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### Abstract

Sees Ransom's character development in *Perelandra* as a classic case of Jungian individuation by undergoing the aspects of Campbell's "monomyth." Sees some affinities between Jung's theory of personality and Lewis's Christianity.

### Additional Keywords

Lewis, C.S.—Characters—Ransom; Lewis, C.S. *Perelandra*—Jungian analysis; Lewis, C.S.

*Perelandra*—Moral and religious aspects; Lewis, C.S. *Perelandra*—Psychological aspects; Edith Crowe

# RANSOM IN PERELANDRA:

## JUNGIAN HERO?

CORBIN S. CARNELL



A Storm Over  
Perelandra

C.S. Lewis distrusted the reductionist tendency of C.G. Jung's thought, yet much of his writing can be seen to reflect certain Jungian categories. Clearly Jungian is Lewis's development of the character of Ransom in *Perelandra*. Lewis's protagonist goes through a process of individuation which includes initiation, trials, suffering, and other aspects of the psychoanalytic "monomyth" (to use Joseph Campbell's term). Likewise, Jung shows some affinities with important aspects of Lewis's Christianity. Jung's theory of personality emphasizes interdependence and mutual giving through the exchange of unlike gifts. This version of Christian community is shown at work among the three societies of Malacandra (in *Out of the Silent Planet*), the shared burdens of the adventurers in Narnia, and in the St. Anne's community in *That Hideous Strength*. Even the skeptical McPhee has a role in the devout community; the pagan Merlin gives of his powers and the contribution of the housemaid Ivy Maggs is received without condescension. In *Till We Have Faces* Orual attains her face (self) through work, suffering, love, and finally repentance. She discovers her shadow self in the devouring goddess Ungit and by coming to treat her shadow with respect she gains greater freedom from it.

There are several kinds of miracle in Lewis's fiction (miracles of precognition, healing, and deliverance from evil). In each case, the event could be explained in a secular framework, but Jung's concept of synchronicity helps to illuminate the significance of such events yet shows how they build upon the daily, ordinary reality. Jung's mystical religion of God as unfolding consciousness, while not orthodox Christianity, may prepare for the Christian God and it does, to some extent, set aside the Behavioristic and Freudian theories of mind, which Lewis so detested.<sup>1</sup>

### I.

According to psychoanalytic scholar Joseph Campbell, the search for self or for selfhood is the most universal story, is what Campbell calls the "monomyth". It includes eight aspects: 1) miraculous birth, 2) initiation and receiving a divine sign, 3) a time of withdrawal for meditation and preparation, 4) a series of trials or a quest, 5) a confrontation with death, 6) a descent into the Underworld as scapegoat, quester, or laborer, 7) a return to earthly life with an ability to confer boons and favors, and 8) an ascent to Heaven. One sees this mythic pattern, in most aspects, in Moses, Joseph in Genesis, Orpheus, Siegfried, and King Arthur. But the *mythos* is clearest, at least for many Westerners, in Jesus of Nazareth. The key to true selfhood is being "a man for others," to use Bonhoeffer's term, or put more deftly for the 1970's, a person for others.<sup>2</sup>

It is the thesis of this paper that Lewis's Ransom fits the pattern of the monomyth, with perhaps one exception. His birth is not reported as miraculous; but we should remember two things here: Ransom's name is changed on his return from Perelandra and also in *Miracles* Lewis contends that every birth is a miracle. In the trilogy the protagonist (modelled probably on Charles Williams) seems to fulfill Joseph Campbell's other criteria. As Ransom develops from the staid, introverted professor in *Out of the Silent Planet* toward being the Fisher-King Savior figure about to ascend or be translated in *That Hideous Strength*, we can make a case for Perelandra as the pivotal story in his transformation. Other examples of changes in Ransom will be given, but first we need to take a look at *Perelandra* as a novel. This second novel in the trilogy has been called a Miltonic prose poem and it obviously owes a great deal to Milton. Margaret P. Hannay's essay, "A Preface to *Perelandra*," which appeared in the recent collection on Lewis's fiction edited by Peter Schakel, is a good beginning point for an intelligent reading of this novel. *Perelandra* was published in 1943, a year after Lewis's *Preface to Paradise Lost*. In her essay Hannay argues that Lewis rejected those aspects of Milton's Edenic myth which he found distasteful:

. . . the magnificent Satan, the anthropomorphic deity, the undignified corporeality of the angels, the mistaken attempt to describe prelapsarian sexuality. . . Lewis believed that Milton's Eve fell through Pride; his own Eve (the Green Lady, Tinedril) is tempted to take her destiny into her own hands, to set herself up as her own god. . . The major departures from *Paradise Lost* come toward the end of *Perelandra*.<sup>3</sup>

Ransom, who is ready to give his life to keep the planet from falling, embodies Lewis's hope for mankind on the verge of a new creation. There are many such themes in *Perelandra*, but if I may be autobiographical for a paragraph, I would like to suggest that what we remember in a novel, 25 or 30 years after first reading it, is significant not just in terms of our psyches but in terms of what is inherently important in the book. The first book by C.S. Lewis which I ever read was *Perelandra*. I was an undergraduate, marooned

by influenza in the college infirmary during the beginning of winter vacation. I read the novel with a fever, literally and figuratively. It was for me what Charles Williams calls a "Beatrician moment," for in the midst of reading this book I received a new and deepened sense of goodness, and it was not the prosaic goodness of moralism. I remember the sensuous but not sensual beauty of the Green Lady, the islands, the colors, the excitement of good and evil, with good seeming more attractive. It was a moment similar to my discovery of Dante, some months later I believe, as I sat reading on the floor of the dorm laundry, waiting for my wash to go through the cycle. Perhaps such revelatory insight can come to us best in the midst of the mundane, like Tolkien finishing The Return of the King in between frequent mowing of his lawn, or — dare I press the comparison — like angels coming to sheep herders.

But to return to Joseph Campbell's transformation process: Elwin Ransom, who becomes Mr. Fisher-King, the Director, in That Hideous Strength, is initiated into space travel, against his will—remember he is drugged and taken to Mars (Malacandra). Though fearful, he receives various signs of goodness from the hrossa, from the sorn Augray, and particularly at the end of Out of the Silent Planet when the Oyarsa of Malacandra speaks to him. Ransom is returned to earth but in the second novel "dies" again when he travels naked to Venus (Perelandra) in a coffin with a dark bandage over his eyes.

A coffin is a kind of ark in that it is a container for temporary safety. The human body returns to dust; the spirit goes to another dimension. Noah found safety on dry land; on Perelandra Ransom finds refuge on floating islands, which were far from dry, but there was safety in abiding there because Maleldil had willed it so. On Malacandra and Perelandra Ransom has to run, fight, struggle, but he is given times for withdrawal, swimming, floating, eating, and preparation. In his struggle with Weston, who becomes the demonic Un-Man, he learns his own capacity for violence but he learns also that skinny philologists had better let Maleldil do most of the fighting. After the truly horrible violence of Ransom's subterranean struggle with the Un-Man, he is given a vision of the glory that has been and will be.

Ransom has fought the powers working through the Un-Man. His self concept has changed from that of a sedentary, non-assertive scholar to that of a soldier recovering from a holy war. But chapters 16 and 17 are more than rest-and-recovery for the soldier. Lewis uses them to develop a different perspective on the Eden story than Milton had given it. The tutelary spirit of Mars whose name is Malacandra has come to join Perelandra (the tutelary spirit of Venus) as they and other eldila bless the reunion feast of the Green Lady and her husband the King.

"The world is born today," said Malacandra. "Today for the first time two creatures of the low worlds, two images of Maleldil that breathe and breed like the beasts, step up that step at which your parents fell, and sit in the throne of what they were meant to be. It was never seen before. Because it did not happen in your world a greater thing happened, but not this. Because the greater thing happened in Thulcandra (the coming of Maleldil the Young) this and not the greater thing happens here."<sup>4</sup>

Thus Lewis deals with the paradox of the Fortunate Fall of Adam and Eve. Ransom is given a vision which is beyond time and space categories. Lewis audaciously tries to depict gender in two characters apart from any mention of primary sexual characteristics. In the procession Ransom sees "Paradise itself in its two persons": the King and Queen of Perelandra, Mars and Venus, Adam and Eve, Masculine and feminine—Jung might add animus and anima, the instrumental and the expressive self.

## II.

In the early part of the novel Ransom had been called Piebald because he was pale on one side of his body and tanned by the heavens on the other side. He is not depicted as particularly athletic, yet he gets stronger as he strug-

gles against evil. One is reminded of the Scandinavian saying, "The north wind made the Vikings." It is tempting to pursue Ransom's adventures in That Hideous Strength, but because of the limits of this paper only two points can now be made. First, Ransom's inconsolable wound, received when the Un-Man injured him on his heel, can only be made well in Perelandra (part of Paradise). Though Ransom returns from Perelandra looking more and more like a king, the wound will not heal and he suffers frequent pain.

Second, though readings of Perelandra which reflect Reformed theology put emphasis on the individual, the more Catholic reading would stress the collective and corporate nature of our experience of Grace. The King says to Ransom:

"All is gift. I am Oyarsa not by His (Maleldil's) gift alone but by our foster mother's, not by hers alone but by yours, not by yours alone but my wife's—nay, in some sort, by gift of the very beasts and birds. Through many hands, enriched with many different kinds of love and labour, the gift comes to me. It is the Law. The best fruits are plucked for each by some hand that is not his own."<sup>5</sup>

Some questions: isn't there much in Lewis to point to his seeing salvation as collective and corporate? Is mercy given to us alone or in groups, however small the groups may be? In the imagery of Perelandra do we cast ourselves on the eternal wave all alone?

In conclusion, Lewis himself in many ways undergoes the ritual hero's quest: he leaves his native Ireland, family, and childhood religion. He is involved with various enemies in two World Wars, in Academia, in his struggle against snobbery, philosophic Materialism, and apostate Puritanism. He fights polarities which sorely threaten him: Reason and Romance, Northernness and Southernness, Asceticism and Sensuality—making a dangerous pilgrimage. He suffers yet "returns" from his struggles to confer boons: some 50 price-less books, which thanks to Fr. Walter Hooper's good offices, continue to come to us. Though it is not to be mistaken for the doctrine of the resurrection, the idea that Lewis continues to speak to us through his books as well as his friends is fitting. For if Charles Williams is the model for the later Ransom, he is an appealing hero, because he is human, wise, and in spite of his wound, more whole than most of us academicians. Ransom is being completed by suffering, risk, trust, receptivity, and the scattered as well as the gathered community.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Lewis's most concentrated discussion of Freud and Jung is "Literature and Psychoanalysis" in Rehabilitations and Other Essays (London: Oxford University Press, 1939). See especially his The Abolition of Man for his views on Behavioristic psychology. A good introduction to Jung is his Memories, Dreams, and Reflections (New York: Random House, 1961; ed. by Aniela Jaffe) and Jung's Man and His Symbols (various editions) is also instructive, particularly for teachers in the humanities.

<sup>2</sup> Of the many books by Joseph Campbell, perhaps the best to read first are Hero With a Thousand Faces, 2nd ed., (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1972) and Myths To Live By (New York: Bantam ed., 1973).

<sup>3</sup> Margaret P. Hannay, "A Preface to Perelandra," in The Longing for a Form: Essays on the Fiction of C.S. Lewis, ed. Peter J. Schakel (The Kent State University Press, 1977), p. 80.

<sup>4</sup> C.S. Lewis, Perelandra: A Novel (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1944), p. 210.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 224 (I have written of the Great Dance at the end of Perelandra in "The Meaning of Masculine and Feminine in the Work of C.S. Lewis" in Modern British Literature, 2 (1977), 153-159.)



# MYTHCON XII

## A Festival in Faerie



### Tentative Schedule

Mythcon will begin after dinner Friday, August 7th, with registration and a revel in the Mills College Student Union. Saturday will feature the procession and convocation, papers and panels, the Masquerade, and dramatic performances. On Sunday there will be religious services, papers and panels, the business meeting and auctions, the Feast, and a performance of "The Feast of the Fisher King", a multi-media masque. Games and other activities will happen during the day, and films will be shown all three evenings. Closing ceremonies and final papers will be on Monday before lunch.

### Prices

Memberships--\$15.00; Room and board for entire weekend (excluding Sunday dinner) \$102.00; Feast on Sunday--\$12.50; Attending fee for 'commuters'-- \$5.00/day; Meals for commuters-- breakfast, \$4, lunch \$5, dinner \$6.

Conference members pay Mythcon XII, and we pay the College. You must make reservations for rooms and/or meals by July 17th. Let us know if you will need a double room, or if you will need to be picked up at the Oakland Airport or Bus Station.

### What to Wear or Bring

Climate will vary from morning fog to sunny afternoons and cool evenings. Bring something festive for the convocation, and a suit if you want to swim. Society branches should bring their banners! Everyone should bring musical instruments, songs and poetry.

### Participation and Information in Areas of Special Interest

Papers-- contact Eric Rauscher, 6017 Avila, El Cerrito, CA 94530 by June 30th with an abstract or the paper itself if you want it read. Papers should be about 40 minutes long.

Art Show-- contact Edith Crowe for information and registration forms, 2674 Biarfield Av, Redwood City 94061.

Formal Presentations (drama, dance, etc.)-- contact Paul Edwin Zimmer with full description, Mythcon.

Music Program-- contact David Williams at Mythcon.

Masquerade-- registration forms available from Marion Zimmer Bradley at Mythcon.

Goblin Market-- Table prices for the Dealer's Room are \$15/table. Contact Clint Bigglestone, 265 Vernon, #314, Oakland, Ca. 94610.

Security-- volunteers to guard the Market or Art Show should contact the Mythcon Committee.

### The Feast

Adrienne Martine, one of the most renowned cooks in the Society for Creative Anachronism, will present a Feast of Fantasy on Sunday afternoon. The proposed menu includes everything from pate aux pistaches, to spicy charred lamb, lemon zucchini, lemon mousse, and gateau breton. Tickets are \$12.50. There will be a limited number of openings for servers at \$4.00 each. For information, contact Adrienne c/o Mythcon XII.

### The Mythopoeic Fantasy Award

Nominees are: Lion of Ireland (Llewelyn); The Grey Mane of Morning (Chant); The Wounded Land (Donaldson); The Beginning Place (LeGuin); Unfinished Tales (Tolkien); and No Award. Votes must be postmarked by July 20th and sent to George Colvin, 3500 Lou Ella Lane, Riverside, CA 92507.

### Auctions

Contributions of books, artwork and other fantasy-related material for Glen to auction off for the benefit of the Society are welcome...

### Advertising

The Program Book will carry advertising for items likely to interest Mythcon members. Full-page, \$20; half-page \$12; quarter-page \$8. Pages will be 5½"x8½" and camera-ready copy is preferred. Submit by July 20th.

We also encourage you to publicize MYTHCON through school, interest groups, or job contacts.

MYTHCON XII is shaping up to be a really memorable event. We hope that all the branches will be well represented, and that those for whom Mythcon is the only opportunity to meet others with similar interests will turn out in force! See you soon!

Diana L. Paxson-- MYTHCON XII  
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