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Guardaci Ben: The Visionary Woman in C.S. Lewis' Chronicles Of Narnia and That Hideous Strength

Abstract

Examines the characters of visionary women—what Esther Harding calls the *femme inspiratrice*—in Lewis's fiction. Part one focuses on Jane in *That Hideous Strength*. Part two focuses on Lucy in the *Chronicles of Narnia*.

Additional Keywords

Lewis, C.S.—Characters—Jane Studdock; Lewis, C.S.—Characters—Lucy Pevensie; Lewis, C.S. Chronicles of Narnia; Lewis, C.S. That Hideous Strength; Seers, female; Gary Myers

+ GUARDAEI BEN: +

THE VISIONARY WOMAN IN C.S. LEWIS' CHRONICLES OF NARNIA AND + THAT HIDEOUS STRENGTH +

NANCY - LOU PATTERSON

Part One

Woman, with her very dissimilar psychology, is and always has been a source of information about things for which a man has no eyes.

C. G. Jung¹

In a pivotal chapter entitled "Breaking Point," of his memoir, *Blind Ambition*, John Dean tells of travelling to Camp David, where he decides he must tell President Nixon that the Watergate affair can destroy him. In this decision, Dean's wife, "Mo," plays a significant role. There is a symbolic event presaging this development:

Now our White House driver announced that he was lost. The main road to Camp David was closed for repairs, and Mo was giving him advice, based on instincts, about which back road was the right one to a place she had never been. My thoughts settling back into reality, I suggested that the driver use his radio to ask for directions. But he was embarrassed to be lost and didn't want to admit it on the radio. Mo might be right, he thought. In fact she was, and we soon arrived, were checked through and shown our cabin.²

In his conversation with his wife after he tries to settle down to write a report "that says everything is okay and no one in the White House has any problems," (*Ibid.*, p. 216) Maureen says:

"That's not true, though is it?"

"No, it's not."

"Then, John, you shouldn't write that report."

That's not very smart."

She was right, but her innocence annoyed me. (*Ibid.*)

In this passage, Maureen Dean, whose translucent beauty and transfixed gaze made her an excellent target upon which her husband could, to put it in Jungian terms, project his anima, expresses to him what until this point he has been unable to admit even to himself.

A woman who plays this visionary role, becoming, as Jung said, "a source of information about things for which a man has no eyes," is described by Irene Claremont de Castillejo in *Knowing Woman*, as the fourth of four types (the other three are the maternal, the hetaira, and the amazon):

. . . here we have par excellence the woman whose principal role is that of mediator.

She is permeated by the unconscious of another person and makes it visible by living it . . . I have known women who were working in a group to dream dreams which seemed unmistakably to be messages to the group as a whole.³

Such a woman may be, as John Dean described his wife to be, quote unconscious of her role. But she may be fully aware of it. M. Esther Harding, in *The Way of All Women*, describes this conscious visionary woman:

Certain women . . . who have advanced beyond the sophisticated stage are yet particularly well fitted for this role of *femme inspiratrice* on account of their own contact with the deeper things within them. Such a woman can lead a man whom she loves into touch with the hidden truths of life because of the reality of her own inner experience . . . Such a woman is in a different category from one who is nothing but anima, for she gives of herself and is not playing a role in which her unconscious motive is to hold the man. She is a "redeemed" anima woman--redeemed, that is, from the hold of her own biological instincts, on the one hand, and from self-seeking and egotistic motives, on the other.⁴

The visionary woman, in both her conscious and unconscious role, appears in many works of fantasy, and is especially vividly evoked in the fantasy novels of C. S. Lewis. The visionary woman is a seer, and Lewis based his fantasies upon seeing. "Everything began with images," he wrote, "a faun carrying an umbrella, a queen on a sledge, a magnificent lion."⁵ And again:

. . . in a certain sense, I have never exactly "made" a story. With me the process is much more like bird-watching than like either talking or building. I see pictures.⁶

In exactly this manner, *That Hideous Strength* begins with Jane Studdock idly thumbing a newspaper and seeing "a picture on the back page."⁷ And, "The moment she saw the picture she remembered her dream." The dream is described: "She had begun by dreaming simply of a face." (*Ibid.*, p. 11). It is not, in fact, an ordinary dream, but a vision of something happening in another place: visual and auditory elements are combined. Then, "At this point the dream abandoned all pretense to realism and became ordinary nightmare." (p. 12) Jane tries to justify the experience in rational terms but fails, and, vaguely disquieted, abandons the attempt and leaves her isolated flat. On the neighbourhood high street she meets Mrs. Dimble, whom she accompanies home to lunch. There, with Professor Dimble, the conversation turns speculative and even metaphysical, and Jane responds by fainting. Returning to consciousness, "Jane attempted to excuse her absurd behaviour by telling the story of her dream." (p. 34) She suggests jestingly that they "can both start psycho-analyzing me now," but to her surprise they take her perfectly seriously. When she returns home she is still uneasy, and telephones the Dimbles for help, at

which they give her the name of Grace Ironwood as one whom she ought to visit concerning the matter. This, after a quarrel with her husband Mark, she does.

While Mark is being drawn into contact with the malignant National Institute of Co-ordinated Experiments (known by its ironic acronym as the N.I.C.E.) which is taking over his college and much of the countryside in a kind of diabolical infection of which Jane's dream is to prove a significant symptom, Jane visits St. Anne's-on-the-Hill. Then, "'I've let myself in for it now,' thought Jane, 'I shall have to tell this woman that dream and she'll ask all sorts of questions.'" (p. 72) Her interview with Grace Ironwood is indeed extremely disagreeable, for again, she is taken seriously. "The reason you cannot be cured is that you are not ill," the woman tells Jane. It emerges that Jane, nee Tudor, is a descendant of visionary stock: "Your ancestor gave a full and, on the whole, correct account of the battle. . . but he was not at it. He was in York at the time." (p. 76) He had dreamed of the battle, for, Miss Ironwood says, "Vision--the power of dreaming realities--is sometimes hereditary." Jane, in fact, has been sent by the Dimbles to St. Anne's-on-the-Hill to give information by means of her visionary gift.

She resists, but in the end her dreams force her back to "the company"--"I saw them killing a man," (p. 90) she tells Mrs. Dimble. "Windows into huge, dark landscapes were opening on every side and she was powerless to shut them." (p. 99) She is, as Arthur Denniston tells her, "a seer: a person with second sight," (p. 138) and as Camilla Denniston says, "You are our secret service, our eyes." (p. 139)

Jane's dreams are vividly described in the novel, and are animus-centred: that is, they are focused upon the image of a dominant, compelling male figure or figures. Emma Jung wrote of a woman experiencing dreams of this type:

. . . I would conclude from the presence of a powerful animus figure . . . that the person in question gives too little attention to her own masculine-intellectual logos tendency, and has either developed and applied it insufficiently or not in the right way. Perhaps this sounds paradoxical because, from the outside, it appears as if it were the feminine principle which is not sufficiently taken into account, since the behaviour of such women seems on the surface to be too masculine and suggests a lack of femininity.⁸

This is precisely Jane's problem; she is an educated woman who, as a wife, has abandoned her intellectual pursuits and now feels restless and frustrated. Emma Jung says, almost as if describing Jane:

To busy ourselves simply in an intellectual or objectively masculine way seems insufficient, as can be seen in many women who have completed a course of study and practice a hitherto masculine, intellectual calling, but who, nonetheless, have never come to terms with the animus problem." (*Ibid.*, p. 13)

Lewis opened *That Hideous Strength* by sketching with a few deft strokes the predicament of Jane Studdock:

She had always intended to continue her own career as a scholar after she was married: that was one of the reasons they were to have no children . . . She still believed that if she got out all her note-books and editions and really sat down to the job she could force herself back into her lost enthusiasm for the subject. But before she did so--perhaps in order to put off the moment of beginning--she turned over a newspaper which was lying on the table and glanced at a picture on the back page. (Lewis, *Op. Cit.*, p. 10)

Thus Lewis has described Jane's problem as a prefix to beginning his narration of her visionary experiences, for this phrase launches them with the "picture on the back page." The rest of the book describes Jane's resolution of her

problem, by a means which Emma Jung may be seen to summarize:

What is really necessary is that feminine intellectuality, logos in the woman, should be so fitted into the nature and life of the woman that a harmonious cooperation between the feminine and masculine factors ensues . . . (Jung, *Op. Cit.*, p. 13)

But the end of the book is far away when Jane begins to dream. Her very first dream is of "a foreign-looking face, bearded and rather yellow, with a hooked nose," and "a rather good-looking man with a pointed grey beard." (Lewis, *Op. Cit.*, p. 11) Emma Jung wrote of the animus: "for women the animus appears either as a plurality of men, as a group of fathers, a council, a court, or some other gathering of wise men" (Jung, *Op. Cit.*, p. 27) and "This figure can come on the scene . . . as sage, judge, artist, aviator, mechanic, and so on. Not infrequently it appears as a 'stranger'." (*Ibid.*, p. 28) When Jane's dream of the foreign-looking man (stranger) and the good-looking man turns to "ordinary nightmare" she sees "a head with a reddish-white beard all covered with earth. It belonged to . . . a sort of ancient British, druidical sort of man." (Lewis, *Op. Cit.*, p. 12) These figures are later explained as apparitions of the murderer, Alcasan; an official of the N.I.C.E., Frost; and the ancient magus, Merlin. But their occurrence in her dream marks them as animus images; as Emma Jung says, "In dreams or phantasies, the animus appears chiefly in the figure of a real man. . ." (Jung, *Op. Cit.*, p. 29)

Jane has "one recurrent dream" in which "someone had apparently drawn a chair up to the bedside and then sat down to watch." (Lewis, *Op. Cit.*, p. 149) He looks "like a doctor," as befits an animus figure. It is the man she has already seen: "the pince-nez, the well-chiselled, rather white features, the little pointed beard." All three of the figures so far described are bearded, a motif of masculine identity which is probably deliberate on Lewis' part: I shall refer to the bearded animus figure again below, when it appears to Lucy in a Narnian novel. The image just described--with its white features and little pointed beard--is remarkably similar to a figure in another novel, *Dracula*, where the theme of the woman who sees in a trance the threatening activities of a dangerous male figure is given especially powerful expression.

In *Dracula*, Dr. Van Helsing hypnotizes Mina Harker so that she can describe the journey being made by Count Dracula as his coffin of ancestral earth is transported (with his body inside it) by water. Dracula has the power to call Mina to him but by the same route she has access to him. She assists not only in a hypnotic trance but by the use of her reason, for she works out an analysis of Dracula's plan which convinces the others and proves, ultimately, to be true; as Dr. Van Helsing exclaims: "Our dear Madam Mina is once more our teacher. Her eyes have been where we were blinded. Now we are on the track once again, and this time we may succeed."⁹ Erich Neumann wrote of such a situation, "when consciousness and reason cannot . . . be drawn upon to decide a situation, the male falls back on the wisdom of the unconscious, by which the female is inspired."¹⁰ At the end of *Dracula*, Mina Harker gives the description of Count Dracula's death:

He was deathly pale, just like a waxen image, and the red eyes glared. . .

As I looked, the eyes saw the sinking sun, and the look of hate in them turned to triumph.

But, on the instant, came the sweep and flash of Jonathan's knife. (Stoker, *Op. Cit.*, p. 165)

This terrible visage strongly resembles the face which haunted Jane Studdock's dreams.

Her climactic dream takes her into a cold, underground darkness. This time she recognizes that she is dreaming, and begins to explore. She finds the body of a large bearded man in coarse clothing: all known by touch alone. The dream ends with a visual image:

She had a picture of someone, someone bearded but also . . . divinely young. (Lewis, *Op. Cit.*, p. 165)

This positive animus figure heralds her meeting with Elwin Ransom, Director of St. Anne's:

Someone all golden and strong and warm coming with a mighty earth-shaking tread down into that black place.

It is an image reminiscent of the Harrowing of Hell in some medieval illumination, in which a gleaming Christ descends into Hell to release the many souls held in bondage there.

Immediately following this dream Jane sees with her eyes for the first time the terrible "waxworks face" of Frost. The confrontation drives her to St. Anne's and her meeting with Ransom, the Pendragon. The passage in which Jane meets the master of St. Anne's may be analysed for its visionary elements.

Jane looked; and instantly her world was unmade. On a sofa before her, with one foot bandaged as if he had a wound, lay what appeared to be a boy, twenty years old.

. . . all the light in the room seemed to run towards the gold hair and the gold beard of the wounded man.

Of course he was not a boy--how could she have thought so? The fresh skin on his forehead and cheeks and, above all, on his hands, had suggested the idea. But no boy could have so full a beard. And no boy could be so strong. (p. 171)

In this passage, Jane becomes the visionary for the reader; we see the transformed Ransom through her eyes. She thinks of Arthur, of Solomon.

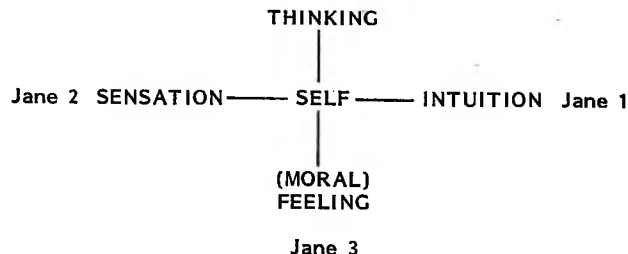
Solomon . . . for the first time in many years the bright solar blend of king and lover and magician which hangs about that name stole back upon her mind. For the first time in all those years she tasted the word *King* itself with all its linked associations of battle, marriage, priesthood, mercy, and power. (p. 172)

The figure of Ransom as Lewis has described him most perfectly fits the vision of Eros as Psyche unveils him in *The Golden Ass* of Apuleius. Lewis has described Eros elsewhere, in *Till We Have Faces*, as he appears to Psyche's sister (invented by Lewis), Orual. There she sees "the look of lightening, pale, dazzling,"¹¹ which reveals "the beauty his face wore." (*Ibid.*, p. 173) In commenting on the Psyche legend itself, Robert A. Johnson writes, in a passage which suggests the gamut of Jane's reactions to her first visit to the Pendragon Ransom:

If one takes [the Psyche legend] . . . entirely as a woman's story, Eros is a woman's own interior animus who is being strengthened, healed, brought out of his boyish, trickster characteristics and made into a mature man worthy of being her mate. This is all done by her labor and by his cooperation. He in turn redeems her.¹²

And in fact, Ransom, as Eros did to Psyche, sets Jane a task. She finds him both profoundly attractive and profoundly frightening, but when he speaks, it is to tell her that "your information has been so valuable . . ." (Lewis, *Op. Cit.*, p. 174) Nonetheless the conversation is discomfiting. She is told she must go back to her husband, to try to free him, by dissuasion, from his association with the N.I.C.E. Her chief discomfiture, however, comes from "that inner commentator who had more than once during this conversation shown her her own words and wishes in such a novel light . . ." (p. 176) Emma Jung says of such a situation: "It [the animus] comes to us as a voice commenting on every situation in which we find ourselves. . ." (Jung, *Op. Cit.*, p. 20) This entity as experienced by Jane may be described as her conscience, her animus, or the Holy Spirit beginning to act. The conversation (which has a three-person element: Jane-Director-Commentator) is interrupted by the approach of an eldil, which Jane is able to sense but is not allowed to see.

On leaving, Jane finds that she is "so divided against herself that one might say there were three, if not four, Janes . . ." (Lewis, *Op. Cit.*, p. 182) These are 1) "a Jane simply receptive of the Director," 2) a "second Jane [who] regarded the first with disgust," 3) "The third Jane [who] was a new and unexpected visitant . . . this moral Jane. . ." (p. 183) and 4) "the fourth Jane, who was Jane herself and dominated all the rest. . ." There is a certain correspondence between these Janes and the four functions of the personality as described by C.G. Jung. The concept may be expressed in the following diagram:



Jane has been, as an intellectual, the kind of woman whose superior function is Thinking. For this reason her inferior function is Feeling, which would probably be better called Judgement, for it has to do precisely with those moral responses which Jane discovers welling up within herself, as the voice of Jane 3, as they would be bound to do in a function unknown, that is, hitherto unconscious. The first two Janes suggest Intuition (Jane 1) whose direct response to the Director is the supreme and positive manifestation of her visionary gift which has previously shown her only negative images, and Sensation (Jane 2) whose response to Jane 1's intuitive grasp is described in such physical terms. Jane 4 is the one "in the sphere of Jove" (*Ibid.*, p. 184)--it was He (Jove) whose eldil approached the chamber--whose Joy in everything she sees is described in terms of sunlight, rabbits, an old man "sweet as a nut," music, sonnets, buttered toast, and "her own beauty...expanding like a magic flower." Jane's ego has been invested in the Thinking function, and the Self, a rich compendium or unity of all four functions together, culminates in the mandalic flower image of this climactic passage.

Immediately after this sequence, Jane undergoes a terrible encounter with still another component of her psyche as Jung has outlined it: she meets her shadow in Fairy Hardcastle. The Shadow is always of member of one's own sex, and contains to a repugnant degree just those traits one least knows and/or most detests in oneself. The Fairy is an "ogress" (p. 188) with a lighted cheroot between her teeth. This phallic evidence of her aggressive and Amazonian nature the Fairy uses to torture Jane, without success in making her reveal where she has been. Jane escapes, having kept secret her visit to St. Anne's. This ordeal ends with her return to the manor, this time with permission to stay.

The house called St. Anne's contains, besides the Director (Ransom) and Grace Ironwood, three other women--Ivy Maggs, Mrs. (or as she is now called) Mother Dimble, and Camilla Denniston--as well as Cecil Dimble, Arthur Denniston, the bear Mr. Bultitude, some mice, a jackdaw, and--Andrew McPhee. He "doesn't believe in [Jane's] dream." (p. 202) He fulfills what the Director calls the "very important office" of sceptic.

Jane now has another dream, "the worst dream I've had yet" (p. 220) as she tells the Director and Grace Ironwood. She has seen the head of Alcasan kept artificially alive in the central laboratory of the N.I.C.E. Most horrible of all, she sees her husband Mark brought before the Head and formally introduced. It is McPhee, whom the Director calls his "oldest friend" who outlines for Jane the situation of conflict between St. Anne's and Belbury, the mansion housing the N.I.C.E.

Considerably further on in the story, after failures of the N.I.C.E. to trap Jane and failures by Dr. Dimble



to save Mark, Ransom states, "Last night Jane Studdock had the most important dream she's had yet." (p. 277) This time she has seen the entrance to the cave in which Merlin, for whom the N.I.C.E. has been searching in hopes that he will become their aid, has been hidden. Furthermore, Jane has perceived that Merlin has already wakened. "...there was a man in the tunnel. Of course I couldn't see him: it was pitch dark. But a great big man. Breathing heavily." (p. 278) All her dreams are of men; this is the man of all men that she has been sent to see, for Merlin is sought as the key to victory by the N.I.C.E. but is, in fact, to be the key for St. Anne's.

The company sets out to find him. "Jane has to go because she is the guide," says Ransom. (p. 279) The search is full of references to vision:

"I can't see a thing," said Jane. (p. 282)

and finally:

"There he is," said Jane.

"Can you see him?" said Dimble.

"I haven't got your eyes." (p. 288-89)

Jane has been facing, for the first time in her life, the actual prospect of both death and the existence of God (Maleldil). "Jane was trying to see death in the new light of all she had heard..." (p. 285) and "The thought [that "Maleldil might be, quite simply and crudely, God"] glowed in her mind for a second like a spark that has fallen on shavings, and then a second later, like those shavings, her whole mind was in a blaze--" (p. 286)

Meanwhile, members of the N.I.C.E. are discussing Jane: "The authorities had access to the woman's mind for only a short time. They inspected only one important dream--a dream, which revealed, though with some irrelevancies, an essential element in our programme." (p. 293) Their fears are justified, as we have seen. And she has a role to play for Mark too, as he in his turn faces the prospect of his own death. "This--this death of his--would be lucky for Jane," (p. 303) he thinks in his prison cell. He is reminded of his twin sister, Myrtle: "it was her large wondering eyes and naif answers to his accounts of the circle he was now moving in which had provided at each stage most of the real pleasure of his career." (p. 303-04) Myrtle has been his anima, a position into which he has subsequently attempted to fit Jane:

And he now knew, for the first time, what he had secretly meant to do with Jane . . . she was to have been the . . . secret hostess in the sense that only the very esoteric few would know who that striking-looking woman was and why it mattered so enormously to secure her good will . . . (p. 304)

The "secret hostess" seems an eminently exact way to describe the anima, and the role of a woman upon whom a man attempts to project that hidden element of his own personality. But now, with the imminence of his own death, he sees Jane in her own selfhood, in which role she can actually save him:

She seemed to him . . . to have in herself deep wells and knee-deep meadows of happiness, rivers of freshness, enchanted gardens of leisure, which he could not enter but would have spoiled. (*Ibid.*)

In this moment, Frost, whose appearance in her dreams had so frightened Jane, enters the cells, and Mark for the very first time sees him for the human monster he is.

Meanwhile the search for Merlin, led by Jane, goes on. " 'Oh look! Look!' cried Jane. 'Stop him. Quick!' " (p. 312) And again, " 'Come on. Run! Didn't you see?' " It is Merlin, who escapes them even as they see him: "with some streaming garment blown far out behind him in the wind, the great figure of a man." (*Ibid.*) The search has been carried out in the pouring rain, which impedes the efforts of the searchers. But the rain has been followed by wind: "It was a great deal lighter now that the rain had stopped, but the wind had risen and was roaring about them." (p. 311) Both water and wind have significance for the scene of seeking. Erich Neuman writes,

. . . the woman is the original seeress, the lady of the wisdom-bringing waters of the depths, of the murmuring springs and fountains, for the "original utterance of seerdom is the language of water." (Neumann, *Op. Cit.*, p. 296)

This water has become a torrent, almost overwhelming Jane and those who follow her lead, when Merlin appears, momentarily, in the passage quoted above. His appearance is accompanied by the risen wind and he wears streaming garments: Emma Jung writes that "the woman's animus in its superhuman, divine aspect is comparable to . . . a spirit and wind-god." (Jung, *Op. Cit.*, p. 17) This animus-spirit is "he who, when evoked, can create by a wish" (*Ibid.*) --a figure like the windswept magician Merlin.

When at last Jane and the others encounter Merlin face to face he is already in the company of Ransom: to Jane, "The two robed figures looked to be two of the same sort." (Lewis, *Op. Cit.*, p. 296) This observation of Lewis' reminds us of what powerful animus figures they have been in Jane's spiritual life. Merlin's response to Jane's presence is astounding:

"Sir, you have in your house the falsest lady of any at this time alive . . . For, sir, it was the purpose of God that she and her lord should between them have begotten a child by whom the enemies should have been put out of Logres for a thousand years." (p. 343)

This charge was, in C.S. Lewis' eyes, deeply serious. In his personal life, he wrote, in a terrifying letter to Sheldon Vanauken, whose wife had recently died:

. . . One Flesh must not . . . "live to itself" any more than the single individual. It was not made, any more than he, to be its Own End. It was made for God and (in Him) for its neighbours--first and foremost among them the children it ought to have produced. (The idea behind your voluntary sterility, that an experience, e.g., maternity, wh. cannot be shared shd. on that account be avoided, is surely v.

unsound. For a. (forgive me) the conjugal act itself depends on opposite, reciprocal and therefore unshareable experiences. Did you want her to feel she had a woman in bed with her? b. The experience of a woman denied maternity is one you *did not & could not* share with her. To be denied paternity is different, trivial in comparison.

One way or another the thing had to die. Perpetual springtime is not allowed. You were not cutting the wood of life according to the grain. There are various possible ways in wh. it cd. have died tho' both the parties went on living. You have been treated with a severe mercy.¹³

And from this point in the novel, Jane plays little more role in the central affairs at St. Anne's; her eyes are no longer needed. But in Mark's life she becomes ever more central. He is being made to undergo an initiation in Belbury, and Jane forms his only hold upon what, in contrast with his experiences in degradation, he now perceives as "the 'Normal'." "It was all mixed up with Jane and fried eggs and soap and sunlight . . ." (Lewis, *Op. Cit.*, p. 370) Jane, for her part, undergoes a sort of initiation herself, into the mysteries of the marriage chamber, as she and Mrs. Dimble prepare a room for Ivy Maggs and her husband. Here Jane encounters a full-blown vision: not a dream, not a waking encounter with ordinary reality, however terrifying, but an absolute, fully conscious confrontation with an archetype. It is, quite properly, a female entity--the earthly Venus, mistress of the house. It is preceded, briefly by "the image of Mark dead, that face dead, in the middle of a pillow, that whole body rigid . . ." (p. 375) Then-- "It was very still . . . so still that she could hear the movements of a small bird which was hopping along the path outside the window." (*Ibid.*) The bird, as befits a harbinger role frequently assigned to birds, and appearing also in the Narnia stories, as will be seen below, leads Jane to a threshold, where the goddess sits. "It is ignoring me. It doesn't see me," (p. 376) Jane thinks. "With a great glow and a noise like fire the flame-robed woman and the malapert dwarfs had all come into the house." (p. 377) The room becomes alight and alive with vegetation. Lewis writes:

It never occurred to her to think she was dreaming. People mistake dreams for visions; no one ever mistook a vision for a dream. (p. 378)

Jane is freed from this visitation of her (one might say for a woman, *the*) Shadow, by the arrival of Mother Dimble.

"I must see the Director at once," said Jane. . . . I'd like to see the Director at once.: (*Ibid.*)

Mark meanwhile has been having his own encounter, with a common tramp whom the N.I.C.E. have mistaken for Merlin. Mark and the tramp build together a genuine camaraderie, the true "inner ring" for which Mark has been searching all his life.

When Jane does see the Director he assures her that her vision "was real enough." (p. 388) He explains:

And you yourself . . . you are a seer. You were perhaps bound to meet her. She's what you'll get if you won't have the other. (p. 389)



GRATIAS AGIMUS

We have been gratified by the response to our appeal for financial support in the last issue. We want especially to thank Anne Osborn, Thomas Gray, Michael Haykin, and Mary Janis Johnson for their contributions, as well as any others whose contributions may not have reached us yet. We also owe thanks to many others who extended their subscriptions or gave gift subscriptions. It leave us deep in your debt.

The "other" is what is represented by Mother Dimble, "a Christian wife." And to protect herself from this raw "Old Woman," Jane must become a Christian, become what is "richer, sharper, even fiercer, at every rung of the ascent." (p. 390) In order to serve God, she is to begin with learning to love her husband.

In going into the garden to ponder this, "at one particular corner of the gooseberry path, the change came." (p. 394)

A boundary had been crossed. She had come into a world, or into a Person, or into the presence of a Person. (*Ibid.*)

It is an experience beyond vision.

Immediately, the central chapter of the book begins-- "The Descent of the Gods"--the complex astrological symbolism I have discussed at considerable length in another paper.¹⁴ The divinities of the planets descend to St. Anne's Manor. Only one of them is described in terms of Jane's perception, and this one is, quite properly, Venus, whose presence shows Jane the Dimbles "like ripe fields in August," and the Dennistons, so godlike "she could hardly bear to look at them." (Lewis, *Op. Cit.*, p. 399) Animus figures in this holy atmosphere appear not as "the gross and ridiculous dwarfs which she had seen that afternoon but grave and ardent spirits, bright winged, their boyish shapes smooth and slender as ivory rods." (*Ibid.*)

Mark's initiation, intended to bring him into the centre of the N.I.C.E., in fact brings him to Christianity. Resisting Frost for the first time intentionally, Mark refuses to desecrate a crucifix. Nonetheless he is present at the last public event of the N.I.C.E., a great dinner given in honour of the guest speaker Jules: at which the doom of tongues, followed by an invasion of animals kept for vivisection, overwhelms and destroys Belbury in its hour of triumph.

Mark alone escapes, and makes his way to St. Anne's. "He was going to see Jane." "In fact, he was going to see Jane in what he now felt to be her proper world." (p. 447) When he comes to St. Anne's he too has a vision of "a woman divinity tall, part naked, part wrapped in a flame-coloured robe." (p. 475) She ushers him into the doorway in the wall of the house of which she is guardian. Jane, descending the garden path to join him, has no longer need of visions.

When she came to the lodge she was surprised to see it all dark and the door shut . . . then she noticed the window, the bedroom window, was open. Clothes were over the sill: the sleeve of a shirt--Mark's shirt--even hung over down the outside wall. And in all this damp, too. How exactly like Mark! Obviously it was high time she went in. (p. 476)

She has seen the goddess, but she has gone beyond sight, into the presence of God. This experience has returned her to the world of ordinary reality, ready now to mediate that vision for her husband, for the vision is most hers when she shares it: "Come and look!" as Lucy says, again and again.

To Be Continued

We now have a Patron (Matron? Benefactress?) but she is a modest soul who desires no graphic glory, being content with a lifetime subscription.

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The Board of Stewards has formed a committee to revise the the Bylaws to bring them into conformity with the 1979 Corporate Code of California.