

Spirituality in C. S. Lewis's *Till We Have Faces*: A Thematic Approach

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Abstract

Spirituality is a thread that runs through almost all the literary works of English Critic and novelist C. S. Lewis. This is evident in his *Chronicles of Narnia* (a series of novels written for children), his *Space trilogy* (a science fiction series), and his last novel *Till We Have Faces* in which he retells the myth of Cupid and Psyche. This last novel, which is the subject of the present paper, is rich with spiritual and theological allusions. The reader needs to dig deep beneath the literal sense of the pagan myth to discover them. The fact that Christian spirituality is inherent in the literature of Lewis is due to his being one of the most important apologetics in the twentieth century. In addition, his conversion to Christianity after many years of atheism impacted his literary production greatly. Nevertheless, his literature is not directed only to those who can fathom its spiritual and theological senses. He is a novelist in the first place and all his readers can enjoy his writings whether they are able to unmask its spiritual depths or not.

Keywords

C. S. Lewis – Christian Spirituality – Till We Have Faces

الملخص:

يتميز أدب الكاتب الإنجليزي سي إس لويس (C. S. Lewis) بما يناقشه من أفكار ذات طبيعة روحية ولاهوتية، حيث لا تخلو رواية من رواياته من هذا البعد الروحي سواء سلسلة "حكايات نارنيا" (The Chronicles of Narnia) التي تنتمي إلى أدب الطفل أو "ثلاثية الفضاء" (The Space Trilogy) التي تنتمي إلى أدب الخيال العلمي، أو حتى روايته الأخيرة "حتى تتكشف ملامحنا" (Till We Have Faces) والتي يعيد فيها رواية أسطورة كيوبيد وسايكي (Cupid and Psyche). تزخر هذه الرواية (التي يتناولها هذا البحث بالتحليل) بالإشارات الروحية واللاهوتية التي لكي يكشفها القارئ عليه أن ينقب جيداً تحت سطح الأسطورة الوثنية التي تحكيها الرواية ويفك شفرات رموزها. وجود هذا البعد في أدب لويس ليس بالمستغرب وخاصة في ضوء كونه أحد أهم المدافعين عن الإيمان المسيحي في القرن العشرين. كما أن تجربته الشخصية بالعودة إلى هذا الإيمان بعد سنوات عدة من الإلحاد كان لها أثر كبير على إنتاجه الأدبي. ومع ذلك لا نستطيع القول بأن أدب لويس موجه إلى قطاع معين من القراء – هذا القطاع الذي بإمكانه أن يفهم الأبعاد الروحية المسيحية في رواياته، فهو قبل كل شيء أديب وناقد أدبي يمكن لكل قارئ أن يتذوق كتاباته ويستمتع بها سواء نجح في سبر أغوارها الروحية أم لم ينجح.

الكلمات الدالة:

سي إس لويس – الروحانيات المسيحية – رواية

Introduction

Spirituality is a thread that runs throughout almost all the literary works of C. S. Lewis. *The Chronicles of Narnia* (1950-1956), *The Space Trilogy* (1938-1942), *The Screwtape Letters* (1942), *Screwtape Proposes a Toast* (1961), and *The Pilgrims' Regress* (1933) are all either spiritual personal experiences and journeys or theology presented easily and beautifully in an allegorical or symbolic literary form. His last novel *Till We Have Faces, a Myth Retold* (1956) – as is clear from its title – is a retelling of an old myth, namely, that of Cupid and Psyche. Yet, the pagan myth is only a patent surface that hides a good deal of Christian spirituality .

C. S. Lewis is known as a literary critic and a professor of medieval literature at both Oxford and Cambridge Universities. He is the author of *The History of English Literature in the Sixteenth Century* (1954) and *The Allegory of Love* (1936), which are studies of Renaissance literature and courtly love in medieval literature respectively. His *Discarded Image* (1964) provides readers interested in Renaissance and medieval literature with a "scholarly" introduction on the topic. As a literary critic, he wrote *An Experiment in Criticism* (1961) in which he explains how to approach works of literature properly and how to read and be a good reader. He put his criticism into practice in his *A Preface to Paradise Lost* (1942) in which he comments on John Milton's epic poem .

However, there is much more than literary criticism and teaching of English literature in the life of Lewis. He was a "lay" theologian and an apologist, a writer of devotional works, a science fiction novelist, an author of children's literature, a writer of short stories and a poet. His apologetic work includes *Reflections on the Psalms* (1958), *Mere Christianity* (1952), *Miracles* (1947) and *The Problem of Pain* (1940). In these books, he explains and defends some elements of the Christian faith. The most famous among his devotional works is *The Four Loves* (1960) where he discusses in the light of the Christian faith the different kinds of love expressed in the Greek thought. Lewis' theological and spiritual views expressed in these books of pure theology and spirituality are literary shaped and presented in his fiction whether his science fiction series *The Space Trilogy*, his famous children series *The Chronicles of Narnia*, or the novel in question *Till We Have Faces*. The Bible, as David G. Clark argues in the introduction to his book *C. S. Lewis, A Guide to His Theology*, is disguised in all these works. Knowing that some readers would avoid anything that is overtly theological, Lewis, according to Clark, did not want to scare them away and instead presented it to them in the form of a story. However, this does not mean that Lewis' fiction is meant to be a mere explanation of the Christian faith or that it is addressed to Christian readers. It is primarily literature that can be enjoyed by all. The imaginary land of Narnia with all its talking animals, fauns, and witches can still be loved and enjoyed whether the reader is able to discover the Christian themes in the *Chronicles* or not. Peter J.

Schakel argues that any reader can "be moved by the exciting adventures and the archetypal meanings, and not find the Christian elements obtrusive or offensive" (132). That is why, according to Walter Hooper "the Narnian stories have been so successful in getting into the bloodstream of the secular world" (99). The success of the Narnia Chronicles here does not depend on its Christian themes but rather on its literary quality that can appeal to all alike .

Till We Have Faces

Despite the fact that *Till We Have Faces* was not well received by critics, Lewis considered it his best novel. He says in one of his letters that this novel "is my biggest 'flop' for years, and so of course I think it is my best book." (Lewis, *Letters to Children* 88). In another letter, he states that "the idea of re-writing the old myth . . . has been in my mind ever since I was an undergraduate . . . I've been at work on *Orual* for 35 years" (Lewis, *Collected Letters* 633). After some poetical attempts to retell the old myth, he was finally able to write his fictional masterpiece .

The story of Cupid and Psyche, which Lewis retells in *Till We Have Faces*, is originally part of a Latin novel entitled *Metamorphoses* or *The Golden Ass* by Lucius Apuleius Platonicus. Lewis gives a summary of the original story in the note at the end of the novel. In the same note, he explains :

The central alteration in my own version consists in making Psyche's palace invisible to normal, mortal eyes— if "making"

is not the wrong word for something which forced itself upon me, almost at my first reading of the story, as the way the thing must have been. This change of course brings with it a more ambivalent motive and a different character for my heroine and finally modifies the whole quality of the tale. I felt quite free to go behind Apuleius, whom I suppose to have been its transmitter, not its inventor ... Apuleius was of course a man of genius: but in relation to my work he is a "source," not an "influence" nor a "model" (147).⁽¹⁾

The tale of *Till We Have Faces* is that of Orual and the gods of Glome rather than that of Psyche and Cupid. The invisible palace truly modifies the whole quality of the tale by turning it, as will be shown, into a journey towards faith rather than a simple story of jealousy.

The novel is divided into two books. The first book can be described as a revelation of Orual's false consciousness of the gods and the second part as a process of unmasking this false consciousness. The first book is written from the point of view of Orual's understanding of the gods and the way they work. In effect, she gained this understanding through the doctrines of Glome as presented by the Priest and the wisdom of Greece as taught to her by the Fox. The two created in her a false consciousness that the gods are no more than "lies of poets" (*Till We Have Faces* 4) and if they exist, they are nothing but dark and cruel. In the second book, however, she gradually discovers that her perception of the gods is false.

Thus, she starts a process of unmasking by questioning and reevaluating this perception as well as her relationship with Psyche, Redival and Bardia. The peak of this process is the reading of her complaint against the gods in their court where the mask hiding her true motives and the veil hiding her face eventually fall .

According to French Philosopher Paul Ricoeur, false consciousness is the opposite of the Cartesian cogito :

The philosopher trained in the school of Descartes knows that things are doubtful, that they are not such as they appear; but he does not doubt that consciousness is such as it appears to itself; in consciousness, meaning and consciousness of meaning coincide. Since Marx, Nietzsche and Freud. This too become doubtful. After the doubt about things, we have started to doubt consciousness (Freud and Philosophy 33) .

Descartes doubted the truth of everything. The only thing he was sure of, however, was the consciousness through which he was able to overcome doubt and prove his existence: "I think, therefore I am." Freud, Marx and Nietzsche, nevertheless, attacked Descartes' stronghold, posing the question: What if consciousness is false? What if man, individually or collectively, is mistaken concerning the truth of her/his beliefs, motives and actions? What if the ideas or the concepts we believe in are not as innocent as they seem to be but have rather been created to serve certain

motives or ideologies? There are ideas and beliefs that are accepted without examination. Whether they are individual convictions or cultural norms, they are taken for granted. We may be mistaken in accepting them as such, as the real motives impelling us to accept them as true are unknown to us. So we believe but with a false consciousness. This false consciousness makes us slip into illusion. To be discovered or unmasked as false, the illusion created by a false consciousness needs what Ricoeur calls an exercise of suspicion in which the motives behind the idea or the belief is questioned and reevaluated. It is this exercise that Orual practices all through the second book

The Religion of Glome: Different Attitudes

Religion in Glome centers upon the worship of Ungit. The House of Ungit is like the religious institution of this pagan kingdom. Not all the main characters in the novel (Bardia, the Fox, Orual and Psyche) have the same relationship with Ungit. Actually, they represent different religious patterns in the relationship with the divine. However, before shedding light on such patterns, it is important to see first how Ungit, as a goddess, is represented by the priest and how he himself is described. Orual is always frightened by the way the priest looks like:

I think that what frightened me (in those early days) was the holiness of the smell that hung about him — a temple-smell of blood (mostly pigeons' blood, but he had sacrificed men, too) and burnt fat and singed hair and wine and stale incense. It is the Ungit smell. Perhaps I was afraid of his clothes too; all the skins they were made of, and the dried

bladders, and the great mask shaped like a bird's head which hung on his chest. It looked as if there were a bird growing out of his body (5) .

She also describes the house of Ungit where she stands as follows:

About as far beyond the ford of the Shennit as our city is on this side of it you come to the holy house of Ungit ... Ungit sits there alone. In the furthest recess of her house where she sits it is so dark that you cannot see her well, but in summer enough light may come down from the smoke-holes in the roof to show her a little. She is a black stone without head or hands or face, and a very strong goddess ⁽²⁾.

Ungit stands on the darkest spot of her house where she cannot be seen. And even when a glimpse of her can be won, one sees nothing but a black faceless stone. The priest who is the "voice of Ungit" (21) is always with his fearful mask and "holy knife" (7) and has the "smell of slaughtering" (7) all over him. Whenever he speaks of Ungit, he speaks of her anger, and of her demand for more sacrifices and more blood: "Her anger never comes upon us without cause, and it never ceases without expiation" (21). The priest also stresses that "Holy places are dark places ... Holy wisdom is not clear and thin like water, but thick and dark like blood" (23-24). The gods, then, according to their representative, are angry bloodthirsty beings who cannot be easily understood by human wisdom and with whom man cannot come face to face because Ungit is after all faceless .

In addition, the girls of Ungit or the temple girls reveal another aspect about her: She is greedy and consuming. She demands total devotion but gives nothing in return. She takes life and gives barrenness. She takes youth and gives old age. The girls of Ungit spend all their lives sitting in her house:

each cross-legged at the door of her cell. Thus they sat year after year (and usually barren after a few seasons) till they turned into the toothless crones who were hobbling about the floor, tending fires and sweeping — sometimes, after a swift glance round, stooping as suddenly as a bird to pick up a coin or a half-gnawed bone and hide it in their gowns ... the seed of men that might have gone to make hardy boys and fruitful girls was drained into that house, and nothing given back ... the silver that men had earned hard and needed was also drained in there, and nothing given back ... the girls themselves were devoured and were given nothing back (128).

Each character reacts differently as to those angry, devouring gods. Bardia represents the person who accepts whatever he is told by the religious authority without questioning it. He is the person who wants to keep himself on the safe side, as far the divine is concerned. He tells Orual :

It's not my way to say more than I can help of gods and divine matters. I'm not impious. I wouldn't eat with my left hand, or lie with my wife when the moon's full, or slit open a pigeon to clean it with an iron knife, or do anything else that's unchancy and profane, even if the King himself were to bid me. And as for sacrifices, I've always done all that can be expected of a man on my pay. But for anything more— I think the less Bardia meddles with the gods, the less they'll meddle with Bardia (65).

The Fox, on the other hand, questions everything related to the gods through the lens of Greek wisdom and philosophy. He believes that man is his own god. He tells Orual that "there is the god in every man" (72) and that the sort of gods Glome believes in is "all folly and lies of poets" (13). He even teaches her to think of the priest as "of a mere schemer and a politic man who put into the mouth of Ungit whatever might most increase his own power and lands or most harm his enemies" (25). He believes that it is the will to power that is behind religion and the way it works on people.

For the fox, every religious belief is to be scrutinized through philosophy and science. When the priest was explaining to the king how and why the "Great Offering" (an important theme that will be tackled below) must be made, he told him of a shepherd who saw the Shadowbrute on the Grey Mountain on the first night lions appeared in

Glome. The Fox doubted the story and offered a rational, scientific explanation of what the man saw: "the shepherd's tale is very questionable. If the man had a torch, of necessity the lion would have a big black shadow behind it. The man was scared and new waked from sleep. He took a shadow for a monster" (22). Again, when the priest spoke of the Brute as Ungit herself and as Ungit's son and the person to be offered as the "Accursed" and at the same time as the perfect in land, the Fox evaluated the whole matter from the point of view of Greek wisdom, concluding that the priest spoke nonsense:

Do you not see, Master, that the Priest is talking nonsense? 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. And a moment ago the victim of this abominable sacrifice was to be the Accursed, the wickedest person in the whole land, offered as a punishment. And now it is to be the best person in the whole land — the perfect victim — married to the god as a reward. Ask him which he means. It can't be both (23)

If Bardia and the Fox represent the traditional believer as opposed to the traditional skeptic, Psyche and Orual represent the religious mystic as opposed to the religiously mystified. Psyche, as will be shown, represents the true believer who grasps the reality of the divine in a true personal relationship away from the religious institution. Orual, however, is totally immersed in a false consciousness. Unlike Bardia, she does not take religion for granted and unlike the fox, Greek wisdom is not her only

point of reference. A great deal of painful personal experience is involved .

The picture the priest draws of the gods shunned them away from the heart of Orual. It created a barrier between her and the gods and made her in addition to her physical deformity, spiritually deformed. She always feels that "the air were sweeter as [she] got away from all that holiness" (44). She sees that "everything's dark about the gods" (59) and that to live in the house of Ungit is to live "in the dark— all blood and incense and muttering and the reek of burnt fat ... living among things you can't see — dark and holy and horrible. (60). Orual, as will be shown, is desperate for love. However, as Doris T. Myers notices in her *Bareface: A Guide to C. S. Lewis' last Novel*, when the Fox told her about the story of Aphrodite and Anchises, she was not moved by the love in the story but rather by the cruelty of the gods. Her comment on the story is: "if the goddess was more beautiful in Greece than in Glome she was equally terrible in each "(4).

Orual believes that everything in her life is an evidence of the cruelty of the gods. The face they have given her is proof enough that they hate her. She is ugly to the extent that her father calls her "goblin daughter" and "crude face." Bardia also notices that: "If a man was blind and she weren't the King's daughter, she'd make him a good wife" (43). For poor Orual, who knows that there is no hope for her ever to be loved and married, this comment is "the nearest thing to a love-speech that was ever

made [her]" (43). After she defeated Argan, Prince Trunia begged her to take her veil off (the veil as a theme will be later referred to) so that he can see her face. She refused, however, as she enjoyed the manner of his conversation with her:

The Prince was at my side, saying all manner of fine things about me (as indeed he had some reason) and always begging me to let him see my face. It was only a kind of courteous banter and would have been nothing to any other woman. To me it was so new and (I must confess this also) so sweet that I could not choose but keep the sport up a little (107).

When Psyche was born, Orual finally found someone to love. She took care of her as if she was her daughter not stepsister. She was very happy with her and the Fox. After Psyche's birth, all the years for Orual seemd "to have been all springs and summers ... the almonds and the cherries blossomed earlier in those years and the blossoms lasted longer" (11). Here too, as Orual believes, the cruelty of the gods makes itself clear. They gave her nothing in the world to love but Psyche and then they demanded Psyche to be offered to them as a sacrifice. The priest speaks of them as angry, devouring and bloodthirsty beings and everything in her life seem to prove him right. Despite the fact that she tends to be as rational and philosophical as the Fox when the gods are concerned, she believes he is a fool to say that the gods do not exist. They do exist and their cruelty proves it: "He thought there were no gods,

or else (the fool!) that they were better than men. It never entered his mind — he was too good— to believe that the gods are real, and viler than the vilest men "(33).

Such cruelty on the part of the gods leaves her with a crude face as well as a crude soul. Her ugly face would not give her a man to love. The cruelty of the gods makes her unable to love them and so they will not love her back. Everything on both sides, the physical and the spiritual, seems to be determined for her :

No man will love you, though you gave your life for him, unless you have a pretty face. So (might it not be?), the gods will not love you (however you try to pleasure them, and whatever you suffer) unless you have that beauty of soul. In either race, for the love of men or the love of a god, the winners and losers are marked out from birth. We bring our ugliness, in both kinds, with us into the world, with it our destiny (134).

Psyche, on the other hand, has a beautiful face and has that beauty of the soul. In short, she has the two things that Orual misses most. As for her beautiful face :

There is only this to be said, that there were no two opinions about it, from man or woman, once she had been seen. It was beauty that did not astonish you till afterwards when you had gone out of sight of her and reflected on it. While she was with

you, you were not astonished. It seemed the most natural thing in the world. As the Fox delighted to say, she was "according to nature"; what every woman, or even everything, ought to have been and meant to be, but had missed by some trip of chance. Indeed, when you looked at her you believed, for a moment, that they had not missed it. 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 — she had the strangest and, I thought, unchanciest love for all manner of brutes — the toad became beautiful (10-11).

As for the beauty of the soul, Psyche is in love with the divine, not with Ungit, however, but with the god of the Gray Mountain. Psyche never talks of Ungit but always of the god of the Gray Mountain. She has been in love with him since she was a child. Orual noticed :

Psyche, almost from the beginning (for she was a very quick, thinking child), was half in love with the Mountain. She made herself stories about it. "When I'm big," she said, "I will be a great, great queen, married to the greatest king of all, and he will build me a castle of gold and amber up there on the very top"(11).

In her fever, she "talked most of her gold and amber castle on the ridge of the Grey Mountain" (15) and before the offering, she tries to

comfort Orual, telling her that she is not going to die but rather be united with the love she has always been longing for :

I am going, you see, to the Mountain. You remember how we used to look and long? And all the stories of my gold and amber house, up there against the sky, where we thought we should never really go? The greatest King of all was going to build it for me. If only you could believe it, Sister! No, listen. Do not let grief shut up your ears and harden your heart (35).

Now, why Psyche seems to be the only character who speaks of the god of the Gray Mountain rather than of Ungit? Why does she speak of him as someone with whom she can fall in love, while the priest speaks of him as a shadowbrute in the only occasion he mentions him? Why does Orual, who already hates Ungit, come to hate him as well after Psyche was offered to him as a sacrifice? Who is the god of the Gray Mountain, and who is Ungit? What do they represent in the novel? Answering these questions is important for tracing Orual's journey from false consciousness to post-critical faith.

The Gods of Glome: Erroneous and Real Image

Since *Till We Have Faces* is a retelling of the myth of Cupid and Psyche, some studies of the novel interpret Ungit and the god of the Gray Mountain as alternatives of Venus and Eros especially that the events of

the novel take place in a pagan setting. Stephen J. Schuler, for example, argues that “Ungit and her son the shadowbrute should be understood as Venus and Eros, who represent the sex act and romantic attraction, respectively” (295). Other studies argue that Ungit is not a pagan goddess but simply a projection of Orual’s inner self. Chad Schrock is of the opinion that what Orual

has called the gods, or Ungit, has all the time been her id, her subconscious, her shadow-self, made holy and mysterious to her because it is what she has refused to know about herself and projected away from her onto the blank, veiled faces of the gods she also did not know ”(16).

In this study, Ungit and the god of the Gray Mountain are rather seen as two aspects of the divine. Ungit represents the divine aspect of judgment (as reflected in the Law of Moses with all its sacrificial system), and the god of the Gray Mountain represents the divine aspect of love (as reflected in the redeeming grace in the person of Jesus Christ). Both aspects are inherently divine. However, when the first aspect is the one that is always stressed and spotlighted, a false consciousness is inevitably developed. Man may end up having a false consciousness that the divine is severe and uncompromising. In such a case, better be obedient to avoid any punishment (like Bardia). Alternatively, s/he may live by the false feeling that the divine is remotely inaccessible and no personal relationship can ever be developed with it (like Orual) for who

can ever love her/his judge. In discussing the concepts of law and grace in his Notes on the Pentateuch, Charles Mackintosh², wonders :

Is there nothing in the mind of God save “thou shalt” and “thou shalt not?” Is there no grace? No mercy? No loving kindness? Is God not to manifest what He is? Is He not to tell out the deep secrets of that love which dwells in His bosom? Is there naught in the divine character but stern requirement and prohibition? Were this so, we should have to say, “God is law” instead of “God is love.” But, blessed be His name, there is more in His heart than could ever be wrapped up in the “ten words” uttered on the fiery mount (266).

Stressing that "God is law" creates the false consciousness that there is no grace, no mercy and no loving kindness in God. This is what happens to John in *The Pilgrim's Regress*. John, as mentioned above, is taken to the Steward to talk to him about the Landlord :

When John came into the room, there was an old man with a red, round face, who was very kind and full of jokes, so that John quite got over his fears, and they had a good talk about fishing tackle and bicycles. But just when the talk was at its best, the Steward got up and cleared his throat. He then took down a mask from the wall with a long white beard attached to it and suddenly clapped it on his face, so that his appearance was

awful. And he said, 'Now I am going to talk to you about the Landlord (23-22) .

The Steward is a kind person. He is even full of jokes. However, when it comes to speaking about the Landlord, he turns into a horrible, awful person. He sees nothing but the stern, just Landlord who forgives no mistake and who punishes the one breaking His laws by throwing him into a dark hole full of snakes and scorpions. Consequently, instead of presenting the real Landlord to John, he misrepresented him. He created in John a false consciousness that the Landlord is cruel while in effect he is love. It is true that the Landlord punishes mistakes and it is true that there is hell. However, this is half the truth. Presenting only half the truth is nothing but a misrepresentation of the truth. The result is that John was relieved to be informed that there is no Landlord .

The priest also never speaks of the love of the gods (which the god of the Gray Mountain stands for). May be he himself does not feel it. It is true that God is a righteous judge who hates and punishes sin and whose anger never comes upon man without cause and never ceases without expiation (according to the law). Still, He is love and His love, mercy and forgiveness are extended to the righteous and sinners alike. The Bible says that God: "maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust" (Matthew 5: 45)³. However, because the priest, the voice of the gods, concentrates all the time on the fearful side, Orual and Bardia too fail to see the other loving face. No one

wants to see the fearful face of judgment. That is why Ungit is placed in the dark where she cannot be seen and consequently where no personal relationship can be developed with her. On the mount of Sinai where the law was given to Moses, God:

revealed Himself in awful majesty, amid blackness, darkness, tempest, thunderings, and lightnings. These were not the attendant circumstances of an economy of grace and mercy; but they were well suited to one of truth and righteousness; and the law was that and nothing else (Mackintosh 266) .

Despite all that, Moses declared to the people of Israel that God is "merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth" (Exodus 34: 6). The priest of Ungit, however, never does. Ungit then is a faulty representation of the divine as far as she is an incomplete picture of the divine.

There is another important point in the passage quoted above, which is the mask that the Steward puts while talking about the Landlord. In *Till We Have Faces*, the priest also always speaks about Ungit from behind his mask and Ungit girls serve in her house wearing their masks. In order to understand what it means to speak of God from behind a mask and the consequences of such a thing, some theology should be brought into the scene. In his second epistle to the Corinthians, St. Paul writes :

...we use great plainness of speech: And not as Moses, which put a veil over his face, that the children of Israel could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished: But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same veil untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which veil is done away in Christ. ... But we all, with open face beholding as in glass the glory of the Lord... (3: 12-18)

In the chapter from which this passage is quoted, St. Paul compares between the Old Covenant preached by Moses and the New Covenant he preached. Moses preached the Law. Paul preached the redeeming grace and love of Christ. Moses spoke to the Israelites about the covenant of God from behind a veil on his face. Paul preached the Gospel with great plainness of speech, "keeping back nothing; disguising nothing; concealing nothing" (Clarke 232). Both the Old and the New Covenants reveal divine glory and heavenly things about "the justice, holiness, goodness, mercy, and majesty of God" (Clark 231). In the former they are "obscurely delivered" through the Jewish religious system with its symbolic rites of sacrifices and offerings. In the later, however, they are clearly and directly given through the person of Jesus Christ, the redeeming Saviour. The Christians of Corinth were able to see the glory of all heavenly things related to Christ and to their salvation with an unveiled face. The People of Israel, however, failed to see all what the covenant alluded to as their hearts were veiled. The moment Moses put on a veil over his face so as not to be gazed at, was also a symbolic moment of a symbolic veil being put over their hearts. According to

Duane A. Garrett in his study "Veiled Hearts: The Translation and Interpretations of 2 Corinthians 3":

The veil ... was also Moses' resignation to the fact that the Israelites would never see into the real purpose of having a covenant with God, even when it was quite literally shining like a beacon in front of them. Their focus on the physical phenomenon of a glowing face was blinding them to the whole reason for coming to Sinai, that they might become God's special possession (Exod 19:5) ... The Israelites, because of their hardness of heart, could not see the glory of life in the Spirit, the very thing Moses' face reflected, but were instead distracted by the glowing itself. And so Moses had no choice but to don the veil. This is the greater theological meaning that Paul perceives in the event (754-755).

In the Biblical passage, a veiled face indicates veiled hearts. In both *Till We Have Faces* and *The Pilgrims' Regress*, a veiled or masked face brings with it veiled hearts that fail to see into the reality of the divine. The Steward seems to believe that somberness is the face that suits the stern nature of the divine he believes in. The priest seems to believe that the public are not allowed to see of the divine more than what they are given. He alone is the "voice of Ungit." Hence, the mask is present in both cases. The result is alienated and veiled hearts that are separated from the divine .

It can be said then that presenting half the truth from behind a mask doubly alienate Orual from the gods. Arnom, the new priest, tries to bring about a religious reformation. He, as Orual tells us :

opened new windows in the walls and her house was not so dark. He also kept it differently, scouring away the blood after each slaughter and sprinkling fresh water; it smelled cleaner and less holy. And Arnom was learning from the Fox to talk like a philosopher about the gods. The great change came when he proposed to set up an image of her— a woman-shaped image in the Greek fashion — in front of the old shapeless stone. I think he would like to have got rid of the stone altogether, but it is, in a manner, Ungit herself and the people would have gone mad if she were moved ... I think I felt that an image of this sort would be somehow a defeat for the old, hungry, faceless Ungit whose terror had been over me in childhood (112-113).

Arnom, despite all the great changes he made, was not able to get to the core of the problem. Religion does not need philosophy and decorations to be attractive. It just needs to be rightly presented. Orual felt the changes were a defeat to Orual. Surprisingly enough for her, however, this is not what the simple woman who was crying at the feet of Ungit in the temple felt. When Orual asked her: "Has Ungit comforted you, child?", she answered :

"Oh yes, Queen," ... her face almost brightening, "Oh yes. Ungit has given me great comfort. There's no goddess like Ungit." "Do you always pray to that Ungit," said I (nodding toward the shapeless stone), "and not to that?" Here I nodded towards our new image, standing tall and straight in her robes and (whatever the Fox might say of it) the loveliest thing our land has ever seen. "Oh, always this, Queen," said she. "That other, the Greek Ungit, she wouldn't understand my speech. She's only for nobles and learned men. There's no comfort in her" (129-130).

This simple woman with her simple faith is able to see into the reality of Ungit with an unveiled heart. She can find her a source of comfort even amid all the system of sacrifices and offerings surrounding her. Her understanding echoes the words of Jesus Christ in the Gospel of Matthew about those who witnessed his miracles but failed to understand his gospel: "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes" (Matthew 11: 25). For Orual and Arnorn, Ungit is simply a heavy religion that can be modernized (each for her/his reasons). For this simple woman, however, she is a goddess to whom she can turn, in whom she finds refuge and from whom gets comfort .

One thing is left to be said about Ungit. More than once in the novel, Orual identifies herself with Ungit, saying "I am Ungit". How can Orual say so of herself if Ungit is an aspect of the divine, as shown above?

Ungit, as said above, represents the Jewish Law in contrast to the god of the Gray Mountain who represents Christian grace. Law and grace are two important concepts in Christianity in relation to the concept of man's fallen nature. When Adam and Eve disobeyed God in the Garden of Eden, the perfect nature God created them in changed to a fallen nature. The Law reveals this fallen nature while grace offers it salvation and reinstitutes it freely to its previous position (new creation). The Law, according to Mackintosh in his abovementioned book was "in a certain sense, like a perfect mirror let down from heaven to reveal to man his moral derangement" (267). Interestingly enough, in the vision Orual cries "I am Ungit," she does so in front of her father's mirror in which one can see his "perfect image." When Orual says "I am Ungit," she is simply saying: "I am the fallen nature revealed in the mirror of the Law." Mackintosh also says that in the light of the law, man discovers that "he actually is the very thing which the law condemns" (266), he discovers that he is the very object of the law that is "set forth the exceeding sinfulness of sin" (267). This is what Orual is: the very object of Ungit. She is the very exposition of the ugliness of sin both physically and spiritually. Orual is Ungit; not that she is an embodiment of Ungit, but as far as she is an example of man born "under the law" (Galatians 4: 4), i.e., man born under the judgment of the law that "the wage of sin is death" (Romans 6: 23). The Bible says that those born under the law are freed from the law by the grace of Jesus Christ .

In one of Orual's visions, the Fox says: "All, even Psyche, are born into the house of Ungit. And all must get free from her" (142). His words echo the above quoted Biblical verses. All people are born under the law and they need the grace of God in the person of Jesus Christ to get free from the judgment of the law. The god of the Gray Mountain tells Orual: "You also shall be Psyche" (84). This means that Orual too will eventually be freed from Ungit (from the law) by accepting his love to her. There is still a third vision that echoes this law-grace dichotomy in the characters of Orual and Psyche in their relations to Ungit and the god of the Gray Mountain respectively. In the vision where she and the Fox speak about the tasks Ungit gave to Psyche and her, Orual says: "Then it was really I who bore the anguish. But she achieved the tasks" (142). The person under the law bears the anguish of the judgment of the law on sin. However, it is grace that accomplishes the task and pays the wage of sin for those who accept Jesus Christ as Savior .

Psyche and the Great Offering :

If Orual stands for man's fallen nature, Psyche stands for the perfect nature that man once enjoyed and that he can get back by the love and grace of God. Psyche's beauty "seemed the most natural thing in the world ... what every woman, or even everything, ought to have been and meant to be, but had missed by some trip of chance" (11). Man was meant to be perfect and ought to have been perfect, but missed this perfection because of the fall in the Garden of Eden. In addition, there are

clear hints in the novel, especially in relation to the incident of the great offering, that establish Psyche as a Christ-like figure. Christ healed the Jews and did many miracles among them, yet they cried out for his crucifixion. Similarly, the people of Glome wanted Psyche to heal them and then called her the "Accursed" and demanded that she should be sacrificed to the Shadowbrute. Trying to convince the king of the plausibility of the great offering, the priest tells him: "It's only sense that one should die for many" (28). His words echo what the High Priest said about the crucifixion of Jesus: "it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not" (John 12: 50). Few days before the offering, Psyche supped together with Orual and told her: "there is some bad thing coming towards us — I have felt it a long time — but I don't think it will come tonight" (19). The scene echoes Jesus' last supper with his disciples and his prophecy that one of them was going to betray him .

The incident of presenting Psyche as an offering to the god of the Great Mountain is an important incident in the novel. It shows the spiritual difference between Psyche and Orual as well as their different perceptions of the gods. It also reveals a lot about Orual's love for Psyche. This point, however, will be touched upon later. In discussing the different patterns of faith in Glome, Psyche appeared to be the only person who speaks about the god of the Grey Mountain and even seemed to be in love with him. The priest said that "in the Great Offering, the victim must be perfect ... The best in the land" (23). Psyche's spiritual

purity to which her perfect beauty testifies makes her the best in the land and allows her rather than Orual to be united with the god of the Gray Mountain in marriage. Marriage is used in the Old Testament as an image of the strong spiritual relationship between the People of Israel and God. It is also used in the New Testament to describe the spiritual bond between Christ and the church as the assembly of believers. In both testaments, it means that since believers are spiritually united with God, they are to be spiritually honest and faithful to Him as a wife should be towards her husband. For example, Isaiah 54: 5 says: "For thy Maker is thine husband," and Hosea 4: 19-20 says: "And I will betroth thee unto me forever ... and thou shalt know the Lord." In the New Testament, the Book of Revelation says: "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready" (7.19).

Orual asked her father to let her be offered to Ungit's son instead of Psyche. In a moving scene, he came to her without a word and led her to his "perfect" mirror, mentioned above, let her see her image in it and said: "Ungit asked for the best in the land as her son's bride ... And you'd give her that" (29). Orual could not be the Great Offering then. However, at the end of her journey, she too was united with the god of the Gray Mountain. Despite the fact that the king is right, his words are not that of a spiritually enlightened person but rather of a cruel father. He too, after all, does not enjoy a good spiritual relationship with the gods. His

relationship with the divine is simply institutional, that which a political institution may have with a religious institution .

The spiritual difference between Psyche and Orual is reflected in their perception of the gods. In their conversation at the night of the offering, Orual sees nothing in the sacrifice but blood and cruel gods who want to separate them. Psyche, however, sees in the sacrifice the accomplishment of her old dream about her castle of gold and amber. She is not frightened at all. The only thing that worries her is to find no god or holy brute up there on the mountain. However, she quickly puts the idea out of her mind, telling Orual that all her life before that moment was like living in a prison and now she is finally going to be free. She always longed for that moment of death/marriage :

It was on happy days when we were up there on the hills, the three of us, with the wind and the sunshine . . . where you couldn't see Glome or the palace. Do you remember? The colour and the smell, and looking across at the Grey Mountain in the distance? And because it was so beautiful, it set me longing, always longing. Somewhere else there must be more of it. Everything seemed to be saying, Psyche come! But I couldn't (not yet) come and I didn't know where I was to come to. It almost hurt me. I felt like a bird in a cage when the other birds of its kind are flying home (35)".

In short her situation echoes what faith should be, for faith is "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Hebrews 11: 1).

Orual's Case against the Gods

Having shed light on the religion of Glome, its gods and the different patterns of faith among its people, it is now time to turn to Orual's case against them. The main reason for which Orual writes her book is to accuse the gods and show their cruelty towards her :

I will write in this book what no one who has happiness would dare to write. I will accuse the gods, especially the god who lives on the Grey Mountain. That is, I will tell all he has done to me from the very beginning, as if I were making my complaint of him before a judge. But there is no judge between gods and men, and the god of the mountain will not answer me. Terrors and plagues are not an answer. I write in Greek as my old master taught it to me. It may some day happen that a traveler from the Greeklands will again lodge in this palace and read the book. Then he will talk of it among the Greeks, where there is great freedom of speech even about the gods themselves. Perhaps their wise men will know whether my complaint is right or whether the god could have defended himself if he had made an answer (2).

Orual claims that the god of the Gray Mountain hates her because he, as mentioned above, wanted her beloved Psyche to be offered to him as a sacrifice. Another part of the accusation is that he gives her "no answer" as to the reality of Psyche's alleged palace and god-husband, even when she asked for it sincerely as she claims :

I spoke to the gods myself, alone, in such words as came to me, not in a temple, and without a sacrifice. I stretched myself face downward on the floor and called upon them with my whole heart. I took back every word I had said against them. I promised anything they might ask of me, if only they would send me a sign. They gave me none (73).

Orual relies heavily on the silence of the gods and uses it as evidence against them. She declares herself innocent on the basis of their silence, claiming that to expect an answer from the gods "is like asking for an apple from a tree that fruited the day the world was made" (133). Even when they give her a sign (when she gets a glimpse of Psyche's palace), it is not a clear, direct sign but more of a riddle that adds more questions rather than giving a satisfying answer :

And now, you who read, give judgment. That moment when I either saw or thought I saw the House— does it tell against the gods or against me? Would they (if they answered) make it a part of their defense? say it was a sign, a hint, beckoning me to

answer the riddle one way rather than the other? I'll not grant them that. What is the use of a sign which is itself only another riddle? It might — I'll allow so much— it might have been a true seeing; the cloud over my mortal eyes may have been lifted for a moment. It might not; what would be easier than for one distraught and not, maybe, so fully waking as she seemed, gazing at a mist, in a half-light, to fancy what had filled her thoughts for so many hours? What easier, even, than for the gods themselves to send the whole ferly for a mockery? Either way, there's divine mockery in it. They set the riddle and then allow a seeming that can't be tested and can only quicken and thicken the tormenting whirlpool of your guess-work. If they had an honest intention to guide us, why is their guidance not plain? Psyche could speak plain when she was three; do you tell me the gods have not yet come so far? (64).

Even when she clearly saw the face of Psyche's god-husband and heard his voice, she accuses him of altering her motives behind asking Psyche to get a lamp to see his face to know whether he is a shadowbrute (according to Bardia and the doctrines of Glome), or a thief that is deceiving her (according to the Fox and the wisdom of Greece) :

He made it to be as if, from the beginning, I had known that Psyche's lover was a god, and as if all my doublings, fears, guessings, debating, questionings of Bardia, questionings of the Fox, all the rummage and

business of it, had been trumped-up foolery, dust blown in my own eyes by myself. You, who, read my book, judge. Was it so? Or, at least, had it been so in the very past, before this god changed the past? And if they can indeed change the past, why do they never do so in mercy ?(84-83).

Her conclusion is that:

I say, therefore, that there is no creature (toad, scorpion, or serpent) so noxious to man as the gods. Let them answer my charge if they can. It may well be that, instead of answering, they'll strike me mad or leprous or turn me into beast, bird, or tree. But will not all the world then know (and the gods will know it knows) that this is because they have no answer? (120-119)

Does Orual really believe that the gods have no answer? Does she really believe that it is her love for Psyche that motivated her to accuse the gods?

False Consciousness, Suspicion and Unmasking

Orual decided to write her charge against the gods after her meeting with the priest of Essur in which he told her the story of goddess Istra. The story he told her was actually her own story with Psyche but with twisted facts. The story says that Istra's sisters saw the palace and

because they were jealous, they decided to ruin her happiness. Hearing the gods' version of her story, she felt that

It was as if the gods themselves had first laughed, and then spat, in my face. So this was the shape the story had taken. You may say, the shape the gods had given it. For it must be they who had put it into the old fool's mind or into the mind of some other dreamer from whom he'd learned it. How could any mortal have known of that palace at all? That much of the truth they had dropped into someone's mind, in a dream, or an oracle, or however they do such things. That much; and wiped clean out the very meaning, the pith, the central knot, of the whole tale. Do I not do well to write a book against them, telling what they have kept hidden? ... I saw all in a moment how the false story would grow and spread and be told all over the earth; and I wondered how many of the other sacred stories are just such twisted falsities as this (117).

The two central knots of the whole tale, the pillars on which her charge against the gods stands are the invisibility of the palace and her love for Psyche. Now that the gods hid such truths in their version of the story, she decided to unveil what they hid and to unmask the truth lying beneath their twisted story. In short, she decided to use the hermeneutics of suspicion to prove the gods wrong to the Greeks whom she wants to read her book and judge her charge against the gods. She sought to uncover the false consciousness that her readers and many other people may get from the false story of the gods.

As far as the invisibility of the palace is concerned, Orual unmasked the signs given to her by the gods as riddles that they want her to guess wrong so that they may punish her with more terrors and plagues. The signs may create the false consciousness that the gods are merciful and that in their mercy they answer her. However, the reality is that they are cruel and their signs are nothing but a mockery :

There's divine mockery in it. They set the riddle and then allow a seeming that can't be tested and can only quicken and thicken the tormenting whirlpool of your guess-work. If they had an honest intention to guide us, why is their guidance not plain? (64) .

Throughout the first book, which constitutes her case against the gods, Orual stresses the silence of the gods, repeating that they gave her "no sign" and "no answer." And when a sign is given it is nothing but a mockery and "some trick of the gods." In her first journey to the Mountain with Bardia, when they came to the valley separating them from the Mountain, everything around them was extremely beautiful to the extent that she forgot her sadness for Psyche and even her own ugliness for a moment. There came to her "as if it were a voice— no words — but if you made it into words it would be, Why should your heart not dance?" (45), However, she fought against this happy mood,

knowing that it is mere "seemliness" that hides another agony from the gods :

Was I not right to struggle against this fool-happy mood? Mere seemliness ... I knew the world too well to believe this sudden smiling. What woman can have patience with the man who can be yet again deceived by his doxy's fawning after he has thrice proved her false? I should be just like such a man if a mere burst of fair weather, and fresh grass after a long drought, and health after sickness, could make me friends again with this god-haunted, plague-breeding, decaying, tyrannous world. I had seen. I was not a fool. I did not know then, however, as I do now, the strongest reason for distrust. The gods never send us this invitation to delight so readily or so strongly as when they are preparing some new agony. We are their bubbles; they blow us big before they prick us (45) .

In a third episode, she unmasked the answer of the gods as a mere twisting of the truth. She saw the face of the god of the Gray Mountain and heard his voice telling her clearly: "You also shall be Psyche." She claimed, however, that he changed the past and "made it to be as if, from the beginning, I had known that Psyche's lover was a god ...if they can indeed change the past, why do they never do so in mercy"? (85-84).

Orual then unmasks the "answers" of the gods as "riddles" or "no answers" motivated by their cruel and deceiving nature. Her suspicion in the motives of the gods rests on her assumption that she, an expert in the dealings with the gods, is able to see the deeper truth behind the false consciousness they want to create in the minds of those who hear the story as they put it in the mouth of the priest of Essur. She alone is able to reveal the truth of the gods to which others are blind. However, she practices an inadequate suspicion that led her to the wrong kind of affirmation. Let alone the fact that it is an affirmation built on her false consciousness of the gods explained above.

The veil was the wrong answer to an inadequate unmasking. Just as the people of Israel failed to see into the reality of God's covenant with them and ended up with veiled hearts, Orual failed to see into the reality of the gods and decided to go veiled outside and inside the palace, even in her room all by herself. The veil, as she claims was a "treaty made with [her] ugliness" (87). She says: "I think my veil served me better than the boldest countenance in the world, maybe better than beauty would have done" (90). In another situation, she says :

as soon as my face was invisible, people began to discover all manner of beauties in my voice. At first it was "deep as a man's, but nothing in the world less mannish;" later, and until it grew cracked with age, it was the voice of a spirit, a Siren, Orpheus, what you will (110).

In addition, with the veil, came her new identity as a queen of Glome. She decided to kill Orual and bury her under these two layers of the veil and the queen: She thought that: "If Orual could vanish altogether into the Queen, the gods would almost be cheated" (89-90). The veil, which gave her "a kind of power" (88), transformed the ugly, weak Orual into the strong, just queen of Glome. The cruel gods who are capable of twisting the truth will no longer be able to harm her now that she is hidden from them. She thought that the new woman-shaped image of Ungit in the Greek fashion "weakened" Ungit. Similarly, she thought that her new image as veiled queen cheated the gods. However, in order to have a face and to meet the gods face to face, the veil and the false consciousness blinding her eye to the reality of the gods should fall .

There is still another side to the case of Orual against the gods, namely, her love for Psyche, which they claim to be jealousy. Or is it jealousy that she claims to be love? Throughout presenting her case to her readers, Orual stresses her love for Psyche. She stresses that Psyche is "my child whom I had cared for all her life" (60) and that she indeed was "her mother and her father, too" (74). If that is true, why both Psyche and the Fox in the incident of lighting the lamb defined her love as hatred? Psyche tells her :

You are indeed teaching me about kinds of love I did not know.
It is like looking into a deep pit. I am not sure whether I like

your kind better than hatred. Oh, Orual— to take my love for you, because you know it goes down to my very roots and cannot be diminished by any other newer love, and then to make of it a tool, a weapon, a thing of policy and mastery, an instrument of torture— I begin to think I never knew you. Whatever comes after, something that was between us dies here (80).

The fox also tells her: "Do you know what it is? There's one part love in your heart, and five parts anger, and seven parts pride" (72). Orual seems to be living with another false consciousness as far as her love for Psyche is concerned. However, while her false consciousness of the gods is a result of the misrepresentation of the divine on the part of both the priest and the Fox, her false consciousness in this case is her own creation motivated by a will to possess Psyche and overrule her, as will be shown below .

It is mentioned above that Orual is ugly both physically and spiritually, as she herself admits. Psyche, on the other hand, is an embodiment of both beauties. She represents the two things that Orual misses the most: physical beauty (which represents the status that man was created in) and spiritual purity (that allowed her to be united with the god in marriage). It can be said that by possessing her (as she always stresses that she is "mine"), Orual would possess both elements. However, it seemed to her that the gods, by taking Psyche from her, are

denying her to enjoy what she lacks through Psyche. Speaking of her love to Psyche, Orual says :

I wanted to be a wife so that I could have been her real mother. I wanted to be a boy so that she could be in love with me. I wanted her to be my full sister instead of my half sister. I wanted her to be a slave so that I could set her free and make her rich "(11).

Her will to be superior to Psyche is clear in this passage. She wants to be the one who gives. She wants her love to appear as "Gift love" while in reality it is "Need-love" as Paulette Sauders argues in her analysis of the novel "Through the Lens of The Four Loves" :

When Psyche is chosen by the priest to become the offering to the gods ... the reader becomes aware of a subtle change in the relationship between Psyche and Orual. When Orual goes to Psyche's chamber to try to comfort her the night she is to be offered, Psyche does not express any fear of death. Instead she speaks of her sacrifice euphemistically ... as a marriage to the goddess Ungit's son ... Instead of comforting Psyche, Orual says, "Oh cruel, cruel! Is it nothing to you that you leave me here alone? Psyche, did you ever love me at all?" Orual even admits that when Psyche speaks bravely of the coming sacrifice on the Grey Mountain, Orual feels, amid all of her love, a

bitterness, a grudging against whatever gives Psyche courage and comfort. When Orual sees that Psyche loves the gods more than her and is anxious to go to them, Orual responds, "I only see that you never loved me. It may well be you are going to the gods. You are becoming cruel like them", trying to make Psyche feel guilty. In the scene in the chamber, the reader gets the first glimpse of Orual's distorted Affection for Psyche—a selfish Need-love (3-4).

Has Orual ever been suspicious of the motives behind her love for Psyche? Has she ever sensed another reality hiding under what she calls love for her sister? Yes. However, in view of the fact that Orual is presenting a case against the gods that she wants to win at any cost, her suspicion in such a case, if voiced, will be taken as evidence against her and she will inevitably lose the case. The gods will be right and she will be proved wrong. That is why her suspicion here is not direct. In other words, she does not confess to the reader that she is suspicious of the motives behind her love for Psyche. Her suspicion is rather latent and to be traced in her visions and dreams rather than in her narration of "real" events in her life although sometimes present there as well. It is actually a reluctant suspicion or better be described as divinely sent suspicion. The gods in their mercy, contrary to what she believes, sent her dreams that would prompt her to rethink her feelings towards Psyche .

After the Great Offering, Orual was sick for many days. In those days, she saw dreams that she described as :

ceaseless torture of tangled diversity, yet also of sameness ... One thread ran through all the delusions ... Psyche was my greatest enemy. All my sense of intolerable wrong was directed against her. It was she who hated me; it was on her that I wanted to be revenged ... always wrong, hatred, mockery, and my determination to be avenged (38).

Interestingly enough, Orual denies that this is her real feeling, stressing that it is again the gods twisting realities. In addition, there is the vision in which she reluctantly admits that she is Ungit, which is discussed above. The main reason that Psyche was presented as the Great Offering is that Ungit was jealous from her as people started to worship her as a goddess. According to the law of Moses, God forbids the People of Israel to make themselves any graven images and worship them: "Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God" (Exodus 20: 5). In the Book of Isaiah, it is also written: "I am the Lord ... and my glory will I no give to another" (42: 8). Ungit (the law) will not allow the divine glory to be given to a mortal. Orual, the mortal, has the same attitude of Ungit, the divine, towards Psyche, namely, jealousy. Here too she is Ungit, however she admits it reluctantly. Orual, nevertheless, expresses her jealousy openly before her fight with Argan. Fearing that she would be defeated, she said :

I'd be the mockery of the whole world; I could see the shamed look on the Fox's face, on Bardia's. I could hear them saying, "And yet how bravely her sister went to the offering! How strange that she, who was so meek and gentle, should have been the brave one after all "(97).

Her apparently strong affirmation of her love to Psyche served only to disguise her suspicion of the nature of her love. The divine helped her to voice her suspicion in her dreams. It is by accepting to make this suspicion fully explicit that the process of unmasking started with the writing of the second book at the beginning of which she writes :

The past which I wrote down was not the past that I thought I had (all these years) been remembering. I did not, even when I had finished the book, see clearly many things that I see now. The change which the writing wrought in me (and of which I did not write) was only a beginning— only to prepare me for the gods' surgery. They used my own pen to probe my wound (121).

It was the process of writing that helped her to see her real intentions hidden behind her veil, which she used to hide herself from the gods as well as from herself. Orual, as William Duffy argues in his essay "Till We Have Voice: C. S. Lewis and the Possibilities of Creative Nonfiction" :

realizes that her original intent for writing her story was to maintain a sense of control—her writing was just another projection of her self-centered outlook. What she thought would be a weapon against the gods, her written complaint, turned out to be the very instrument that helped

lead to her own salvation. “The change which the writing wrought in me (and of which I did not write) was only a beginning—only to prepare me for the gods’ surgery. They used my own pen to probe my wound” (253-4). Writing is a way to remember and recall and make sense of experience, and these acts become means to self-discovery (4).

In the series of the visions, sent to her by the gods, she discovers the reality of her feelings towards Bardia, Redival and Psyche. She is finally able to unmask her love for Psyche as jealousy while reading her complaint before the gods, and to unmask the silence of the gods as a rejection on her part to show her true self without any veil underneath which she hides. She is finally able to conclude:

I saw well why the gods do not speak to us openly, nor let us answer. Till that word can be dug out of us, why should they hear the babble that we think we mean? How can they meet us face to face till we have faces? (139).

The babble we think we mean should be unmasked through a true digging deep examination of our real self and motivations because only then we can meet God face to face, spiritually speaking. When she exposed her real self before the gods with no veil to hide her, she realized that God is the only answer she needs in life. God is not required to justify to us any pain that we go through in our lives. All what we need, which is an answer enough, is to have faith that He is God, and God is good and is love:

I know now, Lord, why you utter no answer. You are yourself the answer. Before your face questions die away. What other answer would suffice? Only words, words; to be led out to battle against other words (145) .

Post-critical Faith/Face

It is important to notice that in presenting her case, Orual is not a mere schemer who wants to just win her case. She honestly seeks to be answered. Duffy argues in his above mentioned essay that :

Orual desires tangible proof of either release or acceptance from the gods, nothing in between; and perhaps they will respond to her book, or at least that is what she hopes. But her writing is also an appeal, if not to the gods themselves, then to the Greeks—the people whose society is the embodiment of reason itself ... She writes what she believes is true, because what she is seeking is truth ⁽³⁾.

And because she is honest and is seeking the truth, she is involved in a process of deconstructing and reconstructing what she believes to be her motives and the motives of the gods. Eventually she is able to have a post-critical faith that is completely different from the simple faith of "prudent" Bardia. Bardia prefers to take faith for granted and ask no questions. However, she chooses to tread the hard roads of suspicion and of fighting with the gods to gain either a grounded faith or disbelief. Like job, she went through pain and questioned the gods about the pain. Like

him, she took the gods to court and by the end, she too like him was able to say: "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee" (Job 42: 5). She is finally able to see God with her spiritual eyes without any veil on her face or a false consciousness on her mind and heart.

Conclusion

The invisible palace truly modifies the whole quality of the tale of Cupid and Psyche and brings with it invisible spiritual and theological themes and allusions. This small but central alteration on the part of Lewis turns the pagan myth into a journey in search of God; a journey towards faith in God rather than a simple story of jealousy, as mentioned above. Lewis, the Christian apologist, who converted to Christianity after many years of atheism, invested a lot of his theological knowledge and faith in this novel as its analysis in this paper shows.

Notes:

- (1) 1. All quotations from Lewis' *Till We Have Faces* are taken from the electronic copy of the novel (<https://treeofideas.files.wordpress.com/2010/01/books-till-we-have-faces-a-myth-retold.pdf>). The novel was first published by Geoffrey Bles in 1956.
- (2) The copy of Mackintosh's book used here is the electronic copy of his book that was first published in 1880.

⁽³⁾ All Biblical quotations are taken from the King James Version.

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