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The Feast of Reason: *Out of the Silent Planet* as The Book of Hnau

**Abstract**

Discusses the concept of *hnau* as developed in *Out of the Silent Planet*. Identifies Platonic and medieval ideas of the Rational Soul (and its faculties of *intellectus* and *ratio*) as applied to Malacandra. Sees *Out of the Silent Planet* as expressive of the apprehension of spiritual truth through Reason; Revelation is saved for *Perelandra*.

**Additional Keywords**

Intellectus in *Out of the Silent Planet*; Lewis, C.S. — Characters—Hnau; Lewis, C.S. *Out of the Silent Planet*—Concept of *hnau*; Platonism in *Out of the Silent Planet*; Ratio in *Out of the Silent Planet*; Rational soul in *Out of the Silent Planet*; Patrick Wynne
The Feast of Reason
Out of the Silent Planet as The Book of Hnau

Jeannette Hume Lutton

Hnau (adj. and n., sing. and pl.) makes a late appearance in Out of the Silent Planet. [1]

It emerges from Ransom's first substantive conversation with the brossa, which occurs — can only occur — after he has lived among them for many weeks and begun to master their language. A world of experience already separates him from his former self, the Cambridge philologist on a walking tour whom we met at the beginning of the story. He has undergone, initially, the shock to his conventional assumptions of being drugged and kidnapped by an old schoolmate and his associate, a professor of physics. That shock has been succeeded by the very much greater one of finding himself confined in a space ship with his abductors and headed for a planet which they identify only as Malacandra. His delight in the unexpected beauties of the space voyage is understandably vitiated by the discovery that, on arrival in Malacandra, he is to be turned over to certain inhabitants called sorns as a human sacrifice. Saved from delivery to these creatures by the timely, if scary, appearance of a water monster, he has next experienced flight and unprovisioned solitude in a world so different from his own as to defy, at first, his very powers of perception ("You cannot see things till you know roughly what they are") (OSP, p.42). In this forlorn state he has been found by a brossa, a creature that looks like an elongated seal but talks, offers Ransom an alcoholic drink, and operates a boat in which it invites him to join it.

Such is the background to Ransom's going to live among the brossa and learning their language well enough to have the aforesaid conversation. Out of the Silent Planet is thus more than a third over and a number of his adventures already in the past before Ransom first hears the word hnaú, Malacandrian for "rational" and "rational being" and hence the location that identifies the common ground between him and the brossa. But the word soon makes up for the tardiness of its appearance by the frequency with which it occurs. In the succeeding eighty-three pages, which comprise the latter two thirds of the narrative, hnaú appears sixty-seven times, almost on every page. Repetition on this scale cannot be idle. Clearly, hnaú is important thematically, and just as clearly we must, if we wish to understand the fantasy, determine the range of meaning and associations with which it is being used.

If the introductory book of C.S. Lewis' space trilogy becomes, through sheer reiteration, the Book of Hnau, in what senses, we need to know, does that designation apply?

First of all, then, Out of the Silent Planet is the Book of Hnau in the sense that it locates hnaú as a grade of reality and explores its relationship with other grades. The word is used initially in an answer to a question that Ransom asks about Maleldil the Young, who, according to the brossa, made the world. He is told that Maleldil is not hnaú. and when he asks the meaning of hnaú, he is given not a definition but a series of examples: himself, the brossa, the seroni (this is the true plural of sorn), and the pfiffrige. There are, in short, three rational species on Malacandra, all very different in appearance and characteristic behavior. The tall, white, spindly, spectral seroni are the planet's intellects, its scientists and philosophers (who assuredly do not, in spite of what Ransom has heard, practice human sacrifice). The furry, sinuous, web-footed brossa are the planet's heroes and bards. The froglike, smutted pfiffrige, with the long fore-limbs and large,
many-fingered hands, are its artists and craftsmen. In spite of these physical and behavioral differences, the *hnau* are all of one mind — all copies of Maleldil — and are equal in the sense that they represent different excellences which are not comparable. [2]

These *hnau* have such relations with the sub-rational grades of Malacandrian reality as befit their various natures. The *seroni* are most closely connected with beasts: they are shepherds, tending herds of fuzzy, yellow, giraffe-like animals and using their milk to make cheese. The *brossa* are connected with the best in plants and vegetables. They fish and grow vegetables for food and drink, besides well water. The *hrossa*, most closely related with the mineral world, for they paint pictures, sculpt in stone, and mine precious metals from which they fashion parts of buildings, drinking vessels, and ornaments. In addition to these sub-rational grades of reality, there is a super-rational grade called *eldila*. These are creatures with bodies so subtle that to Ransom they appear to be made of light. Their voices are high, sweet, remote, and "bloodless." Though they seem to be "on" Malacandra, they actually live in the heavens and regard the planets as merely "places in the heavens," or even interruptions of the heavens. The word *hnau* is normally used only of the planetary rational species, but Lewis eventually discovers that the *eldila* are also *hnau*, only "a very different *hnau*" who do not die or breed and who have superior intelligence.

That these various grades of reality are, at the higher levels, a chain of command Ransom learns from a remark by a distinguished old *sorn*, to whom he has been taken in the interests of Malacandrian science. "There must be rule," says the *sorn*, "yet how can creatures rule themselves? Beasts must be ruled by *hnau*. "hnau" by *eldila* and *eldila* by Maleldil." (OSP, p. 102) Among the *eldila* themselves (unlike the planetary *hnau*) there are evidently gradations of authority, never spelled out but suggested perhaps by their arrangement "rank behind rank about him, and rank above rank over his head" on the only occasion when Ransom sees multitudes of them assembled. (OSP, p. 119) The greatest of the *eldila* associated with Malacandra is called *Oyarsa*. Ransom is told that "he is the one of his kind who was put into Malacandra to rule it when Malacandra was made." (OSP, p. 93) At Meldilorn, Oyarsa's seat, Ransom sees a monolith with sculpture depicting the solar system and learns by it that each planet, at its creation, has been similarly endowed with an *Oyarsa*. (He also learns, incidentally, that Malacandra is Mars.) No *eldil* higher than the *Oyarsa* ever goes to a world; hence, when Ransom encounters the *Oyarsa* of Malacandra, as he does near the end of the story, he has reached the top of the immediate chain of command.

What is the source of this chain? Obviously, it is the Chain of Being of Medieval and Renaissance Europe and a part of the "model" described by Lewis in The Discarded Image, his "Introduction to Medieval and Renaissance Literature." Oyarsa is a planetary Intelligence, as "Lewis," the narrator, points out in his note at the end.[3] The *eldila* are angels — never mind the doubt Ransom expresses on this point in his appended letter. Their subtle bodies are angelic bodies as conceived by the Florentine Platonists.[4] They are "A very different *hnau*" in that *intelligentia*, rather than *ratio*, is their characteristic faculty. (DI, p.157) The heavens they inhabit, everywhere Illuminated by the sun, bear some resemblance to the Middle Ages by Lucan. (DI, p.33,111) Their "ranks," suggested by the seating arrangement at Meldilorn, are the Hierarchies of Pseudo-Dionysius. (DI, p.71) The planetary *hnau* — *seroni*, *brossa*, *pifiltrigi* — illustrate what Lewis has called the Principle of the Triad and identified as characteristic of Platonic and medieval thought:

We shall find Plato himself, and the medievals, endlessly acting on their principle; supplying bridges, as it were, — 'third things' — between reason and appetite, soul and body, king and commons. (DI, p.44)

On Malacandra, the heroic-bardic *hrossa* seem to be the "third kings" between the *seroni*, who are thinkers, and the *pifiltrigi*, who are makers ("We thought it," says Agray the *sorn* of an apparatus for administering oxygen, "and the pifiltrigi made it."). (OSP, p.98) Indeed, the Malacandrian Triad bears some resemblance to the division of society into philosophers, warriors, and producers in the *Republic*, though without Plato's stratification. As for the steps leading up to *hnau*.

On the common medieval view there were four grades of terrestrial reality: mere existence (as in stones), existence with growth (as in vegetables), existence and growth with sensation (as in beasts), and all these with reason (as in man). (DI, p.93)

Though Lewis is naturally most interested in *hnau*, planetary and heavenly, he has not neglected a single grade below them. Thus, Ransom's gradual discovery of the Malacandrian Chain is a rediscovery of the Medieval Model. In his experience, the Discarded Image is reclaimed.

What does this reclamation mean to Ransom? It means that he comes to think of himself as *hnau*, as a part of a vast system or order in which his place is defined by his possession of *ratio*. This implies feelings of solidarity with other *hnau* and duties and responsibilities toward those above him or below him on the Chain. The implications of this view can best be grasped by comparing the Ransom of the earlier parts of the story with the Ransom who stands before *Oyarsa* at Meldilorn. Until he goes to live with the *hrossa*, Ransom is usually alone; alone by choice on a walking tour — so much out of touch with others as to be an ideal candidate for abduction; alone in the space-ship, in that the other passengers are conspirators against him; and alone on Malacandra to the extent that he begins talking to himself and having delusions of duality. His solitude can be seen as, among other things, a figure for the solitude of modern man, alone in the vastness of space. When Ransom goes to live with the *hrossa*, he begins to lose his solitude. And when he stands before *Oyarsa*, with *seroni*, *hrossa*, *pifiltrigi*, and *eldila* around and above him, he is en famille, a *hnau* among *hnau*. He has lost the isolation of modern man and rejoined the cosmic community.

From another point of view, Out of the Silent Planet is the Book of *Hnau* in the sense that it establishes what is *hnau* as an ideal of thought and conduct. Since it does so by picturing deficiently *hnau* human beings in relation to fully *hnau* Malacandrians, it produces what may be called the Gulliver's Travels effect. Indeed, a re-reading of "A Voyage to the Country of the Houyhnhnms" gives rise to the thought that Lewis was almost certainly indebted to Swift for certain elements in his own fantasy. The story of Ransom's experiences among the *hrossa* (and, to a lesser extent, the *seroni*) follows, in general outline, the
story of Gulliver's among the Houyhnhnms. Both men find themselves in fantastic surroundings as the result of treachery and violence at the hands of their fellow men. Both, wandering friendless and unprovisioned in a totally unknown environment, encounter rational beings whom they initially take to be beasts. Both recognize the rationality of these creatures by hearing them talk. Both go home with the creatures they have met, live for a considerable time among them, learn their language, communicate something of the cultures they represent to their hosts (in Ransom's case, most of this communication is delayed until he is among the serons) and learn something of the host culture, grow to love and admire their hosts but eventually find themselves under the necessity of leaving them, and after further adventures, return to their own lands with changed outlook and a kind of permanent homesickness for the culture that once seemed so alien. Within this framework of narrative similarity are many local similarities. But the fundamental likeness between the two works, from which the other likenesses presumably arise, is in the central situation; a human being, accustomed to think of himself as a member of the rational species, meets creatures in whom reason is united with a non-human shape and comes to realize that, compared with them, he and his kind are very imperfectly rational.

It is important at this point to keep in mind that both Swift and Lewis are using reason in the older, more comprehensive sense to mean Rational Soul, in which are included the faculties intellectus and ratio. Lewis explains these concepts in *The Discarded Image* by saying, "We are enjoying intellectus when we 'just see' a self-evident truth; we are exercising ratio when we proceed step by step to prove a truth which is not self-evident." (DI, p.157) Reason in the inclusive sense was considered the organ of morality because most people believed that "fundamental moral maxims were intellectually grasped" — were grasped, that is to say, by intellectus. (DI, p.158) Moral conflict was thus thought to lie between Passion and Reason. Tracing the history of these ideas, Lewis observes,

The belief that to recognize a duty was to perceive a truth — not because you had a good heart but because you were an intellectual being — had roots in antiquity. Plato preserved the Socratic idea that morality was an affair of knowledge; bad men were bad because they did not know what was good. Aristotle, while attacking this view and giving an important place to upbringing and habituation still made "right reason" (orthos logos) essential to good conduct. The Stoics believed in a Natural Law which all rational men, in virtue of their rationality, saw to be blinding to them. (DI, p.160)

When Oyarsa says to Weston, one of Ransom's kidnappers, that "There are laws that all hnau know, of pity and straight dealing and shame and the like," he is not only endorsing the concept of Natural Law but giving it interplanetary scope. (OSP, p.130) There is thus a single basic standard of conduct recognized by both Ransom and the Malacandrian hnau, as by both Gulliver and the Houyhnhnms. What the human visitors discover in each case, however, is that the species they represent falls far short of the host species in meeting this standard.

To illustrate, both Gulliver and Ransom have difficulty in explaining their arrival in the host country, since it has resulted from their victimization by their fellow men. Such behavior is so unthinkable among the benevolent host species that their language has no words to convey it. Lying in Houyhnhnmland can be expressed only as "saying the thing which is not" and bad things (like bad weather or a badly built house) only by appending the word "yahoo" — thus appealing to the only really negative thing in Houyhnhnm experience. In the Malacandrian language, the nearest equivalent to "bad" is "bent". Trying to explain various aspects of the culture they represent, both Gulliver and Ransom encounter incredulity and horror. Gulliver's master Houyhnhnm is aghast at his revelations about human wars and weapons:

...When a creature pretending to reason should be capable of such enormities, he dreaded lest the corruption of that faculty might be worse than brutality itself. He seemed therefore confident, that instead of reason, we were only possessed of some quality fitted to increase our natural vices. [5]

Similarly, when Ransom is questioned by a born scientist and pupils, they were astonished at what he had to tell them of human history — of war, slavery, and prostitution.

"It is because they have no Oyarsa," said one of the pupils. (OSP, p.102)

As they learn more of the customs and attitudes of the host species, both Gulliver and Ransom perceive the superiority of these to human ways. Neither Houyhnhnms nor hnossa, for example, show fear of death or grief for the dead. The Houyhnhnms, feeling the approach of death, exchange visits with their friends to say solemn but calm farewells. The hnossa, confident of the immortality of the soul, go serenely off to Meldirlorn with others born the same year, to die and be "unbodied" by Oyarsa. Houyhnhnms and hnossa have also escaped human deficiencies with respect to marriage and reproduction. Marital infidelity is unheard of among the Houyhnhnms, and each couple produces only two offspring. The hnossa are "naturally continent, naturally monogamous," and it does not enter their heads to repeat offspring during more than one or two years of their lives. Where government is concerned, Houyhnhnms and hnossa both enjoy a simplicity that their full rationality allows. The Houyhnhnms require no more than a general assembly every fourth year to make up any inadequacies of farm products, cows, or Yahooos in any district of the country. The serons, hnossa, and others live peacefully and cooperatively under the rule of Oyarsa: Ransom's repeated effort to discover which is the dominant species, who is exploiting whom, and who has conquered whom yields nothing but the gradual realization that assumptions drawn from human history have no relevance to life on Malacandra.

Yet despite these striking similarities between Gulliver's story and Ransom's, the reader is bound to notice that in one respect their experiences are at opposite extremes. Gulliver is never recognized as a rational being by the cool, condescending Houyhnhnms, and he eventually adopts their view of him as a Yahoo with only the slightest tincture of reason. He is therefore an outsider throughout his stay in Houyhnhnmland and is finally expelle as a Yahoo whose rudiments of reason merely make him more dangerous than the common variety. But he is also, by choice, an
outsider to human society when he is forced to return to it, feeling all the disdain for these "Yahoos" that he has learned from the Houyhnhmens. Ransom, on the other hand, is accepted without question as hnaú by the lovable, exuberant hrossa and later by the other rational species and the eídila, including Oyarsa. In his grief and remorse over his hross friend Hyoi's death, Ransom associates himself with Weston and Devine, the men who have killed Hyoi, by saying, "We are all a bent race. We have come here to bring evil on Malacandra." We are only half hnaú." (OSP, p. 81) But Oyarsa draws a clear distinction among the human visitors between Weston, whom he calls a bent hnaú; Devine, whom he calls a broken one in whose body the hnaú is already dead; and Ransom, who he says is guilty of no more than a little fearfulness. (Pears is, indeed, the "passion" of which Ransom's reason makes gradual conquest in the course of the story — a process especially appropriate to an adventure centered on the planet Mars.) But Ransom's acceptance by the Malacandrian hnaú results in no breach between him and the human race. When he is given the choice between remaining on Malacandra or taking his chances on the space voyage back with Weston and Devine, he chooses the latter on the grounds of love of his own kind, and in our last glimpse of him, as the main story ends, he is entering the gregarious atmosphere of an English pub and ordering a pint of bitter. For him, unlike Gulliver, acquaintance with the fully hnaú in conduct and ordering a pint of bitter is sparing in its allusion to the Christian revelation.

Finally, Out of the Silent Planet is the Book of Hnaú in the sense that, for the most part, it limits itself to a view of ultimate reality that is accessible to hnaú as hnaú. It is theist, that is to say, but sparing in its allusions to the Christian revelation.

Some of this reticence — surprising, perhaps, in the first book of so resonantly Christian a trilogy — can be explained as a function of the history of Malacandra, which has undergone nothing comparable to the fall of man on Earth. The fortunate condition of its rational beings is reflected in Hyoi's puzzled question to Ransom, "How could the life of a hnaú be bent?" The Malacandrians know Maleldil as creator and sustainer of their world ("Maleldil will not stop the plants growing"), but they do not, because they need not, know him as redeemer. (OSP, p. 72) The source of their religious doctrines is never specified in the story. There are apparently no sacred texts on Malacandra; indeed, there are very few books of any kind ("It is better to remember, said the sorns") (OSP, p. 101). Nor is there any of the direct revelation that Ransom will later witness on Perelandra in the life of the Lady and, one memorable night, experience himself. [7] The eídila, of course, are a possible source of knowledge. That the hrossa call Maleldil "the Young" and say that he lives with "the Old One" is evidence, perhaps, that Oyarsa instructs his hnaú and has given them some conception of Maleldil as the Son. Except for this one detail, however, the Malacandrians' doctrines (for example, that Maleldil is "a spirit without body, parts or passions") appear to be of the kind that the might have arrived at purely through the exercise of Rational Soul. (OSP, p. 68) Their spiritual state seemingly requires nothing more.

But conditions on Malacandra cannot account entirely for the pervasive reticence where Christianity is concerned. One proof is that it operates to reference Ransom's religion. Though he is a visitor from Earth and a Christian, the latter fact about him is kept exceedingly unobtrusive. When, for example, he considers suicide to forestall his delivery to the sorns, we are told that "Ransom was a pious man. He hoped he would be forgiven" — an indication, certainly, for his religious position but not for a conclusive one, since the prohibition of suicide is not exclusively Christian. (OSP, p. 35–36) It is also, for example, Platonic, like so much else in the book. [8]

Twice, when he is in tight places, we hear that Ransom "prayed", but we learn nothing of what he prayed or even if the word is being used in a precisely religious sense (once the answer seems to be no, the other time yes). Until he has learned something of the hrossa's religion, Ransom is "haunted by a conscientious scruple as to whether it might not be his duty to undertake their religious instruction," but he doesn't say what he would have taught if he had undertaken it, and when he learns that they have a "civilized religion," he is apparently satisfied. (OSP, p. 68) What they tell him about the Creator he calls a "sort of hrossian equivalent of our God." What they say about the Creator he calls a "sort of hrossian equivalent of our God." Which contains a reference to "our own" may not mean much more than "earthly," (OSP, p. 158) I do not wish to be misunderstood; the impression left is that Ransom is other than Christian but that for some reason what is specifically his is not being articulated.

The policy of reticence that prevails throughout the fantasy is, as it were, underlined in two episodes near the end. These have to do with the history of Earth — by Malacandrians called Thulcandra, the silent planet, because it is the part of the solar system with which there is no communication. Until Ransom meets Oyarsa at the great assembly at Meldilorn, he is not in contact with anyone who knows why his world is thus. It is Oyarsa who explains that long ago the intelligence of Ransom's world became "bent," that he was delisted in the cosmic war, and that he was bound in the air of his own world, which has since been silent because the Bent One does not converse with the rulers of other worlds. But even Oyarsa, though he has heard rumors that Maleldil "has taken strange counsel and dared terrible things, wrestling with the Bent One in Thulcandra," does not know what Maleldil has done. (OSP, p. 121) Ransom is about to tell him when they are interrupted by the arrival of a hrossian delegation with three dead bodies, and the killers, Weston and Devine, in custody. This interruption seems to be a way of saying through the plot that the story Ransom is beginning must not be told in this book. Later, the same point is made in a more direct way. When Ransom and Oyarsa eventually have their conversation, we readers are not privy to it; instead, the narrator, of whose existence we have been unaware until this moment, obtrudes himself and says,

I am not allowed to record this conversation, beyond saying that the voice [of Oyarsa] concluded it with the words:

"You have shown me more wonders than are known in the whole of heaven." (OSP, p. 142)

It is not hard to imagine what Ransom has said, but imagine it is what we are left to do. The "policy," as I have called it, of reticence could hardly be more clearly spelled out than in this passage.

Why, one is naturally led to ask, would Lewis impose such a policy upon himself in the first book of
a Christian trilogy? This question has more than one answer, but the answer most relevant to our present concerns is suggested in the first two paragraphs of the story. [9] There, Ransom is not immediately identified by name. He is called "the Pedestrian" and introduced as a walking tour, a man about thirty-five to forty years of age, with a pack on his back, who doesn't know where he is going to spend the night. For "the Pedestrian" read "the Pilgrim," and you realize that this story belongs to the long tradition of stories in which traveling is a symbol of spiritual progress. Particular details in this opening scene recall individual works of a similar type. The thundershower the traveler has taken shelter may owe something to the first canto of The Faerie Queene. The pack on the traveler's back perhaps alludes especially to the burden of Pilgrim's Progress. But the predominant impression of similarity is to the first canto of the Inferno, which introduces the whole Commedia. [10] The ominously dark landscape broken by one bright splash of sunlight is certainly reminiscent of Dante's beginning. So is the traveler's age, thirty-five to forty, which puts him, so to speak, in the middle of the walking tour. Above all, the impression that this scene is introductory not only of Out of the Silent Planet but of the whole space trilogy recalls Dante's Canto One, the "one" which added to the other thirty-three of the Paradiso makes a perfect one hundred. To point to these similarities is not to suggest that Lewis' trilogy closely follows the Commedia in method or organization. The trilogy is not an allegory and its third part is not primarily a travel story — to mention only the most obvious differences. Nevertheless, one is surely justified in recalling that Dante the Pilgrim begins his spiritual progress by realizing his potential as hnaú, in that Virgil, who stands for Human Reason (Rational Soul) is his original guide. His journey is nearly two-thirds over before he meets with Revelatin in the person of Beatrice. Since Lewis' trilogy is not an allegory, it has no characters that stand for these things, but it resembles the Commedia in that it shows stages of the journey as associated with them. In Ransom's experience, the voyage to Malacandra is the stage associated with Reason, that to Perelandra the stage associated with the intuitive, looking back upon Malacandra from Perelandra, Ransom thinks of it as an "archaic" place, much as he still loves it. So it is, in the sense that it has not been influenced by the Incarnation of Maleldil, either as Earth has or as Perelandra has. But the Lady of Perelandra assures him that it is not "worse" because history has turned a corner since it woke to life. In the same way, the intuitions of Rational Soul, the faculty associated with Malacandra, are not "worse" for having been overtaken by the truths of Revelation. It is with these intuitions as guide that all hnaú begin their journey. [11]

Notes
[2] "It might be supposed that I believe science and philosophy to be somehow intrinsically more valuable than literature and art. I hold no such view. The 'higher' intellectual level is higher only by one particular standard; by another standard the poetic level is higher. Comparative evaluations, essentially different, I feel are essentially meaningless. A surgeon is better than a violinist at operating and a violinist is better than a surgeon at playing the violin." C.S. Lewis, The Discarded Image (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1964), p.20; hereafter cited as DI. In many instances, as here, DI seems to offer a commentary on OSP.
[6] One of the sets of parallel passages in which OSP shows obvious indebtedness to GT is particularly revealing on this point. Gulliver gives three reasons for his frankness with his master Houyhnhms about human shortcomings: that he no longer thinks well enough of his fellow men to try to save their reputation; that, in any case, he could never fool anyone as acute as his master; and, finally, that he has learned by Houyhnhm example to hate lying (GT, pp. 250-51). Ransom, answering some questions about Earth, decides "that he would be quite frank, for he now felt that it would not be hnaú, and also that it would be unavailing to do otherwise" (OSP, p. 102). Ransom's reasons for openness are essentially the same as Gulliver's second and third reasons: Gulliver's first reason is consciously absent from his thinking.
[8] On the (possible) relation of the Platonic to the Christian prohibition of suicide, see DI, p. 25.
[9] Two other answers are suggested in DI: (1) On p. 120, Lewis speaks of a "profound disharmony of atmospheres," though "no absolute logical contradiction" between the Medieval Model "where God is much less the lover than the beloved and man is a marginal creature, and the Christian picture where the fall of man and the incarnation of God as man for man's redemption is central." This passage depends upon an earlier one (p. 114) in which Lewis discusses the Aristotelian idea, later incorporated into the Medieval Model, that "the Primum Mobile is moved by its love for God, and, being moved, communicates motion to the rest of the universe." Lewis adds, "Aristotle describes the natural order, which is perpetually exhibited in the incorrupted and transitory world. St. John ('herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us') describes the order of Grace which comes into play here on earth because men have fallen," OSP, which restores the discarded image, or Medieval Model, to the extent that that is compatible with a heliocentric system, might thus be thought unsuitable "atmospherically" as a place to explore the Order of Grace. (2) In his discussion of Boethius' Consolation of Philosophy, Lewis raises with respect to Boethius the same question that we have raised with respect to Lewis: "But why, we may ask, did a Christian author impose upon himself this limitation?" (p. 78); in Boethius' case, the limitation to philosophical rather than religious consolation. Lewis surmises that Boethius chose a theme that would allow him to emphasize his continuity with rather than his differences from the great pagans, Virgil, Seneca, and Plato, the distinction between Roman and barbarian being more important to him, as he suffered Theodoric's displeasure, than the distinction between Christian and pagan. Lewis, who saw himself as a rather lonely survivor, in the secular, mechanized world of the twentieth century, of an older Western culture that included both the Christian and pre-Christian past, may have had a similar intention.

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Certainly, his work, too, makes its bow to philosophy and the "great pagans." As Ransom lands on Malacandra, for example, he is surprised to discover that in the moment of touching down on an alien planet, he is wrestling with a philosophical problem. Much later, he finds in the faces of the sorns a reminder of Confucius and Parmenides. [10] Certain of Lewis' remarks on the *Commedia* form an obvious link with his own space trilogy: "The *Commedia* combines two literary undertakings which have long since been separated. On the one hand, it is a high, imaginative interpretation of spiritual life; on the other it is a realistic travel book about wanderings in places which no one had reached, but which everyone believed to have a literal and local existence. If Dante in one capacity is the companion of Homer, Virgil, and Wordsworth, in the other he is the father of Jules Verne and H.G. Wells." A *Preface to Paradise Lost,* p. 114.

[11] Though Reason sponsors the first stage of both Dante the Pilgrim's journey and Ransom's, both journeys have been inspired by the Order of Grace. We learn in Canto II of the Inferno that the Virgin Mary, St. Lucia, and Beatrice have been responsible for Virgil's rescue of Dante from the Dark Wood. As for Ransom, Oyarsa expresses the thought that "it is not without the wisdom of Maleldil that we have met now" (p. 143) and suggests that Weston and Devine have helped to bring about great events of a kind very different from what they intended.