Vol. 31 No. 3 September 2017

ISSN 0269-1205 (PRINT)
ISSN 1477-4623 (ONLINE)

literature and theology

An International Journal of Religion, Theory and Culture

OXFORD
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Literature and Theology, a quarterly journal, provides a critical non-confessional forum for both textual analysis and theoretical speculation, encouraging explorations of how religion is embedded in culture. Contributions should address questions pertinent to both literary study and theology broadly understood, and be consistent with the Journal's overall aim: to engage with and reshape traditional discourses within the studies of literature and religion, and their cognate fields—biblical criticism, literary criticism, philosophy, politics, culture studies, gender studies, artistic theory/practice, and contemporary critical theory/practice

theology

An International Journal of
Religion, Theory and Culture

Volume 31 Number 3 September 2017

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Literature & Theology, Vol. 31. No. 3, September 2017, pp. 338–354
doi:10.1093/litthe/frw032 Advance Access publication 2 September 2016

THE SACRED SPACE WITHIN: TOWARD A PSYCHOLOGY OF RELIGION IN C.S. LEWIS' *TILL WE HAVE FACES*

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Abstract

Based on Jung's psychological theory and the Christian perspective that predominates Lewis' imagination, this article explores a psychology of religion manifested in Lewis' work through investigating the protagonist's psychic process toward self-growth in personality and spirituality. In this mythic novel, the real space for the human being to "see" the truth of selfhood and transcendence is located within the psyche, the very "sacred space" for the meeting of the self with the divine.

One of the most influential twentieth-century theories of myth is that of the Swiss psychologist Carl G. Jung. To him: 'Myth is the primordial language natural to [the] psychic processes, and no intellectual formulation comes anywhere near the richness and expressiveness of mythical imagery'.[1] Unlike Freud, who bypasses religion in constructing a sexuality-based theory of human psychology, Jung insists upon the tie between psychic contents and religious meanings, upholding that a human being is by nature a spiritual being and that religion is in reality an essential component of the 'collective unconscious' shared by all humankind.[2] Thus, Jungian psychology is developed through the lens of religion alongside myth. As such, it can be shown to offer particularly fitting and enlightening perspectives for probing into the mythic figuration of the human psyche, or of the psychic journey and its religious meaning.

Indeed, Jung's theoretical ideas, including 'individuation', 'self-experience', and 'ministry of religion to psychic hygiene', can illuminate the profound portrayal of the interconnection between psyche and spirit in C.S. Lewis' mythical novel, *Till We Have Faces*. In light of Jung's theory of the psychic life, which concerns significantly 'man's [or, the individual person's] advance

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toward a spiritual life',[3] this article explores the psychology of religion manifested in Lewis' work through its depiction of the central character's double journeys, both psychic and spiritual.

Such a study, employing Jung's psychological concepts as the main theoretical avenue is, however, not meant to suggest any straight compatibility between Jung's paradigm of religion and Lewis'. Rather, based on Lewis' own explanation that 'the main conscious framework [of *Till We Have Faces*] is Christian, not Jungian',[4] there is, without question, no identifying the Christian underpinnings of Lewis' work with the religious import of Jung's paradigm. In other words, as suggested by Lewis himself, the essential outlook of religion underlying his mythic novel is Christian, whereas Jung's psychological interpretation and theory of religion is not. Therefore, in my interpretation of Lewis' protagonist's interrelated psychic and spiritual jour neys, Jungian concepts of psychology of religion are augmented by other perspectives drawn from the Christian paradigm. Moreover, given that Lewis himself seems to have rejected the compatibility of his mythic work with Jung's theory, the legitimacy of applying Jung's theory to the Christian writer's deeply psychological novel remains a critical issue. This involves fur ther consideration of the context of academic criticisms of Jung, and Lewis' relation to Jung, particularly in terms of the psychology of religion.

As far as the academic debate about Jung's theory is concerned, there have been polarised positions from scientific and religious points of view. R.S. Percival argues against the scientific credibility of Jung's theory and also criticises Jung's supporters who attempt to revive the theories of archetypes and 'collective unconscious' in terms of sociobiology. According to Percival, it is erroneous to claim Jung's theory of archetypes as compatible with 'the neo-Darwinian theory of adaptive evolution'.[5] On the religious side, criticisms are equally as vociferous. Among Jung's harshest critics, Richard Noll warns against the potential dangers underlying the movement or 'phenomenon of Jungism', especially the tendency of self-deification involved in Jungian Analytic Psychology.[6] Noll's concern and critique can be ascribed to those opponents who 'accuse Jung of creating his psychology in *bad faith*—offering a pseudo-religion', as observed by Mark Gundry, who nevertheless intends to re-estimate the value of Jung's theory from a more sympathetic perspective.[7] Rather than responding suspiciously to Jung's theory about the overlap of psychic truth and religious meaning, Gundry proposes to affirm the value of Jung's psychology in terms of the human tendency to theological contemplation. In other words, he is convinced that the psychic truth Jung ventures to bring to light, though being defined as merely pertaining to 'the realm of psychic phenomena', may actually pave the way for (instead of misleading the human subject from), 'faith in truth', i.e. the truth pertaining to 'God-in-Himself'.[8]

Such a sympathetic reception of Jung's psychological theory, as discernible in Gundry's theologically-oriented reception, is most recently supported by David Tacey, another even more outspoken admirer of Jung. Tacey proclaims that, psychologically speaking, '[t]he twenty-first century could well be Jung's century, just as the twentieth was Freud's'.[9] Despite his disagreement with any 'pious discipleship', which is regarded as 'missing the point' as well as being 'detrimental', Tacey insists that the importance and usefulness of Jung's 'profound understanding of human personality and mental health' is not restricted to the therapeutic purpose but applicable to the benefit of our spiritual life, especially in the contemporary post-secular cultural climate.[10] The rationale of Tacey's support of Jung is encapsulated in his concise summary of Jung's insight: 'Jung claimed that a spiritual life lies buried in the unconscious and this could be dug up and brought before consciousness with therapeutic results.'[11] It seems to me that this insight of Jung's would indeed facilitate our understanding of Lewis' characterisation in *Till We Have Faces*, specifically the protagonist's *reciprocal* journeys into conversion, with not only her personal and psychological troubles but also her spiritual blindness being healed.

In addition to the applicability of Jung's insightful ideas to *Till We Have Faces*, another rationale for my appropriation of Jung's theory in interpreting Lewis' work is that in terms of the interrelation between religious experience and psychology, as well as myth, Lewis and Jung are congenial thinkers. In his article 'Psycho-Analysis and Literary Criticism' Lewis shows his appreciation of Jung's psychological theory, commending Jung's understanding of myth and imagery as 'civil and humane'.[12] Speaking of Jung's conception that 'myths, or at any rate the older and greater myths, are such images recovered from the collective unconscious',[13] Lewis admits that he himself has sometimes slipped into Jung's theory, for, to Lewis, it provides 'excellent poetry', if 'bad science'.[14] While he may regard Jung's speculative 'doctrine of Primordial Images or Archetypal Patterns'[15] as neither fully explained nor totally acceptable, Lewis still acknowledges Jung's influence as well as his admiration of Jung. Indeed, in Lewis' autobiographical and literary writings we can find important echoes of modern psychology, especially Jung's theory about depth psychology and the psychology of religion. For instance, Lewis' 'confession' about his personal experience of conversion to Christianity explicitly shows the deep influence of analytical psychology on his self-reflection and also on his recognition of the overlapping journeys to both his true self and his religious belief.[16] To Lewis, a process of coming to know oneself is an indispensable precondition for conversion. It is observable that Lewis' reflection on the 'psychic process' toward both self and God indicates a certain compatibility with Jungian psychology of religion, specifically with the core idea that psychic and spiritual lives are interconnected and interactive dimensions of the self.

This significant idea that a genuine experience of the self needs to precede a grasping of the truth about the divine other also animates *Till We Have Faces*, a novel in which Lewis refashions the ancient myth of Cupid and Psyche with a twist in characterisation. Being Psyche's ugly sister, the protagonist, Orual, is portrayed as an embittered and veiled queen struggling inwardly with her problematic sense of self, which is entangled with her inability to perceive the truth about the sacred. Structurally, this retelling of the Psyche myth consists of Orual's voicing of her personal accusation against the god to whom Psyche is sacrificed in a religious rite. The sacrifice turns out to be a celestially blissful marriage for Psyche, but for Orual it is utterly unbearable and unbelievable. Her passionate writing of her own life-story is full of both grief over the loss of Psyche and hatred of the divine intrusion into her life by 'stealing' Psyche, her only love, away. Despite once gaining a glimpse of Psyche's Sacred Palace, Orual persistently hardens her heart and chooses not to believe in the existence of such a palace. In the name of true love, but actually driven by the passion of jealousy and possessive desire,[17] Orual fiercely forces Psyche to betray her unseen god-husband; as a result, not only is Psyche's happiness destroyed, but the loving relationship between the two sisters is also ruined.

Intriguingly, Lewis' characterisation of Orual is invested with the key notions of depth psychology—that one's *unconsciousness* hides one's deepest and genuine nature, motives, desires or vulnerabilities, which are unacknowledged or simply rejected by the conscious part of one's psyche. In a way similar to Lewis' personal journey of conversion, Orual too undergoes a 'psychic journey' into the dark realm inside her psyche, i.e. the unknown part of her selfhood. The crucial turning point of 'self-experience' befalls this embittered protagonist through the autobiographical writing of her life-long antagonism towards the god. This work, including accusation and self-reflection, becomes a documentation of her life-journey into a gradual grasping of authentic self-understanding and an increasingly more promising development of personality. Ultimately, the account Orual gives of her psychic life displays a growing and even fulfilling experience of the sacred, which in this mythic work can be associated with both the divine and the 'I'.[18] In the end, her inward journey leads not just to self-discovery but even to self-sanctification, a supernatural kind of blessing that is the outcome of her transcendental and reconciliatory encounter with the divine. In this sense, Orual's autobiographical writing fits in the tradition of religious autobiographies from St Augustine's *The Confessions* onward. According to Augustine's 'confession', '[t]he only way to understand God ... is by probing the depths of the self', as stated by T.R. Wright.[19] Though not really a book about conversion, at least not initially, the autobiography of Lewis' protagonist, somewhat like

Augustine's confession, is oriented toward bringing to light some *topological* significance of the heart that is pursuing the god.

In the 'book' of her life-story, the protagonist Orual protests: 'Why must holy places be dark places?' We readers and interpreters of her psychic life can ask correspondingly: Why is the domain of the human psyche no less dark than holy places? Could the darkness of the latter be the projection of that of the former? And further, how can we make sense of the relationship between human psyche and sacred locality, as the two seem to share the common ground of darkness?

Few of Lewis' critics have attended to the ways in which Lewis' mythic novel deals with the interrelation between personality and religious experience. Almost all the readings of *Till We Have Faces* touch upon the issue of the wrestling between the perceptibility of the divine and the subjective experience of the human person as a cognitive and conscious being. The most common approach is that of religious epistemology, of which Robert Holyer's study in 'The Epistemology of C.S. Lewis's *Till We Have Faces*' is an excellent example. In treating the novel as one that 'offers us the most complete account of Lewis's religious epistemology',[20] Holyer concludes that the epistemological questions in Orual's religious experience cannot be resolved unless she achieves 'self-knowledge'. In spite of pointing out the strong association between 'our grasp of ultimate truth' and 'a grasp of the truth about ourselves',[21] Holyer does not substantially investigate the process of self-knowing; his emphasis, rather, is clearly on the way to arrive at ultimate truth. Indeed, the psychological process through which Orual finally discovers the true *face* of her being requires the main attention in order to understand, or 'diagnose', her ignorance and hostile suspicion of the existence or nature of the gods. In other words, simply dealing with the epistemological problems of religious perception without serious analysis of the particular perceiver's mind is an insufficiently comprehensive investigation of the correlation between personality and religion, as explored by Lewis through the character of Orual.

Other illuminating criticisms of this difficult novel, although recognising Lewis' central focus upon his protagonist's problematic selfhood that causes 'the tragedy of spiritual blindness', in the words of Rolland Hein,[22] still pay more attention to the apparent theme of the process of perceiving and experiencing divine love than to the protagonist's *psychology* when engaged in such a process. In his sophisticated discussion of the merits of Lewis' rewriting of Apuleius' story, Steve J. Van Der Weele points out that one of Lewis' key alterations is his powerful dramatisation of 'the anatomy of love' (i.e. 'its diseased' versus 'its healthy state') in relation to 'spiritual perception and blindness'—the heart of Lewis' work. Yet, in Van Der Weele's analysis, we find no further exploration of the specific case of Lewis' 'anatomy', namely, the truth about his protagonist's problem with love, especially her mental struggles.

Even the reading that highlights 'Orual's journey of self-discovery', as offered in Monika B. Hilder's book, *Surprised by the Feminine: A Rereading of C.S. Lewis and Gender*, is not concerned with the psychic process that changes Orual from a personality of ugliness and disobedience to a protagonist of 'femininity', i.e. a new creature embodying what Hilder suggests 'the Christian ethos of obedience to the divine'. According to Hilder, in the characterisation of Orual, we see how Lewis achieves to concretise his 'theological feminism'.[23]

Although the problematic nature of a plot that revolves around female ugliness for contemporary readers cannot be denied, Hilder, acknowledging 'the nature of Orual's ugliness and Lewis's intentions in this portrayal' as 'central to our reading of gender in this novel',[24] takes the critical position contrary to that of other critics, such as Candice Fredrick and Sam McBride as well as Kath Filmer, who maintain the presence of Lewis' misogyny and sexism in the text of *Till We Have Faces*.[25] Treating Lewis' depiction of ugliness as not suggestive of his sexism but emblematic of spirituality,[26] Hilder asserts that the novel showcases 'the culmination of [Lewis'] gradual journey to a more egalitarian view of gender'.[27] Evidently, her criticism of Lewis' treatment of gender comes from a sympathetic, even appreciative perspective. She argues that: 'Lewis' detailed depiction of the anti-feminist old world [in *Till We Have Faces*]—and the fact that he is writing as a male author seeking to identify with a female voice in the first person narrative—suggests his is a critical rather than complicit stance.' One manifest example is the equation between women's beauty and worth in Glome's culture. It is taken to evidence Hilder's observation that: 'Lewis' use of gender metaphor functions as a powerful critique of Western cultural chauvinism.'[28] Yet, despite her scrupulous discussion and critical defence of Lewis, it remains arguable whether the profundity of Lewis' characterisation of Orual, as well as his ambivalent 'theological-feminist' investment may actually be comprehended without serious attention to Orual's disclosure of her 'depth-psychology' through writing her life-journey to self-knowledge and divine love.

Orual's engagement in 'autobiographical' writing is vitally important. Through this narrative device, Lewis not only prepares a perfect channel for the reader to hear Orual's inner voice, but also makes the embittered protagonist embark on a journey of self-discovery. Ultimately, her writing discloses the necessary *psychic process* she goes through to know the truth firstly about herself and then the divine other. Psychologically speaking, such a psychic journey can be rendered lucidly plain in terms of the Jungian notion of 'individuation'. According to Jungian scholar Hans Schaer, 'individuation' means a psychic process:

> [that] consists essentially in recognizing and assimilating the unconscious. Therefore, a new center of personality must come into being, which is not

> bound to consciousness like the ego but is capable of taking equal account of both consciousness and the unconscious. ... This new center Jung calls the 'self', and individuation is the way to the self.[29]

The very objective of individuation, i.e. a complete grasp of self-knowledge, in other words the real experience of the self, precisely explains the ultimate goal of Lewis' protagonist's psychic journey. That is to say, for the purpose of experiencing a holistic development of personality, it is imperative that Orual the 'writer' journey into the depth of her mind and that her reader explore what hides in the dark realm within her. Regarding the most insidiously unresolved problems in the psychic life of Orual, it is perhaps her *complex of ugliness* that is the chief unacknowledged issue.

To better analyse the psychological significance of Orual's complex of ugliness, I again turn to Jungian psychology, in particular his theory of complexes. In 'Psychological Theory of Types', Jung provides a specific definition of 'complexes':

> Complexes are psychic contents which are outside the control of the conscious mind ... and lead a separate existence in the unconscious, being at all times ready to hinder or to reinforce the conscious intentions. ... They are 'vulnerable points' which we do not like to remember and still less to be reminded of by others, but which frequently come back to mind unbidden and in the most unwelcome fashion. ... [T]hey indicate the unresolved problems of the individual, the points at which he has suffered a defeat, and where there is something he cannot evade or overcome—his weak spots in every sense of the word.[30]

The qualities and functions of complexes expounded in this passage are greatly applicable to the predicament of Orual under the spell of her bodily ugliness. Orual's major weak spot is her complex of ugliness, and the source of other vulnerabilities of her *inner self*, such as low self-esteem, self-righteousness, self-delusion, self-pity and even self-hatred. In view of the close relation between her ugliness and her unwholesome self-image, ugliness does not merely signify a mark of shame on her body but also adversely affects her psyche. Moreover, nearly all the personal crises in Orual's life are involved with the psychological effects of her complex of ugliness, by either 'hindering or reinforcing her conscious intentions', to borrow the wording of Jung. The most significant crisis is concerned with her passionate love for Psyche and her near-collapse in the wake of losing Psyche. This devastating crisis is seemingly based on love, yet is substantially related to the psychological conflict between Orual's craving to be loved and her fatalistic pessimism about her undesirability because of her ugliness.

In Orual's external life, the aforementioned internal conflicts are covered and hidden 'safely' within. In order to empower her self-image, especially her queenship, Orual decides that if she cannot evade the cruel reality of the impossibility of changing the predestined fate of looking ugly and being unlovable, she can at least choose whether or not to be seen. Thus she chooses to *cover* her shame of ugliness—by veiling her face. Nevertheless, such a measure of self-empowerment is definitely a self-deceiving disguise. If it works outwardly on her queenship, it makes no impact at all on the inner Orual, whose true self-image is dictated by the complex of ugliness to such an extent that the veiled and powerful Queen even secretly attempts to 'kill' the vulnerable and shameful Orual. As revealed in her writing, this attempt at mental suicide is mixed with an overwhelming sense of guilt for the destruction of Psyche's celestial happiness. During the years when the Queen/Orual is stably and prosperously on her throne, her private self keeps being haunted by the sound of 'a girl crying in the garden', which Orual imagines should be the wailing of the 'cold, hungry, and banished' Psyche, but she strives repeatedly to convince herself that 'it was the chains swinging at the well'. [31] Finally, the Queen makes a frenzied command to have the well *covered* with 'madly thick walls' to silence the terrible voice once and for all.

From a psychological point of view, the evasive act of 'walling' is symbolic of Orual's resort to her familiar strategy of evading reality: her tendency to *disguise*. The covering of the well is a disguise, just as the attempt to hide her authentic bodily image is, and it symbolically conveys her psychology of self-evasion and self-hatred. Furthermore, the disguise in this context concretises her insincerity: she just would not/ could not be true to her inner self. Both her indulgence in veiling her actual face and the frantic move to bury and silence her inner voice reveal her double estrangement from her real self. That real self remains hidden but alive in her unconsciousness, notwithstanding her efforts to split her self-image into the veiled and the 'bare-faced' Orual,[32] and to divide her whole being into the Queen and Orual. Ultimately, she makes herself symbolically *faceless* by means of rejecting the true face of both her outer and inner self—through veiling/walling, burying the traumatic memory, paralysing her feeling heart and silencing her conscience, and fooling herself that she can lead a self-divided life and weaken, even kill, the vulnerable self, Orual.

But, in reality, Orual refuses to die, and the voice of conscience cannot actually be silenced. If it cannot be heard from within, it will be uttered from without. Until she starts giving ear to the whisper, or, in Lewis' phrase, the 'megaphone of conscience' and opens herself up to the encounter with the knowledge about herself *bare-facedly*, she cannot undergo the kind of 'death' that she really needs to go through. In other words, she must meet with the true face of her inner self in moral terms before she can truly embrace the

hope of undoing the old Orual. One crucial 'megaphone' of conscience/morality is the widow of Bardia, who is the chief commander of the royal army. Orual the Queen used to rely heavily on Bardia and even secretly loved him up to his death. Visiting Bardia's wife to offer her condolences, Orual is 'rewarded' with the bereaved and embittered 'rival's' straightforward criticism. The widow blames Orual to her face, claiming that her 'queenship drank up [Bardia's] blood year by year and ate out his life'.[33] This criticism concerning her devouring personality is so sharp but undeniably true that, from that moment on, her Majesty/Orual can no longer evade the real image of herself—an insatiably greedy, demanding, entirely unsympathetic, and vampire-like exploiter in love.

Furthermore, the revelation of her devouring nature initiates a new state of life in which Orual begins to undergo a so-called *self-disillusioning* process. The angry widow's accusation is indeed a fatal enlightenment to Orual, who confesses in her writing that 'nearly all that I called myself went with it. It was as if my whole soul had been one tooth and now that tooth was drawn. I was a gap. And now I thought I had come to the very bottom and that the gods could tell me no worse'.[34] It appears that Orual is conscious of experiencing a new kind of death now that she comes to recognise the very truth: her previous self-knowledge is nothing but a façade. This sense of being a 'gap' is a clear expression of self-disillusionment, or in Orual's own words, the 'operation' of the 'divine Surgeons'.[35]

At this stage the 'death' Orual experiences is still incomplete. Journeying further into the abyss of her psyche as well as into the truth of reality, she (as well as her reader) has yet more new discoveries to make. Intriguingly, all of her subsequent discoveries of the truth of her being take place within a series of dream-like visions. From a psychological perspective, the blurring of the boundary between waking and dreaming life is important in the transferring Orual's ego to the next stage of life—to recognise and accept her alter ego, the 'also-I'. The psychic process of this ego-transference is in line with Jung's analysis of the psychic development from the 'childhood level of consciousness' to the consciousness of 'the dualistic stage', in which 'the individual finds himself compelled to recognize and to accept what is different and strange as a part of his own life—as a kind of 'also-I'. Moreover, Jung associates this horizon-extending stage of life with the purpose of religious education, or 'the rebirth rituals of primitive races', that is, 'to transform a human being into a new—a future—man, and to allow the old forms of life to die away'.[36] Jung's psychological and religious interpretation of personal development is indeed applicable to the process of self-transformation Orual undergoes. As a retrospective writer of her own life and heart, Orual confesses that as her text starts to encompass recurrent dreams and fantasies, she simultaneously experiences more and more enlightenment from the 'divine surgeon'.

According to Jungian religious psychology, during the process of individuation, i.e. the integration of the subject's consciousness with the psychic contents within the unconscious level, the ego would experience 'the danger of disintegration' and the process itself would be 'a time of crisis for his soul'[37] before the stage of reintegration through a process of religious transformation. In Orual's case, her text, intermingled with her dream-texts, does attest to such a psychic process. Her next vital encounter with a clearer recognition of her true image occurs in the vision in which she is led by her dead father to see that her face projected on his great mirror is the face of Ungit, the misshapen idol of a fertility goddess, representing what Lewis calls 'dark idolatry' of the land of Glome:

> 'I am Ungit.' My voice came wailing out of me and I found that I was in the cool daylight and in my own chamber. So it had been what we call a dream. But I must give warning that from this time onward they so drenched me with seeings that I cannot well discern dream from waking nor tell which is the truer. This vision, anyway, allowed no denial. Without question it was true. It was I who was Ungit. That ruinous face was mine. I was that ... all-devouring womblike, yet barren, thing. Glome was a web—I the swollen spider, squat at its center, gorged with men's stolen lives.[38]

The striking discovery of the identification between herself and Ungit—both faceless in body and ugly in soul—causes Orual's nearly complete psychological collapse. In order to cease being Ungit she even makes several attempts at suicide. As she is about to fling herself into a deep river, a god's voice comes to stop her: 'Do not do it,' said the god. 'You cannot escape Ungit by going to the deadlands, for she is there also. Die before you die. There is no chance after.'[39] If she cannot live with Ungit's soul and also cannot die to escape Ungit, how then can she *die before she dies*? The mystery of these words appears as hard to unravel as the ambiguous messages in the divine voice that first reached Orual immediately after the destruction of Psyche's happiness: 'You, shall know yourself and your work. You also shall be Psyche.'[40] Nevertheless, these mysterious and ambiguous voices from the divine ultimately turn out in fact to predict her personal life-journey. Moreover, the divine command of 'dying before she dies' as her only hope of regeneration, by putting off her old ugly self, bears a definite undertone of the Christian idea of redemption, as admonished by St Paul that prior to 'living unto God' the necessary process for the soul to be redeemed is to 'die unto sin' (Rom. 6:11).[41]

Thus, struggling to grasp the meaning of this 'death before death' and to figure out how she can live on instead of committing suicide, Orual at first chooses to turn to philosophical wisdom through her Greek mentor, Fox, rather than to religion, to help her change her 'ugly soul into a fair one'.[42]

With great efforts to put her 'passions and desires and vain opinions'[43] to death, Orual, however, falls into the greater despair of finding herself to be a hopeless failure as a moral being. Deeply frustrated, she finds with a cold fear in her heart that she could never mend her soul any more than her face. Then, trying to turn to the help of the god, she is immediately gripped by a more bitter thought: because of her double ugliness in body and in soul, she must also be doubly ill-favoured both as a woman and as a human being; that is to say, she will never be granted any help from the god. Orual's logic is questionably simple, but it reveals also some change in her as a spiritual being. Now, more than ever and for the first time in her life, she is in the desperate position of seeking the help of the gods with all her heart.

In another sense, such alteration in spirit as well as enhancement of moral consciousness may be viewed as a sign of 'purgation'. According to Evelyn Underhill, the practice of 'purgation' involves letting go the 'mental and moral sloth which keeps us so comfortably wrapped in unrealities'.[44] In this way it actually prepares one to enter into further development of 'mystical consciousness'. That is to say, through 'purgatory' experiences, the psychic journey Orual embarks on (in her psyche and writing) would possibly become a 'mystical' journey, that is, one which brings her to the ultimate encounter with the divine. Within Orual's psychic processes, the most crucial 'purgatory' event happens in a 'living vision' in which she is taken to the sacred court with her book written to make complaints against the gods. The dramatic scene in the divine court when Orual is asked to read her complaint is the most vital turning point for her to discover the real voice of her inner self. Taken to stand in front of the divine judge, who too has a veiled face, Orual is first commanded to speak in her *bare face*. The first two words of the divine judge, 'Uncover her',[45] are symbolically meaningful, pointing directly to the most conspicuous and crucial blind spot in Orual. The divine command can be understood as an immediate—though implicit—suggestion that before Orual could *sound true*, she must show her *true image*. Moreover, this order to Orual to reveal her bare face may also be associated with the simple but inescapable rule that in the presence of the divine, not just the veil-mask but also all of Orual's *self-disguise*—in any form, at any level, conscious or unconscious—must and would eventually be uncovered. This is the essence of 'purgation' that Orual needs to live through.

Situated in the sacred place, albeit only in a dream-like vision, Orual is taught the lesson that the demarcation between the veiled and the revealed, the real and the unreal must be restored and re-legitimated. Specifically, she now has to face the challenge of acknowledging all the unrealities she used to hold on to, blindly or intentionally. For example, being in the land of the divine, she is faced with the metaphysical reality, which she once obstinately dismissed as unreality due to its invisibility. Her previous misperception had

been based on an invalid dichotomy between the seen/knowable and the unseen/unknowable that she used to apply (e.g. disbelieving in Psyche's sacred Palace and her unseen God) or 'play' with (e.g. always wearing a veil). Now, finally, Orual comes to abandon her false dichotomy and change her mind as well as her 'view' to embrace the Reality revealed to her—of the god and of her selfhood.

To Orual, the most striking discovery of the unreality she has naively clung to concerns her book. As soon as she is bidden to read her complaint, she sees the book in her hand become utterly strange to her; it is not *her book* at all. It is no longer the same book that she wrote, and this discovery gives her unspeakable comfort. Now it becomes a roll of 'all vile scribble—each stroke mean and yet savage'.[46] Her second surprise is the strangeness of her reading voice, which she finally realises is her 'real voice'.[47] What used to be real to her has gone, and she is forced both to look at and listen to something foreign but actually belonging to her—from the innermost depth of her being.

As a result of listening to her own repeated reading of the different but authentic book, Orual finally reaches the real bottom of her downward process of self-disillusionment. The essential problem of her love for Psyche and her charge against the gods is uncovered and disclosed. Orual realises herself to be blinded by her own weak and wicked nature: her egoism, pride and jealousy of the outwardly and inwardly superior Psyche. Her weakness in character or inward wickedness is the very foundation on which she has built her own *fictional* world full of hatred, bitterness, and prejudice about the god's mean and cruel deprivation of her only love, Psyche. Now, the very text of her fiction, that is, her writing, has been proved wrong-headed and turned into a dark-hearted illusion. However, at the bottom of self-disillusionment there lies also a ray of hope, for the moment of complete disillusionment can be the turning point for the growth of the self. Due to the disclosure of the true face of her being, Orual from now on no longer has to be the *faceless Ungit*; instead, she becomes *faced* again by means of the retrieval of authentic self-knowledge. Hence in response to the divine judge's brief question, 'Are you answered?',[48] Orual can give a definite 'Yes'. Now that she has grasped the truth about her selfhood, it seems that she has also come to reconcile herself with the imperceptible gods. The divine surgery Orual has gone through indeed manages 'to purge her of her rebellious attitudes and bring true enlightenment', as is keenly observed by Rolland Hein.[49] Here, the utterly disillusioned Orual, now ready for conversion, also reminds us of how Lewis, in *Mere Christianity*, once portrays 'fallen man'—as 'not simply an imperfect creature who needs improvement', but 'a rebel who must lay down his arms'.[50]

The correlation between self-knowledge and the question about the perceptibility of the divine is the most significant enlightenment to the self-disillusioned yet fully appeased Orual:

> The complaint was the answer. To have heard myself making it was to be answered. . . . When the time comes to you at which you will be forced at last to utter the speech which was lain at the center of your soul for years . . . 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?[51]

This enlightenment brought on by the encounter between human self and divine otherness is of multilayered significance. As her confession quoted above suggests, Orual at last comes to a twofold realisation: firstly, the outcry from 'the center of her soul' is her real voice and reveals the very true *face* of her soul; secondly, without integrating this level of self-understanding into self-knowledge, she can never sincerely or right-mindedly seek after the knowledge of the divine other. Here Orual's confession echoes St Augustine's realisation of the interconnected awareness of self and God: 'But where was I, when I was seeking Thee? And Thou wert me, but I had gone away from Thee; nor did I find myself, how much less Thee.'[52]

In Lewis' mythic delineation of Orual's psychic and spiritual journey, it is indicated that a 'blind' and problematic individual such as Orual simply needs to be led out of her darkness, in mind and spirit, into the light of Reality. In other words, it takes the interaction between psychic force and religious power for Orual to experience ultimate self-integration. In view of such an implication, Lewis' characterisation corresponds with Jung's observation that 'religion ministers to psychic hygiene'.[53] Hans Schaer, in 'Religion as a Psychic Function', provides an eloquent summary of Jung's ideas about how 'a living religion' can function in the psychic process toward the self:

> Religious experience can be defined by saying that it tends towards psychic integration. Religion is the acknowledgement of the things that consciousness fails to realize; or it can go further and bring about an inner unity and wholeness. Thus . . . a living religion is needed for the full development of personality.[54]

This Jungian notion of the ministry of religion to psychic health could reinforce the interpretation that C.S. Lewis' protagonist achieves her self-growth, namely, 'psychic integration', not through a process of reflection on what lies *within* her but more substantially because of the religious strength and insight from *above*. Yet it ought to be reiterated here that to Lewis, such a 'living religion' that can 'minister to psychic hygiene' undoubtedly, if not explicitly, refers to the Christian faith.

The supernatural and living visions that serve to deconstruct the unrealities in Orual's perception at last make her 're-innovated' not only in psyche but also in bodily image. Finally, through a mythical vision of Psyche, the goddess of love, journeying to the Deadland in order to 'face' the faceless or ruinously-faced Ungit (the alter ego of Orual) with beauty from Death herself, Orual receives an ultimate gift, a kind of 'total solution' to her ugliness. From a feminist perspective, this instance of metamorphosis out of a holy blessing, i.e. the transformation of the ugly-looking Orual to a female of beauty redeemed by sacred love, may be rendered as a problematic 'solution', especially in association with sexist devaluation of females. My reading of Orual's transfiguration, however, does not mean to put stress on the development of the protagonist's sexuality or on Lewis' treatment of Orual as a victim of anti-feminism. Rather, this interpretation highlights the healing and regeneration of Orual's whole being as resulted from her encounter with the reality of holiness as well as her own selfhood, as deliberated more specifically below. In other words, this articles underscores that Orual's ultimate redemption in both body and soul is obtained not from the mere experience of living vision or fantasy but, indeed, from 'the living religion'

The fullest experience of the 'living religion' is yet to come to Orual, again through a living vision. It pertains to Orual's *face-to-face* encounter with the holy god (the son of Aphrodite/Ungit), which gives her the absolute feeling of the numinous. At the climactic moment as the *god of love* approaches, Orual, standing side by side with Psyche, looks into the pool at the sacred place and discovers the ultimate significance of her personal encounter with the divine—her own transfiguration:

> Two figures, reflections ... stood head downward in the water. ... Two Psyches, the one clothed, the other naked? Yes, both Psyches, both beautiful (if that mattered now) ... 'You also are Psyche', came a great voice.[55]

This moment, full of wonder and holiness, signifies that the very spell based on the dichotomy between beauty and ugliness that caused Orual's life-long vulnerabilities is broken at last. Undergoing the spiritual and bodily *metamorphoses* in the presence of the holy god indicates the ultimate achievement of Orual's *psychic* journey toward the self, namely, the attainment of a fully developed and transformed personality. Such a psychic journey signifies not just the 'improvement' Orual needs and eventually attains but, more importantly, her religious transformation that happens when, as explained in Lewis' letter, 'Divine Love gradually conquers, first, a Pagan (and almost savage) soul's misconception of the Divine (as Ungit), then, shallow "enlightenment" (the Fox), and most of all, her *jealousy* of the real God, whom she hates till near the end' due to her possessive love for Psyche.[56]

Ultimately, Orual's psychic processes culminate in the climactic meeting with the transcendent god in the sacred place, the very space where the whole being of Orual becomes transfigured, sanctified, and reintegrated. Yet it should not be forgotten that these transcendental and mythic experiences do not happen 'realistically' but are lived through by Orual through 'seeings'.[57] As the final section of Orual's book tells us, soon after she returns from those 'living visions' to the real world, she is about to die physically. Supposing that the metamorphoses and sanctification of the self actually happen to Orual, in whatever form, whether spiritual, mental, or mythically fantastic, we may still wonder *where* exactly is the channel for the mortal Orual to undergo these transcendental and surreal experiences. Indeed, the real space of this experience is *within her psyche*. In other words, what is revealed by 'the mythical imagery' of Lewis' *Till We Have Faces*, through the portrayal of the protagonist's psychic processes, is this: the psyche *is* the sacred locality wherein each human being can discover the truth of selfhood, meet with the numinous face to face, and even recover or restore the sanctity of his or her personhood, soul and body included.

Furthermore, we may also conclude that Lewis' rewriting of the myth of Psyche and Orual manages to represent profoundly the potential as well as the problematic of the *human self* as the very 'place' for the meeting and interaction between humanity and divinity. Therefore, to Orual's inward outcry, 'Why must holy places be dark places?',[58] we may respond that the psyche of humanity, though also deeply dark, is essentially the sacred space for the light of divinity to enter and ultimately dwell.

REFERENCES

[1] C.G. Jung, *Collected Works of C.G. Jung*, Vol. 12 (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1980), p. 25.

[2] In 'Freud and Jung—Contrasts', Jung disputes Freud's psychological theory that ascribes religion to humankind's illusion and makes explicit affirmation of religion as part of the reality of the human psyche, based on his observation that 'man has, everywhere and always, spontaneously developed religious forms of expression, and the human psyche from time immemorial has been shot through with religious feelings and ideas. Whoever cannot see this aspect of the human psyche is blind, and whoever chooses to explain it away, or to "enlighten" it away, has no sense of reality' (*Modern Man in Search of a Soul*, trans. W.S. Dell and Cary F. Baynes (London: Ark Paperbacks, 1984)), p. 140.

[3] Jung, *Collected Works*, p. 141.

[4] See Walter Hooper (ed.), *The Collected Letters of C.S. Lewis, Volume III: Narnia, Cambridge, and Joy 1950–1963* (New York: HarperCollins, 2007), p. 1419.

[5] R.S. Percival, *Journal of Social and Evolutionary Systems* 16.4 (1993) 459–87, pp. 460–87 (JAI Press, Inc.), p. 470. The problematic 'Jung-reviving' attempts are questioned by Percival as follows: 'Stevens (1982) and others (Hall & Nordby, 1973) argue that Jung's theory of archetypes anticipates and makes

sense of sociobiological concepts and theories, and that this new science confirms Jung's theory. However, these attempts fail because they misunderstand the Darwinian criticism, confusing it with the Lockean criticism of innate ideas, and because neither the origin nor the development of Jung's archetypes lends itself to a sociobiological explanation' (p. 461).

[6] The phrase is borrowed from Richard Noll's book, *The Jung Cult: Origins of a Charismatic Movement* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), p. 7

[7] See Mark Gundry, *Beyond Psyche: Symbol and Transcendence in C.G. Jung* (New York: Peter Lang, 2006), p. 1.

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 3.

[9] David Tacey, *The Darkening Spirit: Jung, Spirituality, Religion* (New York: Routledge, 2013), p. 2.

[10] *Ibid.*, p. 1.

[11] *Ibid.*

[12] Lewis, 'Psycho-Analysis and Literary Criticism', in Walter Hooper (ed.), *Selected Literary Essays* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1969), p. 296

[13] *Ibid.*, p. 297.

[14] *Ibid*

[15] *Ibid.*, p. 296.

[16] See Lewis, 'The Seeing Eye', in Walter Hooper (ed.), *C.S. Lewis The Seeing Eye and Other Selected Essays from Christian Reflections* (New York: Ballantine Books [1967] 1992), p. 228. The 'confessional' passage is quoted as follows: 'it is significant that this long-evaded encounter [with God] happened at a time when I was making a serious effort to obey my conscience. ... One of the first results of such an effort is to bring your picture of yourself down to something nearer life-size. And presently you begin to wonder whether you are yet, in any full sense, a person at all; whether you are entitled to call yourself *'I' (It is a sacred name)*. In that way, the process is like being *psycho-analysed*. ...You find that what you called yourself is only a thin film on the surface of an unsounded and dangerous sea. But not merely dangerous. Radiant things, delights and inspirations, come to the surface as well as snarling resentments and nagging lusts. *One's ordinary self is, then, a mere façade. There's a huge area out of sight behind it*' (emphases added).

[17] That Orual's love for Psyche is psychologically twisted by the passions of possessiveness and jealousy (of Psyche's becoming a goddess belonging to an invisible and incomprehensible god) is clearly noted by Lewis in the letter to Clyde S. Kilby: 'Orual is ... an instance, a "case", of human affection in its natural condition: true, tender, suffering, but in the long run, tyrannically possessive and ready to turn to hatred when the beloved ceases to be its possession. What such love particularly cannot stand is to see the beloved passing into a sphere where it cannot follow.' *The Collected Letters of C.S. Lewis, Volume III*, p. 831.

[18] As seen in the quotation of Lewis' 'The Seeing Eye' above (Note 10), the name 'I' for Lewis is 'sacred' in itself.

[19] See T.R. Wright, *Theology and Literature* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989), p. 99.

[20] Robert Holyer, 'The Epistemology of C.S. Lewis's *Till We Have Faces*', in Cynthia Marshall (ed.), *Essays on C.S. Lewis and George MacDonald: Truth, Fiction, and The Power of Imagination* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen, 1991), pp. 53–81, p. 53.

[21] *Ibid.*, p. 80.

[22] Rolland Hein, *Christian Mythmakers* (Chicago, IL: Cornerstone Press Chicago, 2002), p. 253.

[23] Monika B. Hilder, 'Recovering "Femininity" in C.S. Lewis's *Till We Have Faces*', in *Surprised by the Feminine: A Rereading of C.S. Lewis and Gender* (New York: Peter Lang, 2013), pp. 93–148, p. 101.

[24] *Ibid.*, p. 97

[25] Hilder's citations of their critiques are taken respectively from Kath Filmer,

The Fiction of C.S. Lewis: Mask and Mirror (London: Macmillan, 1993), pp. 119–20, and Candice Fredrick and Sam McBride, *Women Among the Inklings: Gender, C.S Lewis, J.R.R. Tolkien, and Charles Williams* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 2001), pp. 151–2.

[26] The questions of Orual's ugliness and ultimate endowment of beauty, according to Hilder, have nothing to do with sexism, based on the understanding of the 'idea of beauty and ugliness as metaphors for spirituality' in Lewis' mythic novel. See Hilder, *ibid.*, p. 98.

[27] *Ibid.*, p. 93.

[28] *Ibid.*, pp. 102, 152.

[29] Hans Schaer, *Religion and the Cure of Souls in Jung's Psychology*, trans. R.F.C. Hull (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1951), p. 122.

[30] Jung, *Modern Man in Search of a Soul*, pp. 90–1.

[31] C.S. Lewis, *Till We Have Faces: A Myth Retold* (Orlando, FL: Harcourt, Inc., 1984), p. 224.

[32] The original title Lewis gave to this novel is *Bareface*. See *The Collected Letters of C.S. Lewis, Volume III*, pp. 705, 715.

[33] Lewis, *Till We Have Faces*, p. 264.

[34] *Ibid.*, p. 267.

[35] *Ibid.*, p. 266.

[36] Jung, *Modern Man in Search of a Soul*, pp. 116–17

[37] The phrases are quoted from Hans Schaer. The original context is: 'The approach to the unconscious exposes the ego [the center of consciousness] to the danger of disintegration. That is why a man descends into the unconscious only at a time of crisis for his soul.' Schaer, *Religion and the Cure of Souls*, p. 47.

[38] Lewis, *Till We Have Faces*, p. 276.

[39] *Ibid.*, p. 279.

[40] *Ibid.*, p. 174.

[41] Romans 6:11.

[42] Lewis, *Till We Have Faces*, p. 282.

[43] *Ibid.*, p. 281.

[44] See Evelyn Underhill, 'The Essentials of Mysticism', in *The Essentials of Mysticism and Other Essays* (London: J.M. Dent & Sons, 1920), pp. 1–24, p. 12.

[45] Lewis, *Till We Have Faces*, p. 289.

[46] *Ibid.*, p. 290.

[47] *Ibid.*, p. 292.

[48] *Ibid.*, p. 293.

[49] Rolland Hein, *Christian Mythmakers: C.S. Lewis, Madeleine L'Engle, J.R.R. Tolkien, George MacDonald, G.K. Chesterton, Charles Williams, John Bunyan, Walter Wangerin, Robert Siegel, and Hannah Hurnard* (Chicago, IL: Cornerstone Press, 2002), p. 254.

[50] Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (London: HarperCollins, 2002), p. 56. The quotation is taken from the chapter entitled 'The Perfect Penitent', pp. 53–9.

[51] Lewis, *Till We Have Faces*, p. 294.

[52] Augustine's *Confessions*, Book 5, Chapter 2: *TheConfessions of St Augustine*, trans. Edward B. Busey (New York: Pocket Books, 1952).

[53] The original quotation of Schaer is: 'Jung makes the astonishing assertion that religion ministers to psychic hygiene ... a living religion ministers to psychic health.' Schaer, *Religion and the Cure of Souls*, p. 129.

[54] *Ibid.*, p. 136.

[55] Lewis, *Till We Have Faces*, pp. 307–8.

[56] See *The Collected Letters of C.S. Lewis, Volume III*, p. 1949.

[57] Lewis, *Till We Have Faces*, p. 307.

[58] *Ibid.*, p. 249.