus, Orual's veil meant to hide her womanly shame instead acts as Shame's robe: it covered but uncovered more. Her veil "revealed" her (278). It is then befitting that the King shows her her reflection as Ungit, for when he was alive he seems to identify Orual as a false image of their chief deity when she first dons her veil: "'Take her away! Take away that one with the veil. Don't let her torture me. I know who she is. I know'" (185). The King's apparent fear of his daughter and her veil is likely due to the approach of his death: his daughter is torturing him by appearing as Ungit coming to collect his soul — a "meet your maker" moment, so to speak.

In some publications of *Faces* (e.g., Houghton Mifflin Harcourt), the novel includes an illustration for Book II by Fritz Eichenberg that reinforces Orual's likeness to Ungit/Venus, as well as the likeness of Psyche-Cupid with Scudamor-Amoret (see Figure 1.1). The faceless, distraught figure on the left is undoubtedly Orual, so with the figure on right seemingly being kissed by the winged Cupid above, this would then be Psyche. In addition, the illustration evokes the two statues of Ungit: Orual's figure is

dark and faceless, suggesting the old Ungit statue; Psyche's figure is elegant and white, just like the "new, woman-shaped image" of Ungit (269). As such, given the old Ungit statue's likeness to the Venus statue, the new Ungit statue also bears a likeness to "that faire *Hermaphrodite*" that Scudamor and Amoret resemble in their union. The fair statue is even described as being made by "that rich Romane of white marble wrought," and while the new Ungit statue's designer and material is left unknown, it is "white," evoking marble, especially since the statue is "in the Greek fashion." Only the statue is neither from Glome nor imported "from the Greekland themselves, but from lands where men had learned of the Greeks," highly suggesting the statue is from Rome given its Greek fashion (234). While Eichenberg's illustration certainly does not depict Psyche and Cupid melting in pleasure into one another, Cupid's kiss does retain the same idea of matrimonial fidelity (*FQ* III.xii.45).

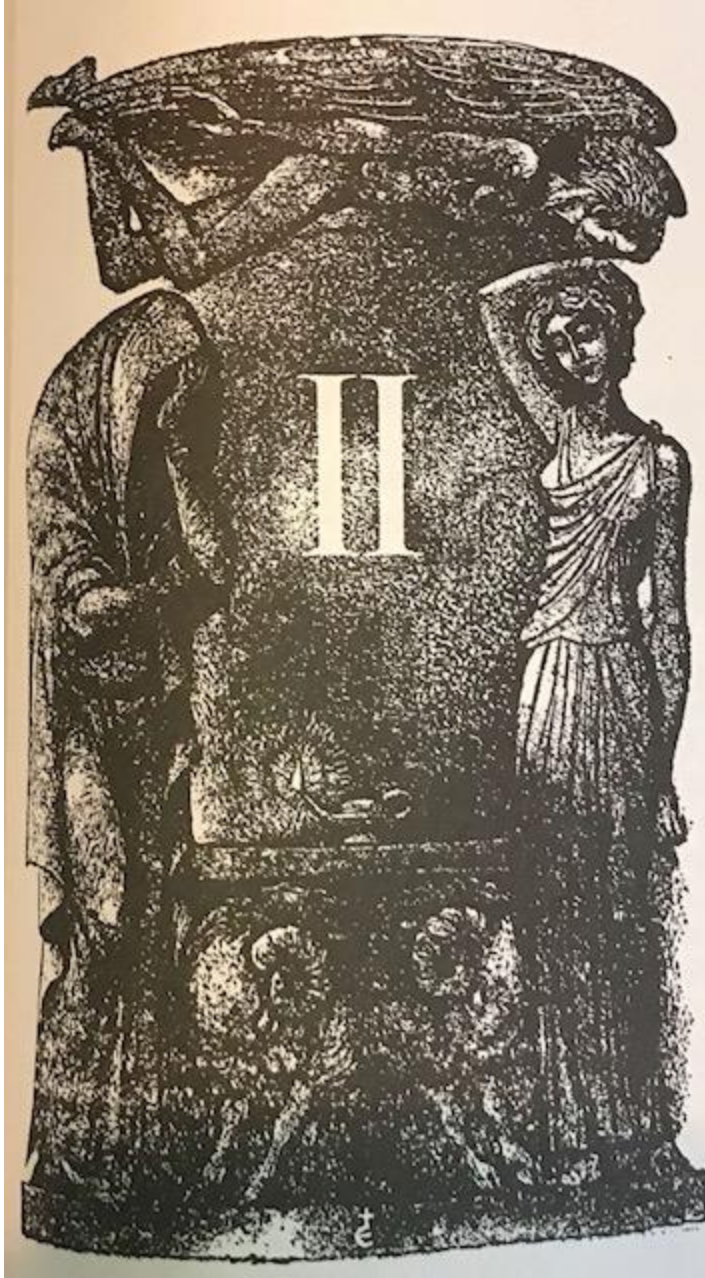
After all, androgyny can be achieved through marriage, which is achieved through love; hence the reason Spenser depicts the goddess of love as androgynous. Orual, however, regards Cupid's marriage to Psyche as the gods stealing her beloved sister from her, as she admits at her trial,

What should I care for some horrible, new happiness which I hadn't  
given her and which separated her from me? Do you think I wanted her  
to be happy, that way? It would have been better if I'd seen the Brute tear  
her in pieces before my eyes. (*TWHF* 292)

What Orual does not realize is that her kind of love would have consumed Psyche, who even told her, "You are indeed teaching me about kinds of love I did not know... I am not sure whether I like your kind better than hatred" (165). But Orual's love does not consume Psyche alone. After Bardia's death, her eyes begin clearing: "Did I hate him [Bardia], then? Indeed, I believe so. A love like that can grow to be nine-tenths hatred and still call itself love" (266). Like the Fox, Orual is ignorant how love can take opposite forms, that "the loving and the devouring are all the same thing;" she believes any act performed in love is for that person's good: "I perceived now that there is a love deeper than theirs who seek only the happiness of their beloved. Would a father see his daughter happy as a whore? Would a woman see her lover happy as a coward? My hand went back to the sword. 'She shall not,' I thought" (49,138). Orual

considers all acts of love as ultimately good, that love can only get deeper in benevolence; she disregards the Fox's words to her when she first becomes jealous of Psyche's marriage and "transported beyond all reason and nature... one part love in [her] heart, and five parts anger, and seven parts pride" (148). In reality, the "deeper love" Orual perceives is a vulgar understanding of love—a counterfeit of the divine. While Psyche's husband is divine Love Himself, Orual's vulgar understanding allows her love to claim divinity, but this instead makes it profane. Orual's complaint demonstrates her inability to distinguish sacred love from profane love, but it will also clarify the answer; that is to say, clarifying sacred love *by* profane love.





(Figure 1.1: Eichenberg, *TWHF* 251)

CHAPTER 2: THE ALLEGORY OF LOVES



(Figure 2.1: *Sacred and Profane Love* by Titian)

*Two figures, reflections, their feet to Psyche's feet and mine, stood head downward in the water. But whose were they? Two Psyches, the one clothed, the other naked? Yes, both Psyches, both beautiful... beyond all imagining, yet not exactly the same.*

—*Till We Have Faces* (307-8)

*We might have been two images of love, the happy and the stern—she so young, so brightface, joy in her eye and limbs— I, burdened and resolute, bringing pain in my hand. (157)*

Lewis once wrote in a letter to his colleague that, “the writers on art have hopelessly outstripped the writers on literature in our period. Seznec, Wind, and Gombrich are a very big three indeed.”

(*Collected Letters* 1364). The second art critic listed here, the German-born art historian Edgar Wind, substantiates this claim of Lewis' in a chapter from *Pagan Mysteries in the Renaissance*, as he reviews the long and prolific history of various interpretations on Titian's *Sacred and Profane Love*. This ambiguous title of the Italian Renaissance painting has spurred numerous arguments in attempt “to affix a sacred or profane character to one or the other of the two figures” (Wind 142); among them all, no consensus can be gathered as to which figure in the painting is Sacred love and which is Profane. Initially, the painting was considered with “a conventional view of Christian virtues,” identifying the clothed figure

as Sacred love due to her modesty, and the naked figure Profane for her lack thereof. However, it is also possible to interpret the unadorned figure as Sacred love, for “according to a well-established tradition, the absence of adornment is a sign of virtue and candor;” the foreground then bolsters this perspective, as a church is visible just behind the unadorned figure, while a castle behind the adorned figure conveys her worldliness. Yet this stance was also countered. The figure on the left may be adorned with clothes, but her adornment is still restrained: “[t]he beauty of her garment does not depend for its effect on embroideries, pearls, gold braid, or brocades, which so often predominate in Renaissance dress”; instead, “she prefers flowers for her adornment wearing a small wreath of myrtle... in her hair and holding a few flowers in her lap” (143-4). Taking a step back from either stance though, Wind ignores the impulse to label the figures according to the painting’s title and concludes that the painting portrays the “initiation of Beauty into Love” (148).<sup>9</sup>

Just from this glimpse of Wind’s review, Titian’s painting demonstrates that identifying love as either Sacred or Profane is much easier said than done. The two figures not only bear a resemblance but, although they present themselves differently, critics have unearthed validity for the sacredness of either figure. The painting seems to have made an impact on Lewis as he evokes Titian’s painting in the final image of *Faces* (quoted in the epigraph). However, the novel’s initial depictions of these loves—that of a devouring Brute and an amorous god—are such contrasting images that it would appear to be far more difficult to make an argument for the sacredness of either figure. Even the Fox, always eager to flaunt his reason, is keen to point out how simple he thinks it is to distinguish them: “A shadow is to be an animal which is also a goddess which is also a god, and loving is to be eating—a child of six would talk more sense,” he says in response to the old Priest’s description of the Brute and god (*TWHF* 49). Orual, however, is no better at identifying love as either the god or the Brute than art critics have in arguing which of the figures in Titian’s painting is sacred or profane. Rather, she perceives profane love as “a love deeper than theirs who seek only the happiness of their beloved,” so she justifies her decision to force Psyche against her will by arguing that it is the same as the time they removed a thorn from her hand – “[t]hose who love must hurt” Orual argues to herself (138, 159). But Orual only needs to justify coercing

Psyche because she realizes that her sister is happy; indeed, “ten times happier, there in the Mountain, than [Orual] could ever make her” (138). Orual realizes that Psyche does not wish to return to Glome and her, so she forces her sister to comply with her wishes; but to force a person away from happiness for the sake of one’s own is selfishness, not love. Orual does not simply want Psyche to be happy, she wants to be Psyche’s only source of happiness.<sup>10</sup> She *needs* to be loved by Psyche.

Orual may believe what she does is in love, but she fails to recognize that this need for love is exactly what profanes it. Lewis examines the profanation of loves in *The Four Loves*, a book that originated as a radio broadcast where he talked of Affection (*storge*), Friendship (*philia*), Romantic/Sexual love (*eros*), and Charity (*agape*). In the book, he first introduces none of these, but rather his own terms for two subcategories of love that make up the nature of these four loves: “Gift-love” and “Need-love” (*Loves* 1). Of the former, he says that “Divine-Love is Gift-love,” so it is hardly a leap to claim that Sacred love would also be an appropriate name. Need-love, however, was clearly harder for him to define, as he writes,

I was looking forward to writing some fairly easy panegyrics on the first sort of love [Gift] and disparagements of the second [Need]. 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... that if we mean only this craving we are mistaking for love something that is not love at all. I cannot now deny the name *love* to Need-love. Every time I have tried to think the thing out along those lines I have ended in puzzles and contradictions. The reality is more complicated than I supposed. (2)

Regarding Lewis’ initial qualm, it should be mentioned that the introduction to *The Four Loves* is not a part of the original broadcast: he only uses the terms Need-love and Gift-love in the book. Given that Lewis ‘found the writing rather laborious’ when he first began to prepare the broadcast, the passage

quoted above suggests that what exactly complicated Lewis' writing was he originally meant for his term Need-love to be synonymous with Profane love (Sayers 387). He instead found that Need-love need not only be disparaged, as there are exceptions to it being profane. Although he did still consider most of what he was going to say to be true; perhaps he instead decided that Need and Profane love may not be the same, but they are alike.

Furthermore, Lewis aligns Gift-love with the divine love of God (*agape*) and Need-love with the natural loves of humanity (*storge, philia, eros*). The reason the latter love need not be regarded solely as profane is because humanity's natural loves should strive to be an imitation of God's Divine/Sacred love, just as "this [life], so strangely unlike anything we can attribute to the Divine life in itself, is apparently not only like, but is, the Divine life operating under human conditions" (*Loves* 6). In other words, the natural loves are vulgar forms of divine love, but a greater understanding brings them closer to resembling the divine. As such, a balance must be achieved, for the natural loves become profane when they are at their worst, having little to no resemblance of Divine love, but also when they are at their best, bearing so much resemblance to Divine love that they can be mistaken for God, Love Himself. In *The Four Loves*, Lewis warns, "If we ignore [this balance] the truth that God is love may slyly come to mean for us the converse, that love is God" (7). In *Faces*, this idea is manifested both literally and figuratively.

Orual unknowingly takes up the idea figuratively: she begins to serve her love as if she is devoted to a god, so nothing else matters to her, not even the person her love desires. In turn, she refuses to accept that Psyche's husband, Love Himself, literally is a god, so she urges Psyche to defy her god's command; in doing so, Orual is fulfilling the commandment of *her* "god" that has "claim[ed] for itself a divine authority":

Its voice tends to sound as if it were the will of God Himself. It tells us not to count the cost, it demands of us a total commitment, it attempts to over-ride all other claims and insinuates that any action which is sincerely done 'for love's sake' is thereby lawful and even meritorious.

(7)

Considering this idolatry of love, it is then ironic that Orual writes that her love would not allow herself to see Psyche be “ma[d]e sport for a demon,” for the reality is that human love itself ““begins to be a demon the moment [it] begins to be a god”” (*TWHF* 138; *Loves* 6). Furthermore, this apotheosis is a result of her love for Psyche being so “pure,” as Lewis warns that this is precisely when the natural loves “are most God-like” and “most boundless and unwearied in giving.” Thus, when love is so pure and at its best is when “we may mistake Like for Same” and “give our human loves the unconditional allegiance which we owe only to God. Then they become gods: then they become demons” (*Loves* 7-8). Orual’s profanation of love is not because her love for Psyche has diminished; rather, it has been swollen up beyond its purity, to god-like pride. Only Orual cannot identify her love’s bloated face any better than Psyche can her husband’s; hence, at the moment of Psyche’s fall, the god appears in front of Orual and tells her, “You also shall be Psyche” —she already is like her (*TWHF* 174). However, Psyche follows the commandment of her husband out of love for him; Orual’s obedience to her “god” is, as Psyche herself says, no “better than hatred” (165). Lewis would unequivocally agree with Psyche: “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” (*Loves* 8).

By now, the reader ought to be fully prepared not to “mistake Like for Same,” especially regarding Lewis’ heroine. Along with the androgynous statues, this notion of “like, not same” is an idea adapted from *Faerie Queene*, and is a focal point of Lewis’ analysis of Spenser’s epic in *The Allegory of Love*. He sets out to correct the “profound misunderstanding” that Spenser was “a poet entirely dominated by the senses who believed himself to be an austere moralist” (*Allegory* 321-2). He does so by comparing and, more importantly, contrasting several images that are *like* each other, but a great error to consider them the *same*. “The spear-head of this attack” from critics is directed at the Bower of Bliss and the Garden of Adonis: even though the former is the lecherous domain of Temperance’s ultimate enemy and the latter, an idyllic garden “Wherewith dame Nature doth her beautify” and “the first seminary/ Of all things,” many critics claim that the two are “not sufficiently distinguished” (*Allegory* 324 ;*FQ* III.vi.30). The Garden is an image of the divine, so its likeness to the Bower has critics blaming Spenser for his

sensuality when he is in fact attempting to moralize such passions. However, Lewis' thorough reading of *Faerie Queene* stresses the importance of heeding Spenser's language to distinguish the two locations, as the words describing the Bower convey "artifice, sterility, death," and the Garden is depicted with words of "nature, fecundity, life" (*Allegory* 326). Lewis highlights that the Bower is nothing more than a counterfeit of the Garden, with "an Arber Greene" "striving to compare/ With nature," "Art, as halfe in scorne/ Of niggard Nature," and "rich metall... so coloured" that any person would "deeme it to bee yvie trew" (*FQ* II.v.29, xii.61).). The Garden, however, is "[s]o faire a place as Nature can devize" and also holds an arbor, only it is "not by art/ But of the trees owne inclination made" (III.vi.29, 34). Everything in the Bower is artificial yet trying to pass as if it were also devised by Nature and, therefore, also an image of God. The critics who faulted Spenser for the two locations' similarities have fallen trap for the Bower's false image, just as Verdant and all the men turned into animals had. The Garden is also contrasted with another false image found in the house of Malecasta: for in the former we find "the good and real" Adonis and Venus together as "a picture of actual fruition," but in the latter, we find Art again scorning the Garden's Nature by also picturing Adonis and Venus together, only the goddess is enjoying her love by infertile means, secretly spying on him while he sleeps in a bath (*Allegory* 331). Serving as a reminder to Orual's own false image and consuming love, this false Venus's only concern is the pleasure she receives from Adonis' beauty, not with reciprocating the feeling, for his sleeping (which, as Donne writes, is but a picture of Death) renders him nearly lifeless. Thus, when he dies from the boar's wound, she has no qualms in preserving him as a flower, for she can continue her one-sided pleasure as he continues to live lifelessly. As a reminder that such "love" bears no more fruition than art itself though, Spenser's description of the false image ends with Adonis as "a dainty flower.../ Which in that cloth was wrought, as if it liuely grew" (cf. *FQ* III.i.36-8).

Lewis deduces that the misconception of Spenser's "pictures of virtuous and vicious love," like those of Venus and Adonis, leads many readers to

approach[ing] him with the *vulgar* expectation that his distinction  
between them is going to be a quantitative one; that the vicious loves are

going to be warmly painted and the virtuous tepidly —*the sacred draped*  
*and the profane nude* (*Allegory* 330; emphases added)

Instead, for Spenser, “intensity of passion purifies: cold pleasure... is corruption;” in other words, he portrays the sacred nude and profane draped. Hence, the “two naked Damzelles” bathing in the Bower (named “Cissie and Flossie” by Lewis) are *like* the Graces in Book VI, “an hundred naked maidens... dauncing in delight” around Colin Clout (Spenser’s literary avatar) only Spenser’s description of the former two depicts them as far more profane than the latter hundred; just as Lewis states, quantity is not a factor in determining what is profane (*FQ* II.xii.63, VI.x.11). The Graces may have far greater numbers, but they are not wanton in their nudity: they dance “in order excellent” and vanish as “soone as [Calidore] appeared to their vew” (VI.x.13, 18). Cissie and Flossie, however, welcome Guyon “espying” them and further entice his voyeurism with the water that renders his view of the two maidens “as through a *vele*,” much like their mistress, Acrasia, who is

arayd, or rather disarayd,  
 All in a *vele* of silke and siluer thin,  
 That hid no whit her alabaster skin,  
 But rather shewd more white, if more might bee (II.xii.64,66,77;  
 emphasis added)

The veils of Acrasia and her maidens are joined by Orual’s veil as an antitype to the Venus statue; they may not technically be as exposed as the Graces are, yet what little they are draped with reveals themselves more than if they were actually nude. They are clear agents of the Bower of Bliss, of cold pleasure and of corruption; they “thrield/ Fraile harts, yet quenched not” (II.xii.78). Hence, when Orual is presented in front of the judge, she is stripped of all her clothes along with her veil: she must present her complaint and nothing more. For when she could not accept the truth about Psyche’s husband, Orual adds more truth, if more might be, by justifying a reason that better suits her means and further entices her god.



With the topic of passion and purification, we are returning to the realm of Neoplatonist thought. Let us return to Wind's analysis of *Sacred and Profane Love*, as he also touches upon the subject to elucidate the symbolism of the painting's fountain:

Both Ficino and Pico professed to know that in the pagan initiatory rites of love the first stage was a purge of the sensuous passion, a painful ritual of purification by which the lover was prepared for his communion with the god...rather fully described in Apuleius [i.e., Cupid and Psyche]... (Wind 146)

With this passage, we have come full circle: Lewis depicts his heroine with the likeness of androgynous figures from *Faerie Queene* not to equate them, but rather make her a false image of them to demonstrate the vulgar understanding that renders one unable to distinguish from purified passion and cold pleasure, which Lewis' source is commonly interpreted as portraying the process of purifying passion from pleasure. Lewis not only learned Italian during his education with his teacher, "the Great Knock" (cf. *Joy* 144), he also demonstrates his awareness of Italian literature when he considers its influence on Spenser's epic (cf. *Allegory*. 298-310). As such, both Spenser and Lewis were familiar with Ficino and Pico's Neoplatonist idea of this ritual purification that Wind identifies in the original Cupid and Psyche myth. Lewis, therefore, knew that the myth was regarded as a portrayal of the Neoplatonist idea that the human soul consisted of a lower soul linked to bodily desires, while a higher soul was linked to the mind's rationality and intellect (Remes 123-4). An impure soul could undergo purification to achieve *henosis*, or union with the One, just as Psyche, literally meaning "soul," is granted apotheosis in her heavenly union with Cupid, but only because her labors purified her (213). In considering Mark Edwards' idea that Orual is "the body, the inseparable companion of the soul" (as well as the fact that she "bore the anguish" while Psyche "achieved the tasks") it substantiates that Lewis kept these Neoplatonist ideas intact in his retelling, effectively depicting Orual as the lower, profane soul and Psyche the higher, sacred soul (Edwards 133; *TWHF* 301). Therefore, Orual's complaint that we read is the purification she must go through to receive her answer, become a higher soul, and commune with Psyche and her god, Love

Himself. Orual's purification is the clarification of what separates her and Psyche, as well as what separates lower and higher souls.

What exactly separates Orual and Psyche can be extricated by contemplating the way Lewis concludes his retelling, as he deviates from Apuleius' conclusion rather than excluding it. Although *Faces* does conclude with a heavenly reunion with Psyche, Orual is brought to her: Apuleius concludes with Psyche, having gone through her purification, being brought to Cupid (by Cupid) and their reunion being blessed by the gods and resulting in the birth of their daughter, Voluptas, otherwise known as Pleasure. Lewis does provide a final glimpse at Psyche near the end of Orual's dream-visions, but there is nothing to suggest that she is pregnant or has already given birth. As a character, Pleasure is absent from *Faces*, yet she is still crucial to the novel.

But before identifying Pleasure's presence in the novel and relating her back to the original subject of sacred and profane love, it would be better to refer to her with an alternative moniker since it has already been established that "cold *pleasure*...corrupts." We then turn to another Renaissance iteration of Cupid and Psyche, suitably found in the epilogue of *Comus*, Milton's masque depicting the contest between sensuality and chastity. Milton makes his own alteration to the tale by replacing Cupid and Psyche's only daughter, Pleasure, with "Two blissful twins [...] born/ Youth and *Joy*" (1010-1; emphasis added). William Kerrigan notes that "Joy was obviously suggested by Voluptas and Pleasure," but Joy is also a term of great significance to Lewis and perhaps another correction he wanted to make to Apuleius (1011n). Without proper context though, Lewis would not entirely agree with Kerrigan's statement; in his autobiography, he distinguishes Joy

both from Happiness and from Pleasure. Joy (in my sense) has indeed one characteristic, and one only, in common with them; the fact that anyone who has experienced it will want it again. Apart from that, and considered only in its quality, it might almost equally well be called a particular kind of unhappiness or grief. But then it is a kind we want. I doubt whether anyone who has tasted it would ever, if both were in his

power, exchange it for all the pleasures in the world. (*Surprised by Joy*  
18)

Given this alternate identification, we may safely assume why Lewis does not conclude *Faces* with the birth of Pleasure/Joy: she is in fact present from the beginning of the novel. The moment Orual sees the newborn Psyche, it was “the beginning of all [her] joys.” She writes,

I think I laughed more in those days than in all my life before. Toil? I  
lost more sleep looking on Psyche for the joy of it than in any other  
way... This was the beginning of my best times. (*TWHF* 20-1; emphasis  
added)

However, since Lewis defines Joy as far surpassing happiness or pleasure but also “equally well... a particular kind of unhappiness or grief,” then Joy as the best of Orual’s times means it also contains the equal potential of causing the worst of her times. She even seems to get a sense of this dangerous potential when she finds Psyche alive on the mountain, as Orual gets “[a] quivering shock of feeling that has no name (*but is nearest terror*)” (101; my emphasis).

Orual’s love for Psyche brings her Joy and her best times, but this also means it dooms her for her worst times, for there is immense danger in loving anything finite. In *The Four Loves*, Lewis writes of the risk that comes with loving another human being; specifically he refers to St. Augustine (but they could almost be the very words of Orual after she receives clarification), who writes, “For wherever the soul of man may turn, unless it turns to [God], it clasps sorrow to itself. Even though it clings to things of beauty, if their beauty is outside God and outside the soul, it only clings to sorrow” (IV.10). The idea behind these words is why Orual blames the gods for the sorrow that results from her loss of Joy: she fails to recognize that “[a]ll humans beings pass away,” so to love somebody in any capacity is to set oneself up for some degree of sorrow (*Loves* 120). The natural loves render us vulnerable, so if any of the natural loves incite Joy with its feeling that transcends cold pleasure, this then leaves us vulnerable to unfathomable grief at the loss of what is loved. Therefore, losing Psyche also means Orual’s Joy is lost; her only solace is in her other loves, as they act as a reminder of the Joy she once felt with Psyche, but

with diminishing effects. This solace is an idea more explicitly conveyed in Lewis' first novel, *The Pilgrim's Regress*.

The novel centers upon John, Lewis' avatar in his allegorical world, embarking upon a quest to reach his Island, the manifestation of his boyhood Joy giving him the feeling of "a sweetness and a pang so piercing" (11). John never does physically reach the Island, but as he first embarks upon his journey, he is given reminders of the feeling it gave him. The greatest of these reminders are evoked by the Halfways: first with a song by Mr. Halfways, causing John "to see a picture of the Island with his eyes open" and then in his love for Media Halfways, finding an Island "'in one another's hearts'" (33, 35). However, Mr. Halfways and his daughter merely embody the most commonly expressed secular progenitors of Joy: *eros* and poetry/music. Thus, they are "[t]he bad, semi-erotic kind of Romanticism – halfway between mere animalism and a real form of spiritual experience and ready to lead you the whole way to one if you don't make her lead you the whole way to the other" (30). Given the irony of John residing with the Halfways at only Book Two (out of Ten), we can safely assume that this is the "regress" Lewis' avatar makes in his pilgrimage.

In this respect, Lewis' last novel parallels his first novel. In her younger days, before Psyche is sacrificed, Orual finds her own Island with Psyche and the Fox: "it was now always we three—the Fox, and Psyche, and I— alone together" (*TWHF* 21). Even later in her life, Orual reminds the reader of this Island while expressing her disconsolation that she will never know its Joy again: "I had been happy, far happier than I could hope to be again, with Psyche and the Fox, long ago before our troubles" (222). It is an Island based in *storge*: first with the Fox, who feels Affection toward Orual and Psyche as "a true grandfather" does, and they reciprocate this love as a daughter would (21). Likewise, Orual also loves Psyche with the same Affection as a mother would, likely due to her being much older and perhaps because she is only Psyche's half-sister. Her desire for mothering Psyche is never more evident than at a point of great grief when she writes of a fantasy of her ideal life, in which everything would be "different from the very beginning and [Bardia] would have been my husband and Psyche our daughter. Then I would have been in labour ... with Psyche..." (224). This quotation best depicts Orual's desired Joy of

*storge*, yet also embodies her desire for motherhood. Adjoining this maternal desire, Orual's fantasy also embodies her *eros* for Bardia, her greatest reminder of her Island after Psyche's Fall, just as *eros* acts as a reminder for John in *Regress*. In Orual's fantasy, Bardia is her husband, but Psyche is not simply *her* daughter: she is *their* daughter. Although subtle, it is the only point in Orual's writing that suggests her love for Bardia is more than mere admiration or infatuation; rather, she fulfills *eros* in desiring to be Bardia's wife by sexual means as well. Acting as another reminder to her false image, Orual desires the fruition of Venus and Adonis in the Garden, but instead can only gaze at Bardia as the infertile Venus does to enjoy her love.

Unable to realize the true image of Venus and Adonis for herself, Orual imagines this fantasy of femininity, but her budding relationship with Bardia develops alongside her swordsmanship, which he immediately establishes as inherently masculine. Before they even consider training, he tells her, "It's a thousand pities, Lady, that you weren't a man[...] You've a man's reach and a quick eye" (65). But what Bardia says seems to only confirm the conception Orual already has towards swords, for when she grabs one to get past Bardia guarding Psyche, she writes, "Even in my woman's rage I had *man* enough about me to cry out, 'Ward yourself, Bardia'" (64; emphasis added). In other words, before Bardia even begins Orual's fencing lessons, they are both approaching the lessons with the impression that it is a man's art. Their relationship develops as her swordsmanship does, so Orual's *eros*—her rekindling of Joy—is built through masculinity. Furthermore, Bardia not only considers it a "thousand pities" that Orual is not a man, she also overhears that he finds it "a pity about her face," and would never become a good wife from the man she fantasizes being a wife to (92). As such, Bardia pities her for being a woman with natural sword skills, but also for being an unattractive woman—the source of her womanly shame. Thanks to Bardia being "a good doctor to [her]" through her fencing lessons, Orual can improve the former; she can do nothing to change her face (cf. 111-2). However, when she sets out with Bardia to discover Psyche's fate on the mountain, Orual appears to realize that she may be unable to change her face, but she can change how she feels about her face: she writes, "Even my ugliness I could not quite believe in. Who can *feel* ugly when the heart meets delight? It is as if, somewhere inside, within the hideous face and bony

limbs, one is soft, fresh, lissom and desirable” (96). This confession is the reason why Joy is so essential to Orual: along with the feeling of transcending pleasure, she forgoes any thought of her ugliness. This fact is supported by the manner Orual regards the beauty of her sisters: she often feels jealous of Redival’s looks as it reminds of her own ugliness, but she never feels insufficient around Psyche, despite her beauty being described as far surpassing that of Redival (cf. 22 & 34). In fact, one thing Lewis does not borrow from Spenser is the blazon, which the poet employs in attempt to capture Belphoebe’s (i.e., Elizabeth’s) beauty by devoting a canto to each of her body parts, resulting in an image of a monstrous effigy, rather than mythical beauty (cf. *FQ* II.iii.22-30); Lewis instead opts to describe Psyche’s beauty by its effect: “She made beauty all round her. When she trod on mud, the mud was beautiful; when she ran in the rain, the rain was silver. When she picked up a toad... the toad became beautiful” (*TWHF* 22). Rather than being jealous of Psyche’s beauty, it likely made Orual feel beautiful as well. This effect may be brought on by Joy, but the physical unattractiveness of Orual’s face is not merely a matter of perception. Orual hints at the idea that even the Fox pitied her for her ugliness, writing of a lullaby he used to sing to her —“*The Moon’s gone down, but/ Alone I lie*”— that she thought “[h]e always sang that one very tenderly and as if he pitied [her] for something” (9). Although it is left unexpressed, Orual herself seems to be implying that the Fox sang these words tenderly to her because he was worried that his “granddaughter” would also always lie alone at night, unable to find a husband due to her appearance. But Orual likely never again suggests this of the Fox because her ugliness is not a factor in their relationship; as Lewis explains, *storge* “is indeed the least discriminating of loves... almost anyone can become an object of Affection; the ugly, the stupid, even the exasperating” (*Loves* 32). The Fox cares not about her appearance, nor does she concern herself about it with him, so she does not bother to worry about his unexpressed pity.

Her *eros* for Bardia, on the other hand, causes her to be fully aware of her ugliness, the shame “about her face” she cannot help, so his pity that she would never be a good wife wounds her even as she writes in the novel’s present, “that is the nearest thing to a love-speech that was ever made me” (*TWHF* 92). For Bardia does not reciprocate Orual’s love; he loves her with *philia*, not *eros*. Therefore, she feels

ugly, undesirable; but he only treats her as he would any other man and speaks freely around her because *philia* is a love that seeks out comfort (*Loves* 72).<sup>11</sup> We might say that, if the pen is mightier than the sword, then the tongue is far sharper in *eros* than *philia*; hence, Bardia likely thought and meant little with his words, “the day’s work is over,” yet hearing these few words is enough to drive Orual to drunkenness and fantasizing.

Thus, Orual faces somewhat of a paradox: Joy causes her to not feel ugly and she receives a rekindling of Joy with the new love she experiences for Bardia, but because he does not reciprocate with the same love, his Friendship instead treats her as a man, reminding her of her ugliness and the loss of Joy that comes with it. However, the source of this paradox likely stems from Orual’s ironic perception of her gender. She improves her swordsmanship, that which she and Bardia regard as masculine, likely as a means of compensating for her womanly shame, but eventually even doing so “to drive all the *woman* out of [her]:” “My aim was to build up more and more that strength, hard and joyless, which had come to me when I heard the god’s sentence” (*TWHF* 184; emphasis added). Orual aims to make herself more masculine, ridding herself of femininity to do so, yet she still desires for Bardia to treat her as a woman. As somewhat of a compromise, she creates the illusion that she and Bardia share a relationship that transcends *eros*, because Bardia will only ever feel this love for his wife, Ansit. Orual knows she will never be Bardia’s wife, she even knows he pities her for being unable to become a good wife; but she again adds more truth if more might be, inventing and justifying a notion that her significance in Bardia’s life is much greater than his actual wife:

In a sudden flash, *not without joy in it*, the thought came to me, “Can [Ansit] be jealous?” And so it was, through all those years, whenever we met. Sometimes I would say to myself, “She has lain in his bed, and that’s bad. She has borne his children, and that’s worse. But has she ever crouched beside him in the ambush? Ever ridden knee to knee with him in the charge? Or shared a stinking water-bottle with him at the thirsty day’s end? For all the dove’s eyes they’ve made at one another, was

there ever such a glance between them as well-proved comrades  
 exchange in farewell when they ride different ways and both into  
 desperate danger? I have known, I have had, so much of him that she  
 could never dream of. She's his toy, his recreation, his leisure, his solace.

*I'm in his man's life* (233; emphasis added)

Orual is in his man's life, but this is only a recognition that it is all she can achieve with Bardia; nine pages prior, *she* wanted to be the one to lie in his bed and bear his children. Orual is once again casting masculinity as superior to femininity due to her vulgar understanding, failing to see that her Joy derives from her feminine loves. Her Island consisted of loving Psyche as a mother, the Fox as a daughter, and, afterwards, Bardia as a wife. While her actual relationship with Bardia is built on masculinity, her feminine *eros* is the source that Joy that arises from. Additionally, while Orual continues her lessons with Bardia after Psyche's Fall, she is all the while experiencing the ultimate grief from the loss of this feminine love and the Joy that came with it. When Orual first begins her lessons, she says that it helped to rid her of her "numbness," yet she continues them precisely for a numbing effect, by building up that "hard and *joyless*" strength (92; emphasis added). The fact that this strength is being built up through a masculine association and as a means to drive all the woman out of her implies that she believes masculinity's strength is being hard and joyless. Orual decides that the potential of Joy's pleasure from her feminine loves is not worth the risk of the grief she experiences after the loss of Psyche. She may take to masculinity because she perceives it as joyless, but this also means that it is griefless; she would become hard, no longer vulnerable. Although at one point the source of her Joy, femininity is in turn the source of this grief she wants to be numb to. To be feminine is to be exposed. By donning her veil, Orual has assigned for herself masculinity as sacred and femininity as profane. She has, almost literally, cast a sword between the genders.

This division in Lewis' heroine becomes manifest when she assumes her father's throne, as she develops a new identity of "another woman acting and speaking in [her] place. Call her the Queen; but



Orual was someone different” (199). The Queen embodies the masculinity of the joyless strength she recently built-up, with the intent of driving out the ugly, vulnerable Orual and her feminine loves.

Although “queen” maybe a feminine title, this new persona very much regards herself as masculine, for she begins

taking to queenship as a stricken man takes to the wine-pot or as a stricken woman, *if she had beauty*, might take to lovers. It was an art that left you no time to mope. If Orual could vanish altogether into the Queen, the gods would almost be cheated. (201; emphasis added)

The Queen may use a woman as an example here, but she also distinguishes herself from this example by adding “if she had beauty,” which she –or at least Orual– would unlikely relate to. Additionally, she later becomes her example of the man, as she eventually “discover[s] the wonderful power of wine” and “understand[s] why men become drunkards” (224). “Queen” is only a title that fulfills Orual’s frustrations with Bardia mentioned above, wanting to be fully masculine but still addressed as female; she wants her woman’s body to be recognized, but rule with the heart of a King. Bardia, however, only confirms her King’s heart when he challenges Arnom by declaring, “*This Queen can*” “lead the armies of Glome in war” (187; emphasis added). Bardia knows better than anyone that she has built up the strength to rule as well as any King, so once Orual becomes the Queen, his treatment of her as a man is only coronated to treating her as a King.

However, not even a crown and built-up masculinity is sufficient enough to completely repress Orual, who “would whisper a cold word in the Queen’s ear at times” (205) Yet her capability also extends to assuming complete control when she finds one of her feminine loves in jeopardy, such as when she is “plunged in despair” after the Queen thoughtlessly frees the Fox, meaning he may now return to his homeland and leave her: ““Grandfather!’ I cried, no Queen now; all Orual, even all child. ‘Do they mean you’ll leave me? Go away?’” (208). Orual springs forth to cling to her grandfather, the only remainder of her Island of *storge*, which almost becomes a physical location when she goes “out into the gardens” and

writes, “I would not go up that plot behind the pear trees; that was where he, and Psyche, and I had often been happiest” (208). Orual does not wish to retread the physical manifestation of her Joy as she believes the last remnant of it might soon abandon her. As such, when the Fox tells her he will stay, she feels “only the joy,” but she is more blind than ever to the realities that threaten this joy. When he tells her this, the Fox begins “making little of his deed,” and Orual fails to recognize that he is only adding truths to dissuade himself from leaving, just as she added truth to justify hurting Psyche (210). Given that his initial reaction to his freedom was to list all the things he could finally return to, Orual should have responded to her grandfather by repeating the words he had had recently told her: “I was wrong to weep and beg and try to force you by your love. Love is not a thing to be so used” (204). These are the Fox’s words to Orual just before he is given his “freedom,” but it is clearly a lesson not comprehended with vulgar understanding. Love’s palace is once again clouded to Orual, as she only concerns herself with her god’s palace on her Island; to anyone else, it would be but a garden with a pear tree, just as how Psyche’s feast was nothing but water and berries to Orual. Instead, this lesson becomes the Fox’s last; indeed, it is one of the last things he will say to her, for after he tells her he will stay, he has not another word of dialogue for the remainder of his life. Orual’s writings may mention him intermittently before his death, but he apparently no longer offers to the Queen the words of wisdom that Orual once revered. Orual’s profane use of love has her face the consequence that Adam feared from forcing Eve to stay with him: “Go, for thy stay, not free, absents thee more” (*Paradise Lost* X.372). The Fox is nearly as absent from Orual’s writing in his “freedom” as he would have been had he returned to Greece; even worse, to the reader, he is almost as lifeless before his death as he is after. Orual’s false image does not give her the power of the goddess, but she does have the power of a queen: rather than transmuting the Fox into a flower, she gives him “a kingly funeral and made four Greek verses which were cut on his tomb” (*TWHF* 236). Thus, he will continually offer her Greek wisdom.

Following the Fox’s funeral, Orual then begins writing of the journey that would be the catalyst of her complaint, during which she leaves Bardia in Glome and returns receiving the news of his sickness that would eventually take his life. Although in a different manner, Bardia also becomes absent before his

death, and Orual even admits that she “hardly gave Bardia a thought” for “nothing seemed to matter a straw except finishing [her] book” (257). For the first time in her life, Orual has no loves to concern herself with, no god to serve; she finally has only herself to reflect upon and so she does writing her entire life as she forms her complaint. But even after she finishes her complaint with the words, “no answer,” events occur that have her reflect upon herself from a new perspective. She first reflects upon herself a little after learning from Tarin (one of her Redival’s old romances) that her older sister complained to him, ““First of all Orual loved me much; then the Fox came and she loved me little; then the baby came and she loved me not at all”” (255). After hearing the complaint of Bardia’s grieved widow, Orual then reflects upon herself a great deal more:

My love for Bardia (not Bardia himself) had become to me a sickening thing. I had been dragged up and out such heights and precipices of truth, that I came into an air where it could not live. It stank; a gnawing greed for one to whom I could give nothing. Of whom I craved all[...] But when the craving 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. (267)

Much like her own complaint, in these complaints Orual receives an answer: she took to Bardia as Redival took to Tarin. The dalliances that Redival turned to was to fill the gap that Orual (who criticized her for her romances) once filled when they were children “building mud houses,” “[c]atching tadpoles in the brook, hiding from Batta in the hay,” and “a thousand other things[...] when there was no Psyche and no Fox” (5, 254). Likewise, Bardia filled in the gap that was once Orual’s Island; she needed him and consumed him to not be left with her “emptiness” (266).

This self-reflection then takes on a literal manifestation in her dream-visions once they begin to blend with reality. As mentioned in the previous chapter, in the first dream, Orual’s father wakes her and has her look upon her reflection in his beloved mirror to see that her “face was the face of Ungit” (276). Though it is mentioned only one other time, this mirror is described as having “been made in *some distant*

*land* and no king in [their] parts had one to match it[...] in this you could see your perfect image” (61; emphasis added). This is not the only extravagant item imported to Glome from some unnamed land, as the new Ungit statue also comes from a land that is only recognized as not being the Greeklands. Just as this statue has a parallel to *Faerie Queene*, the mirror Orual looks into shares similarities with the mirror Britomart looks into. While the Faerieland mirror may have been made by Merlin, it is owned also by the heroine’s father, who allows her to look into it because she is “his hayre;” Orual may be forced to look into the mirror by her father, but she is also her father’s heir since the King never has a son. For Britomart, her gazing into the mirror is most notable for her seeing Artegall, her future love, for the first time, but when she first

espyde that mirrhour fayre,

Her self awhile therein she vewd in vaine (*FQ* III.ii.22).

Merlin’s mirror, which also showed reflections “in perfect sight,” behaves as a standard mirror before revealing its magical properties: it first shows Britomart herself and then what “Imperious Love hath highest set his throne” in her gentle heart (III.ii.19, 23). Lastly, the first time the mirror is ever mentioned, it is called “*Venus* looking glass,” making it all the more fitting that Orual sees the goddess’ Glome equivalent in such a similar mirror (III.i.8.9).

So it is with Orual: she looks into her father’s foreign mirror and sees Ungit, only the goddess functions as both of the reflections Britomart sees to Orual: her own image, as well as what Love (i.e., Cupid) has set inside her heart. We have already established how Orual reflects Ungit, as our heroine is the false image of the goddess presented in the Venus statue. Orual wears a veil to hide her ugliness out of womanish shame: Venus does so “to accommodate her splendid beauty to [frail men’s] weak eyes” (something similar to Moses’ veil) (Dauber 707); Orual makes a point in separating her genders: Venus has both kinds in one; Orual’s love only consumes: Venus begets and also conceives. Additionally, when Britomart looks upon her reflection, she sees “an idealized self-projection” (Hamilton et al. 305). Again, when he was approaching death, King Trom recognizes his oldest daughter’s false image to Ungit; in the dream, Orual’s father takes her to his mirror to reveal to her her perfect, ideal image of her counterfeit.

Ungit also reflects what Orual's heart most desires, but even for Britomart, the image she is presented with after her own reflection also functions as a mode of self-reflection. While the mirror ultimately shows her future husband, Artégall, she is first presented with "[a] comely knight, all arm'd in complete wize," thus to set out on the quest to find her husband, Britomart becomes a knight herself (*FQ* III.ii.24). Therefore, her reflection and her heart's desire both show herself; likewise, Ungit also operates both as Orual's reflection and her heart's desire. But due to Orual's revelation about Bardia just before this dream, what her heart desires is to feel complete: she feels she is a gap that can never be filled, for even if a person she loves never leaves her in anyway, she *needs* their love to fill that gap. To remain joyless and avoid any potential grief, her only options are to either live with her feeling of emptiness or profane love by consuming a person until they are a doll: hollow and/or lifeless. Orual desires love, she desires beauty, she desires being desired, all of which Ungit (Venus) is, yet her desires can never be sated on this earth. Lewis, however, argues that

Creatures are not born with desires unless satisfaction for those desires exist... If I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that[...] earthly pleasures were never meant to satisfy it, but only to arouse it, to suggest the real thing. If that is so, I must take care[...] never to mistake them for the something else of which they are only a kind of copy, or echo, or mirage. (*Mere Christianity* 136-7)

Orual desires Ungit because the goddess is Joy, "a pointer to something other and outer;" a desire, but not the desired itself (*Joy* 238). Hence the reason "she had a thousand faces" and the reason the peasant woman prefers the "shapeless stone" over the "painted doll of Arnom's," for Joy's image, her pointer to the divine, appears in different forms to everyone (*TWHF* 270, 295).<sup>12</sup> The new, woman-shaped Ungit statue is also an image of Joy, but its distinctive face and features are "*an image of her*": this statue is a singular image—a single face—of Joy (234; emphasis added). It is the artist's projection of his own image of Joy, as it no doubt brought him "great comfort," but its singular image renders it extremely limited in

providing any comfort to anyone beside the creator of its image (270). Perhaps the new statue brings comfort to Arnom, but it does not for the peasant woman, so she turns to the Ungit statue with a thousand faces instead. However, the new statue's singular image is also befitting, being the statue that evokes Psyche (and her union with Cupid) and relates it to the Hermaphroditic statue that Scudamor-Amoret resemble. Lewis explains that the statue's embodiment of union is an image that "is a metaphoric exposition of true marriage[...] of *henosis*"—"it is the married couple, united in the relation called one flesh, that is the *imago Dei*" (*Images* 38). Furthermore, married love is, like the new Ungit statue, "*an image*, a foretaste, of what we must become to all if Love Himself rules in us without a rival. It is even (well used) a preparation for that," for what married love does is "obliterate the distinction between giving and receiving" (*Loves* 114, 96). The androgyny true marriage achieves begets and conceives just as Venus does and it is capable of filling the gap in people's lives without consuming a person until they are hollow.

For Orual, this image of Love Himself would provide no comfort, as she never becomes a good wife—she can only fantasize such. But Ungit is androgynous because Joy is ultimately the desire to achieve the same, only it transcends the Hermaphroditic image. As quoted above, Lewis concludes that Joy is an indication of belonging to something other and outer, but he distinguishes this as the "Christian Way" of regarding this insatiate desire (*Mere* 136). St. Paul's own indication is that Christians—the Church—are but reciprocating this desire, for he writes to husbands to

love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, in order to make her holy by cleansing her with the washing of water by the word, so as to present the church to himself in splendor, without a spot or wrinkle or anything of the kind—yes, so that she may be holy and without blemish. In the same way, husbands should love their wives as they do their own bodies. (Ephesians 5:25-28)

The Church is the Bride of Christ, effectively establishing Joy as the desire for the Bride-groom. Those that have been purged of their cold pleasure and their sensuous passions will be in communion by true marriage with Love Himself; they shall be restored to the divine androgyny God first created male and female in His image.

Having bared her face, body, and complaint, Orual is made sacred and beautiful, ready to meet the god face to face, even overwhelmed by the return of that Bridal desire: “Joy silenced me. And I thought I had now come to the highest, and to the utmost fullness of being which the human soul can contain. But now, what was this?” (*TWHF* 306). “The god comes to judge Orual,” but Lewis does not end his retelling with a heavenly union as his source does (307). Instead, he details the meeting of Orual and Psyche with “no cloud between [them],” evoking Titian’s painting, our lodestar for understanding Sacred and Profane love (306). However, let us also consider Lewis’ words with another sort of retelling:

Two figures, reflections [...] stood head downward in the water. But whose were they? Two [Souls], the one clothed, the other naked? Yes, both [Souls], both beautiful (if that mattered now) beyond all imagining, yet not exactly the same. (307-8)

In re-reading this passage with the meaning of Psyche’s name in mind, it eliminates the distinction that Orual is profane love and Psyche sacred love, or that Orual can only become sacred love by becoming Psyche. Instead, we are shown two souls, both beautiful no matter their adornments.

It should now be noted that the title used thus far to refer to Titian’s painting has no record of use before the eighteenth century; before then, it held the much less equivocal title of *Beauty Adorned and Unadorned* (Cantelupe 220). Lewis successfully demonstrates profane love through his heroine, yet this is exactly what is necessary to demonstrate sacred love: “Divine Gift-love in the man enables him to love what is not naturally lovable; lepers, criminals, enemies, morons, the sulky, the superior and the sneering” (*Loves* 128). All the ugliness that Orual brings in her complaint in fact purifies her to be made beautiful with the answer. Due to its potential, Joy is Orual’s complaint, yet it desires the answer; thus, Orual writes, “Lord[...] You are yourself the answer. Before your face questions die away” (308). Only the

reader is never shown the face of this god, instead they are left with questions: does the god meet her face to face? Does her story end with a heavenly union? What was she going to write “*after the word might*”? Undoubtedly, the reader will have many other questions, but they are fittingly left desiring answers. Lewis’ last novel sets out to clarify vulgar understanding, such as Apuleius’ profound misunderstanding of a myth that demonstrates purifying passion from pleasure and, thereby, sacred love from profane love. For the soul’s purification does not merely produce Pleasure, rather Joy is the answer that leads to purification. Lewis likely intended for *Till We Have Faces* to be enigmatic: by leaving the reader with desiring answers, he has started them on their own purification. Orual’s archaic spelling and semblance to Queen Elizabeth would then be the lodestars for readers to turn to the Renaissance and begin the road to purification.



CONCLUSION: TILL WE HAVE JOY

*Till We Have Faces* has generally been regarded as Lewis' *Magnum opus* —even he himself thought it was one of his best works— but let us address why it is also considered his most enigmatic. It is understandably so, as the novel is a break away from his tradition of allegorical novels. We have considered his first published novel, *The Pilgrim's Regress*, a self-declared allegory with a title that pays homage to a well-known allegory; perhaps his best known work, *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, is largely regarded as an allegory of the gospel; by the same principle then, *Perelandra* (the other work Lewis thought his best) would be an allegory of Adam and Eve. Additionally, his most well-known critical work, *The Allegory of Love*, is an extensive overview on major allegorical works, such as Spenser's allegorical epic that, as demonstrated, holds great significance for *Faces*. Lastly, the myth of Psyche and Cupid "had been a subject for mediaeval and early modern *allegoresis*," due to the myth's presentation of the Soul being united with Love and resulting in the birth of Pleasure. (Edwards 138). Its author, its influence, its source: all of these elements strongly indicate that *Faces* should have been an allegory itself, yet this expectation is broken in the opening paragraphs as Orual declares that she is writing to present her complaint against the gods as if "before a judge" (*TWHF* 3). She is writing a history to present the truth as she witnessed it, rather than presenting truth through abstractions as allegory would.

However, this has not stopped readers from allegorizing Tolkien, who famously decried allegory in his works, and is found even more commonly with the Bible, which Lewis was certainly aware "is not only the commonest subject of *allegoresis* but the canonical exemplar of this practice" (Edwards 138). Edwards defends allegorizing Lewis' novel, stating that "we have the right to adopt a more exacting method of decipherment in reading *Till We Have Faces*, so long as this is grounded in a system of recognised correlations to which the author is known to have subscribed" (137). We have indeed recognized how grounded *Faces* is in allegory, but let us limit our scope as to what is open to allegorizing. Another way in which the novel is un-allegorical is its first-person narration, which is not unheard of in allegory but often such is expressed via a dream: *Roman de la Rose* (which Lewis also reviews in *Allegory*) and *Pearl* both begin with the narrator falling asleep and recognizing that they are in

a dream. Lewis adapts the same motif in *Regress*, the opening words of which are “I dreamed of” and repeated throughout (3), and *The Great Divorce* begins with the slightly ambiguous “I seemed to be” but ends with the narrator falling from his chair and awaking “in a cold room” (541). As such, Orual’s dreams would be the most welcoming to allegory, especially at the point when Apuleius’ original myth welcomes allegorizing the most.

As addressed at the beginning of this paper, the etymology of Orual’s name comes from an herb also referred to as “clear-eyed,” effectively designating her “Clarification” for allegory’s sake. Therefore, whereas Apuleius ends with the Soul’s true union with Love and bringing Pleasure, Lewis ends with Clarification coming to the Soul and thus finding Love Himself. From the beginning, the Soul desires to find her “gold and amber house” built by Love, “the greatest King of all”; in other words, the Soul desires “to find the place where all the beauty came from” (*TWHF* 75). However, if this same desire is repressed, it will bring about many trials, but they will result in Clarification to meet Love. Accordingly, the Soul chooses to adorn its longing as it sees fit: Psyche imagines a gold and amber house and the Pentateuch envisions it as a land of milk and honey; how they dress their desire is not as important as the desired itself, so they need not be stripped of their adornments. Clarification, on the other hand, needs to clear the eyes; it needs to strip away the “madly thick” “stone walls” that were built to repress one’s Joy, and cloud one’s eyes from the palace of Love (235). Whether they take the short or long route, whether they be adorned or unadorned, the Bride-groom finds both to be beautiful.

The reader might already have noted an interesting characteristic of Joy: if it is the inherent desire of any soul for the Bride-groom, this would then suggest that Joy is a feminine desire —the Bride’s longing for married love. We must then recall that Lewis would regard this gendered classification of Joy as arrogance, as it is keeping the sword between the sexes in place and falls under the same folly that caused Orual such frustration. Instead, if earthly marriage helps two to become fully human, just as Adam was when he was first created, then true marriage with Christ would ascend one to become something more than fully human. For that reason, it would be best to correct Joy as an androgynous desire, for

whether male or female, Lewis would say that there is a gap that each of us feel needs to be filled; that if there is a desire that makes us feel empty, there must be a satisfaction to help us feel complete.

Nonetheless, Lewis' fictional works do at least acknowledge this inclination of regarding Joy as feminine. Like Psyche with her gold and amber house, it is often Lewis' female characters that best demonstrate a desire to go to a fantasy land that seems unattainable. In *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, it is Lucy, the younger sister and sibling, who first discovers Narnia in the wardrobe, while all of her older siblings believe she is "either going queer in the head or else turning into a most frightful liar" (130). It is probable that Lewis has Lucy go to Narnia because she is the youngest, not because she is female, alluding to Christ's words of having faith like a child's to enter God's kingdom (Matthew 18:3); however, when Edmund returns from his first trip to Narnia, he denies the land's reality by giving "a very superior look as if he were far older than Lucy" when there is "really only a year's difference" (129). Had she heard him say this, Lucy might have responded by saying, "Don't talk like a grown-up," as she does to her sister after seeing Aslan for the first time in their return Narnia when they are a year older (*Prince Caspian* 373). Lucy would then be the same age as Edmund, yet she still retains seeing what appear to be implausible things that her siblings do not.<sup>13</sup> Additionally, there is also an example of a female who is possibly older (her husband refers to her "[y]oung limbs," but her age is never specified) than either Lucy or Psyche in "The Queen of Drum," one of Lewis' incomplete narrative poems published posthumously (I.37). At the very least, the Queen is no younger than Psyche, as she is also married (albeit to a King who is much older than her), but unlike her, even in marriage the Queen still searches for her own gold and amber house—to "lift the curtain" of a land that only "lights come through" (III.54-5). The Queen has such a yearning for this land that she not only stands her ground against the brutal General's ridicule of her midnight searches, she even risks her life running away when he kills the king and forbids her wandering. She displays her passion when declaring, "'Of what should I beware?/ What is the crucifixion that I would not dare,/ To find my home?'" (III. 94-6). After receiving insight from an elfin knight, the poem concludes with the Queen taking "the midmost moss-way" between the roads to Heaven and Hell, but it is left ambiguous whether she reaches "fairy land" (V.199, 292).

The last character who demonstrates the same desire is John from *Regress*, Lewis' avatar through an allegorical land. Of course he is not female, yet he is relatable to both Lucy and the Queen of Drum: as a young boy, John unexpectedly discovers a fantastical land, an Island that he sets out for on a quest that ends similar to "The Queen of Drum,"<sup>14</sup> as John essentially chooses a middle road by slaying dragons that rest at the end of the Northern and Southern roads (regarding plot, they are similar, although the symbolism of the roads and their reason for taking the middle roads do differ; nonetheless, they are both led to taking their respective middle road due to their desire to reach a seemingly inaccessible land). In between his likenesses of these characters though, John's embarks on a long journey that has him face many trials and characters, eventually receiving Wisdom that he needs the help of Mother Kirk (i.e., the Church), as she tells him, "'You have come a long way round to reach this place, whither I would have carried you in a few moments'" (*Regress* 193). John had encountered Mother Kirk long before, but he refuses her help believing she is "insane," likely because she is the Landlord's (i.e., God) "own daughter-in-law" (84, 79). In other words, John's journey could have been short, but through the trials of his long journey he finds Clarification (we might even say he is reunited with Reason). John may be similar to Psyche, Lucy, and the Queen, but he is most like Orual, especially given the allegory of her above, and this is quite appropriate. Lewis' first novel depicts a male character overcoming trials in pursuit of Joy through allegory, while his last novel depicts a female character overcoming the same, only it is based in allegories. In general, Lewis seemed to rely more so on females depicting Joy's desire, but the most intricate representations of his own clarification —his surprise by Joy— are androgynous.

The composition of *Till We Have Faces* is quite appropriate as well, as it can also be regarded as androgynous. As mentioned in the introduction, Lewis first wanted to correct Apuleius long before his final understanding of Joy but was unsuccessful in doing so on his own three different times. What he was missing was Joy —literally. A couple of years before their marriage, Joy Davidman volunteered to help Lewis come up with a new book after hearing he "had run out of ideas". He would eventually tell her that he "at last [had] a really good idea for a book" and so the two sought to correct Apuleius together. George Sayers, Lewis' student and close friend, even goes so far as to state that "[h]er part in the book, and there

is so much that she can almost be called its *joint author*, put him very much in her debt. She stimulated and helped him to such an extent that he began to feel that he could hardly write without her.”

Considering Lewis’ multiple attempts and having the idea for thirty years, Davidman was undoubtedly crucial to the novel; after one day with her help, Lewis “had written the first chapter” and “[b]y the end of the month *Till We Have Faces* was about three quarters finished” (Sayers 361; emphasis added).

Davidman’s joint-authorship is perhaps another contributing factor to the unfamiliarity of *Faces* among Lewis’ fictional oeuvre, as her part in his final novel is absent from the rest; she even typed the whole thing, a job that was ordinarily reserved for his brother. Yet her part also explains why it is commonly regarded as Lewis’ greatest work, as *Faces* was composed androgynously: it is the pinnacle of his fiction, just as androgyny was the apogee of humanity. Even from a purely literary standpoint, Virginia Woolf finds that “a great mind is androgynous,” explaining that “[i]t is when this fusion takes place that the mind is fully fertilised and uses all its faculties” (901). Perhaps Woolf did not have in mind dual-authorship such as *Till We Have Faces*’s, but because of it, Lewis’ writing skill went beyond his own, just as marriage “leads us out beyond our sexes,” a truth that would begin clarification for Lewis the same year the novel was published –when he would marry Joy.

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<sup>1</sup> Likely because it was his first novel, *Regress* is a work that, as David C. Dunning notes, Lewis wrote “less for a popular audience than for the intellectual elite of his generation” (title page).

<sup>2</sup> See Nancy Enright’s essay, “C. S. Lewis’s *Till We Have Faces* and the Transformation of Love,” Stephen J. Schuler’s “The Pagan Sacrament: Venus and Eros in C. S. Lewis’ *Till We Have Faces*,”

<sup>3</sup> See Christine Hsiu-Chin Chou’s “The Sacred Space Within: Toward a Psychology of Religion in C.S. Lewis’ *Till We Have Faces*,” and for a psychological, feminist approach, see Sally A. Bartlett’s “Humanistic Psychology in C.S. Lewis’ *Till We Have Faces*: A Feminist Critique”

<sup>4</sup> See Mark Edwards’ “*Till We Have Faces* as Myth and Allegory”, and T.S. Miller’s “The Pearl Maiden’s Psyche: The Middle English Pearl and the Allegorical-Visionary Impulse in *Till We Have Faces*.”

<sup>5</sup> See Erin K. Wagner’s “Divine Surgeons at Work: The Presence and Purpose of the Dream Vision in *Till We Have Faces*”, and, again, see Miller’s essay.

<sup>6</sup> For the connection between Elizabeth and Britomart, see Mary Villeponteaux’s essay, “Displacing Feminine Authority in the Faerie Queene.”

<sup>7</sup> Later in her life, Orual even scrutinizes women based on their appearance, such as Bardia’s wife, Ansit, and her own sister, Redival, after she has bore children.

<sup>8</sup> In his “Note” after the novel, Lewis provides a brief summary of all the “relevant parts” of Apuleius’ tale and he includes the fact that Psyche’s sisters plot against her by telling her “that her mysterious husband must really be a monstrous serpent” (311-3).

<sup>9</sup> In Eugene B. Cantelupe’s essay, appropriately titled “Titian’s *Sacred and Profane Love* Re-Examined”, he also provides a similar review of the multiple interpretations of the figures. However, despite often citing Wind, his conclusion takes the side of the unadorned figure being Sacred love.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. her complaint she reads at 290-2.

<sup>11</sup> Specifically, the comfort *philia* seeks out is described by Lewis as:

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Those are the golden sessions; when four or five of us after a hard day's walking have come to our inn; when our slippers are on, our feet spread out towards the blaze and our drinks at our elbows; when the whole world, and something beyond the world, opens itself to our minds as we talk; and no one has any claim on or any responsibility for another, but all are freemen and equals as if we had first met an hour ago. (*The Four Loves* 72)

<sup>12</sup> Consider John's conversation with the hermit History in *The Pilgrim's Regress*:

"Then is it really true that all men, all nations, have had this vision of an Island?"

"It does not always come in the form of an Island: and to some men, if they inherit particular diseases, it may not come at all."

"But what *is* it, Father? And has it anything to do with the Landlord? I do not know how to fit things together."

"It comes from the Landlord. We know this by its results. It has brought you to where you now are: and nothing leads back to him which did not at first proceed from him." (171)

<sup>13</sup> I have purposefully overlooked Susan in displaying the same characteristic due to her ultimate fate in *The Last Battle*, as she is the only sibling not present at the end of Narnia due to her having given in to "nylons and lipstick" (741).

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