Ungit's Character, Role, and Meaninig in C. S. Lewis's Christian Framework of Till We Have Faces

Crnogorac, Petar

Master's thesis / Diplomski rad

2016

Degree Grantor / Ustanova koja je dodijelila akademski / stručni stupanj: **University of Zadar / Sveučilište u Zadru**

Permanent link / Trajna poveznica: https://urn.nsk.hr/urn:nbn:hr:162:756179

Rights / Prava: In copyright / Zaštićeno autorskim pravom.

Download date / Datum preuzimanja: **2024-03-28**

Image not found or type unknown

Repository / Repozitorij:

University of Zadar Institutional Repository

zir.nsk.hr

Image not found or type unknown

Sveučilište u Zadru

Odjel za anglistiku

Diplomski sveučilišni studij engleskog jezika i književnosti; smjer: nastavnički (dvopredmetni)

Petar Crnogorac

Ungit's Character, Role, and Meaning in C. S. Lewis's Christian Framework of Till We Have Faces

Diplomski rad

Zadar, 2016.

Sveučilište u Zadru

Odjel za anglistiku

Diplomski sveučilišni studij engleskog jezika i književnosti; smjer: nastavnički (dvopredmetni)

Ungit's Character, Role, and Meaning in C. S. Lewis's Christian Framework of Till We Have Faces

Diplomski rad

Student/ica:

Petar Crnogorac

Mentor/ica:

Doc. dr. sc. Marko Lukić

Zadar, 2016.



Izjava o akademskoj čestitosti

Ja, **Petar Crnogorac,** ovime izjavljujem da je moj **diplomski** rad pod naslovom **Ungit's Character, Role, and Meaning in C.S. Lewis's Christian Framework of Till We Have Faces** rezultat mojega vlastitog rada, da se temelji na mojim istraživanjima te da se oslanja na izvore i radove navedene u bilješkama i popisu literature. Ni jedan dio mojega rada nije napisan na nedopušten način, odnosno nije prepisan iz necitiranih radova i ne krši bilo čija autorska prava.

Izjavljujem da ni jedan dio ovoga rada nije iskorišten u kojem drugom radu pri bilo kojoj drugoj visokoškolskoj, znanstvenoj, obrazovnoj ili inoj ustanovi.

Sadržaj mojega rada u potpunosti odgovara sadržaju obranjenoga i nakon obrane uređenoga rada.

Zadar, 8. rujan 2016.

Table of contents

1. Introduction ……...….... 1

2. Ungit's character ……... 4

2.1. The context …… 4

2.2. Ungit as hiding herself ……... 6

2.3. Jealous Ungit …….. 7

2.4. Ungit as a possessive devourer ……..... 10

2.5. Ungit as a comforting figure …… 15

3. Ungit's son the god of the Mountain as *a real god*/God ……...…… 17

4. Ungit's role within the novel through Lewis's Christian framework ……. 22

4.1. Ungit as the embodiment of mystery and enigma ……...…… 22

4.2. Ungit as the fallen human nature, or Satan …….. 29

5. Conclusion …….. 31

6. Bibliography ……...… 33

1. Introduction

C.S. Lewis (1898-1963) is one of the most influential writers of the 20th century. The Irish-born author's most famous work is *The Chronicles of Narnia*, a series of children's book that turned to be a classic of fantasy literature. His other notable works in fiction include *The Screwtape Letters and the Space Trilogy*. Even though Lewis is known for using fiction to express his Christian ideas, he is no less important for writing theological books like *Mere Christianity and The Problem of Pain*, where he explicitly discusses his views, and joins Christian apologetic efforts. Even though he wrote around 40 books in total, he managed to point out one of them and call it "far and away my best book" (qtd. in Gray 1) - his last novel *Till We Have Faces*. Written in 1956, the novel retells the myth of Cupid and Psyche. Lewis considered rewriting the myth since he was an undergraduate, planning to deepen the characters and change the "peculiar quality" of the story which he labeled as a compound of picaresque novel, horror comic, mystagogue's tract, pornography, and stylistic experiment. (*Till We Have Faces* 313) He breathes in Christian themes and symbolism, once again using fiction to say something about the divine.

Set up in a fictional pre-Christian city-state of Glome located not too far away from ancient Greece, the story is told from the perspective of Psyche's sister Orual. Orual finds herself in society that believes in two gods: Ungit (Venus) as the main deity, and her son the god of the Mountain (Cupid). In belief that Ungit is jealous of Psyche's beauty and of the worship she receives from the people, Psyche is offered as a sacrifice to the god of the Mountain. She ends up being married to the god of the Mountain, and Orual is also jealous of her. She manages to destroy their happiness, but as she sees herself as acting out of love and worry, she writes a book where she shifts the blame to the gods. Bartlett sees Orual's book as "her defense of her actions and motivations in order to protect herself from the gods' version that "threatened her [innermost] self-deception" (qtd. in Gray 22). At the end of the novel

Orual receives a series of visions that make her reconsider her actions, and the intention of the gods.

It was already mentioned that Lewis uses fiction to portray his Christian ideas. In *The Screwtape Letters* he creates a conversation between two demons to describe his views of how Christian faith can be undermined. In *The Space Trilogy* he shows the futility of efforts to perfect the inherently sinful humanity without the grace of God. In *The Chronicles of Narnia* he portrays God as a beautiful and untamable Creator and Christ-like Savior of all life. Throughout all his works (fiction or non-fiction) Lewis motifs are the majesty and the nature of God, salvation through Christ, sin and Satan, meaning of pain in relation to God, etc. Therefore, it is clear to see that Lewis works inside a Christian framework, shaping his fiction and his characters in order to mirror the divine reality in which he believes in. In relation to that, it is important to read *Till We Have Faces* by using the framework Lewis himself established. The assumption of this thesis is that in *Till He Have Faces* Lewis does not simply tell a story of a pagan kingdom and pagan deities in order to engulf and entertain his readers; he does entertain, but just like in his other works, he is working inside his Christian framework, and the plot and the characters' meanings can be properly understood only through this framework. And while the novel makes it relatively easy to grasp the meaning of the god of the Mountain inside Lewis's Christian framework as he stands as a metaphor for the Christian God that is easily compared to Aslan the lion from *The Chronicles of Narnia*, it is not as welcoming to labeling Ungit. She is the most mysterious and the most confusing character in the novel. She is a real god, but also a product of superstitious beliefs and psychological needs of the people; she is devouring everything she touches but she also gives comfort; she is telling something about the real gods, but she is also their antagonist. Overall, she seems to be God and Satan at the same time, while still leaving doubt whether she is any of the two. Ungit is a source of real mystery in Lewis's far and away best book, and that

makes her an extremely interesting character to investigate. Therefore, this thesis will engage the dilemmas embodied in Ungit in an attempt to resolve them and show Ungit's place within Lewis's Christian framework. Rather than choosing one Christian entity to stand behind Ungit, this thesis will try to show that the answer to interpreting Ungit is in a mixture of meanings. Lewis may be using a single character in order to depict the nature of God, the nature of Satan, and the sinful nature of humanity, and this thesis will try to prove that this mixture of meanings is the proper interpretation of Ungit. The context is Lewis's Christian framework, and the methodology will composed of a direct text analysis of *Till We Have Faces* interpreted through the lens of other Lewis's works, and helped by interpretations of other authors on the topic.

This analysis will be divided into three parts. In the first part we will analyze the novel in order to describe Ungit in terms of character. We will find the character of Orual to be an important source of information as her actions and motives reflect Ungit's. The most important reference will be Lewis's The Four Loves; his analysis of types of loves will help us interpret relationships and motives of Ungit and Orual. In the second part we will investigate the role and the meaning of Ungit's son the god of the Mountain because it is impossible to understand anything about the divine characters in the novel without properly interpreting him. The character of Aslan from The Chronicles of Narnia will be crucial in this part because it reveals Lewis's metaphorical habits. In the third part we will build on the findings on Ungit's character and on interpretation of the god of the Mountain, and further analyze the novel to explore Ungit's role and her meaning within Lewis's novel and his Christian framework. Here we will draw on J.A. Whitmer in *Place as Plot: A Comparison of the Use of Place in C.S. Lewis' Till We Have Faces and John Milton's Paradise Lost* where he provides insightful interpretations of Ungit.

2. Ungit's character

2.1. The context

The first part of the thesis will try to describe Ungit in terms of character. The source of information will be a text analysis of the novel, and the main interpretational tool will be Lewis's book *The Four Loves*. But first we need to understand the development of the plot announced in the introduction. As already said, Ungit is a pagan deity worshipped by the fictional city-state of Glome. Her cult composes of a temple with her statue, temple staff, and the Priest of Ungit who interprets and declares her will. The place where she starts influencing the plot is when the Priest of Ungit interprets the uprising natural and military dangers to the kingdom as a wrath of Ungit because people started worshipping Psyche – a mortal. The Priest arranges Psyche to be sacrificed, and from that point her son the god of the Mountain is placed in focus as Psyche is sacrificed to him. Parallel to this, the novel follows Orual as the main character that is on a voyage of discovering is there a god or gods, and what is he like - or what are they like. She expects the god of the Mountain to kill Psyche on the top of the Mountain, but instead finds her there alive and well. Now Psyche believes to be married to the god of the Mountain, living in his palace and spending nights with him, but for the most part Orual sees nothing but desolate nature around Psyche. When Psyche says that this god hides his face even from her, Orual sees her as either delusional or being taken advantage of. Trying to rescue her, she destroys Psyche's relationship with what turns out to be a real god, and Psyche is banished from the land. The rest of the novel deals with Orual trying to heal her emotional wounds, and trying to understand what really happened. At the end of the novel she starts receiving a series of visions involving her father, her sister Psyche, her slave the Fox, and some supernatural characters, visions that gradually uncover the truth about Ungit, the truth about the god of the Mountain, and the truth about her own motives and actions.

Therefore, to understand Ungit we need to cover the entire novel, looking for implicit and explicit points that can reveal as much as possible about her.

Now, the first step will be defining Ungit in terms of character. This is chosen as a starting point because, as we will see, the novel is more clear about what is she like than about what does she represent, and it is better to start with a more familiar topic. And because her character is mostly revealed through her relationships to other characters, *The Four Loves* as a source of Lewis's views on what kind of relationships are there and what character traits stand behind them is a proper interpretational tool. Based on the analysis of the text helped by the findings from *The Four Loves*, we will try to describe Ungit as a person with certain character traits and character habits. Traits and habits point to divine, satanic or humanlike qualities, and they will help us place Ungit where she belongs inside Lewis's Christian framework.

In examining Ungit's character, it is necessary to use Orual's character as an important source because the novel makes constant parallels of the two. To argument this, we need to inspect Orual's visions. In one of them, her father (the king of Glome) forces her to look at a mirror and asks her "who is Ungit?"; Orual sees herself as having Ungit's face, and she replies: "I am Ungit" (*Till We Have Faces* 276). Ungit is, as we will see, described as a devourer consuming people's lives and giving nothing in return, and in one place compared to Orual's maid named Batta; and Orual uses these very labels to describe herself: "I was that Batta-thing, 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" (*Till We Have Faces* 276). In the last vision Orual is stripped naked as she states her case against the gods, and in this symbolic moment when her real nature is being fully exposed she describes herself as "the old crone with her Ungit face" (*Till We Have Faces* 289); her handwriting from her book against the gods changes to match her real nature, and it is now "a vile scribble" that is being compared to "the ruinous faces one could make out in the Ungit's stone" (*Till We Have Faces* 290).

Therefore, when Orual is being fully exposed, she is being exposed as Ungit. We will see that Ungit's character fits with Orual's, and because Orual's motives and actions are more explicitly described, she will serve as a supplement for describing Ungit.

2.2. Ungit as hiding herself

At the beginning of the novel we find Orual's description of the interior of the house of Ungit, and description of her statue as well: "In the furthest recess of her house where she sits it is so dark that you cannot see her well, but in summer enough light may come down from smoke-holes in the roof to show her a little. She is a black stone without head or hands or face…" (*Till We have Faces* 4). Near the end of the novel Orual adds more information about her appearance: "I have said she had no face; but that meant that she had a thousand faces. For she was very uneven, lumpy and furrowed, so that, as when we gaze into a fire, you could always see some face or other" (*Till We have Faces* 270). Ungit's temple girls wear masks and heavy make-up that disguise their faces (*Till We have Faces* 80), and Psyche is disguised too by the temple girls when she is about to be offered as a sacrifice (*Till We have Faces* 105). Therefore, Ungit hides her face either by dark or by showing thousand faces that result from her ugliness, and her subjects represent her by hiding their faces too.

For most of her life, Orual also hides her face. She tells of growing up at her father's court, and slowly realizing that people find her physically extremely ugly (*Till We have Faces* 6, 11). She does not do anything about it until losing Psyche: "I now determined that I would go always veiled. I have kept this rule, within doors and without, ever since. It is a sort of treaty made with my ugliness" (*Till We Have Faces* 180-181). Thus, hiding the ugliness – the same motif we find with Ungit.

However, hiding physical ugliness is just a symptom of what is happening in terms of character. The Fox, a wise Greek slave working at the court, is someone who tries to apply clear and transparent logic to everything. When he tries to do the same on the gods, the Priest of Ungit gives the King the following speech:

> They (Greeks) demand to see things clearly, as if the gods were no more than letters written in a book. I, King, have dealt with the gods for three generations of men, and I know that they dazzle our eyes and flow in and out of one another like eddies on a river, and nothing that is said clearly can be said truly about them. Holy places are dark places. (*Till We Have Faces* 50)

Equaling dark places with holy places is a common theme in the novel, and mostly related to Ungit. It is this feature of the gods that upsets Orual the most. She often says something like "everything's dark about the gods" (*Till We Have Faces* 124). *Everything* points to more than just face. There is also the custom of drugging participants of Ungit's rituals (*Till We have Faces* 105), which numbs their thoughts and feelings behind the masks. It is interesting that Orual eventually does exactly what she hates about the god. She starts to hide her face, and the timing is interesting: it happens just after she loses Psyche. The loss does not change her face, but changes her mood and her feelings, and that is exactly what she intends to hide together with her face. Hiding is about the face, but about the character too; it is present in Orual, and most importantly, present in Ungit too.

2.3. Jealous Ungit

Psyche's beauty does not go unnoticed by the people of Glome who begin to as her as a divine being. As the plague spreads through the kingdom, they start asking for her kiss or her touch in hope of healing. Orual starts worrying that Ungit will become jealous and punish

Psyche for blasphemy: “oh, it’s dangerous, dangerous”, “the Gods are jealous” (*Till We Have Faces* 28). She turns out to be right. People’s belief in Psyche’s healing powers become so strong that they surround the palace, asking Psyche to touch all the sick. They eventually start bringing offerings for her” (*Till We Have Faces* 33). As worshipping Psyche peaks, Glome is struck by series of calamities adding to the plague: a draught, rumors of wars, lion attacks, and bad harvests. The people’s opinion drastically changes and now they see Psyche as a source of disasters, calling her “the Accursed” (*Till We Have Faces* 38). In response to that, the Priest of Ungit visits the King, saying that he comes as the voice of Ungit and of the people. He interprets the disasters as a wrath of Ungit, continues that “her anger never comes upon us without a cause, and it never ceases without expiation” (*Till We Have Faces* 45), and then points to Psyche: “I hear of terrible doings in this land, mortals aping the gods and stealing the worship due to the gods” (*Till We Have Faces* 47). Psyche is labeled as the Accursed because she stole honors intended for gods only, and she must be sacrificed (*Till We Have Faces* 46). This turns out to be more than just the Priest’s interpretation of Ungit: after the sacrifice it starts raining, the draught finishes, the lions withdraw, and the main rival kingdom is torn by a civil war (*Till We Have Faces* 83-84). Here Ungit shows supernatural qualities. Her jealousy of Psyche has been fed, and her wrath is over.

Orual does not lag behind Ungit in terms of jealousy. Her face is extremely ugly, while her sister Psyche is incredibly beautiful. On the surface Orual does not seem jealous of Psyche’s beauty, but she reacts when Psyche outclasses her in other virtues. For example, Psyche shows great maturity when about to be sacrificed, prompting Orual to feel like talking to someone older than herself. Orual does not take it too well: “It gave me a pang at the heart” (*Till We Have Faces* 39). Also, when Psyche leads Orual through an ice cold river with strong current, Orual notices her Psyche’s strength in terms of physique and character, and once again displays jealousy: “How strong she grows. She’ll be a stronger woman than ever I was.

She'll have that as well as her beauty" (*Till We Have Faces* 103). Years later when Orual decides to publicly fight a rival king one-on-one, she thinks about the possibility of losing courage and embarrassing herself in front of everyone. Her fear is that the people will say "And yet how bravely her sister went to the offering" (*Till We Have Faces* 200), and her next thought is: "And so she will be far above me in everything: in courage as well as in beauty and in those eyes which the gods favoured with sight of things invisible, and even in strength" (*Till We Have faces* 200). Orual's father, the King, notices her jealousy, and when Orual offers herself as a sacrifice instead of her sister, he questions her motifs: "You're not asking me to believe that any woman, let alone such a fright as you, has much love for a pretty half-sister? "It's not in nature" (*Till We Have Faces* 61).

The objects of Orual's jealousy spread well beyond Psyche. She is jealous at her sister because of her husband (*Till We Have Faces* 212), she is jealous at the wife of her highest ranking officer Bardia (*Till We Have Faces* 223), she is even jealous at Greece for having an important place in the heart of the Fox (209). At the end of the book when Orual envisions presenting her case against the gods in a court, she admits her jealousy of Psyche, but also her jealousy of even the gods:

> You know well that I never really began to hate you until Psyche began talking of her palace and her lover and her husband. Why did you lie to me? You said a brute would devour her. Well, why didn't it? I'd have wept for her and buried what was left and built her a tomb and… and… But to steal her love from me! Can it be that you really don't understand? Do you think we mortals would find you gods easier to bear if you're beautiful? I'll tell you that if that's true we'll find you a thousand times worse… The girl was mine. What right had you to steal her away into your dreadful heights? You'll say I was jealous. Jealous of Psyche? Not while she was mine. (*Till We Have Faces 291)*

Lewis's quote from the Four Loves can help us better understand this jealousy towards the gods: "The rivalry between all natural loves and the love of God is something a Christian dare not forget - God is the great Rival, the ultimate object of human jealousy; that beauty, terrible as the Gorgon's, which may at any moment steal from me or it seems like stealing to me my wife's or husband's or daughter's heart" (*The Four Loves* 61). Orual is powered by jealousy aiming towards anyone having anything that she wants, but most of this jealousy is faced towards the gods because they have the beauty and the power to capture and seduce whoever they want. And when she sees the god of the Mountain in person, his beauty is the worst thing to her (*Till We Have Faces* 172). This is relevant for our research on Ungit's character; as Orual's jealousy serves as a testimony to the jealousy of Ungit, and as jealousy (according to Lewis) is generally turned mostly towards God, this motif of God/gods being the ultimate object of jealousy should be applied to Ungit too. Ungit *is* a god, but not the only one in the novel; and being a god, as we will see in the second part of the thesis, is just one of her identities.

2.4. Ungit as a possessive devourer

Whenever is Ungit involved with in an event, blood sacrifices are included. They usually mean animal sacrifices, but "sometimes when the kingdom is not doing well, someone gets slayed to pour the blood over her (*Till We Have Faces* 7). The vast number of sacrifices makes Orual admit to fearing the Priest of Ungit because of "the holiness of the smell that hung about him", the smell that reminds her of the blood sacrifices (*Till We Have Faces* 11). This devouring of lives in rituals is not the only aspect of devouring taking place in the name of Ungit. Living women's time and health are also devoured through their service to the goddess. Orual notices

> terrible girls sitting in rows down both sides of the house, each cross-legged at the door of her cell. Thus they sat year after year (and usually barren after a few seasons) till they turned into the toothless crones who were hobbling about the floor… …And I thought how the seed of men that might have gone to make hardy boys and fruitful girls was drained into that house, and nothing given back; and how the silver that men had earned hard and needed was also drained in there, and nothing given back; and how the girls themselves were devoured and were given nothing back. (*Till We Have Faces* 269-270)

There is also devouring outside of the house of Ungit. As mentioned earlier, in certain moment Psyche is labeled as the Accursed that "must die by the rite of the Great Offering" (*Till We Have Faces* 46). The Priest says that the people have spotted the Brute, a threatening figure last seen before the last Great Offering, "very black and big, a terrible shape" (*Till We Have Faces* 47). The Priest elaborates that the Brute is Ungit herself, or the god of the Mountain, or maybe both (*Till We Have Faces* 48). If the Accursed is a man, it must be offered to Ungit as a husband, if it is a woman, she must be offered to the god of the Mountain as a bride (*Till We Have Faces* 49). The offering "must be perfect" (*Till We Have Faces* 49), and submitted as "the Brute's Supper" (*Till We Have Faces* 49). When asked by the Fox how loving and devouring can happen at the same time, the Priest states his belief that sacred language implies that "loving and the devouring are all the same thing" (*Till We Have Faces* 49). These two actions are united in the character of Ungit, and Orual notices it by comparing Ungit to her old maid because of her "huge, hot, strong yet flabby-soft embraces, the smothering, engulfing tenacity of her" (*Till We Have Faces* 270).

It was already mentioned that Orual is jealous of Psyche. Psyche is amazing everyone around her: "You would have thought she made bright all the corners of the room in which she lay" (*Till We Have Faces* 20); "it was beauty that did not astonish you till afterwards

when you had gone out of sight of her and reflected on it (*Till We Have Faces* 22); when she trod on the mud, the mud was beautiful" (*Till We Have Faces* 22); the Fox describes Psyche as "prettier than Andromeda, prettier than Helen, prettier than Aphrodite herself" (*Till We Have Faces* 23). The only way Orual can avoid feeling jealousy towards Psyche is through taking possession of her, making herself an object of Psyche's love and desire: "I wanted to be a wife so that I could have been her real mother. I wanted to be a boy so that she could be in love with me. I wanted her to be my sister instead of my half sister. I wanted her to be a slave so that I could set her free and make her rich" (*Till We Have Faces* 23). While talking to Psyche before her offering, Orual wants her to be crushed because of their separation. She wants to be the one that comforts, and makes Psyche's last moments as easy as possible. However, during the conversation Orual feels that "she (Psyche) had been petting and comforting me as if it were I who was the child and the victim", which makes Orual's emotional pain only stronger (*Till We Have Faces* 67): "I laid my head down in her lap and wept. If only she would so have laid her in mine" (69). Instead of being happy for Psyche's emotional strength, Orual wants Psyche to suffer so she could comfort her. And when Psyche does start to cry, Orual feels "sweetness in our misery for the first time" (*Till We Have Faces* 70). Psyche's mood twists again, and when she is excited about the offering, hoping to "wed a god" (*Till We Have Faces* 71), and Orual cries: "Psyche, did you ever loved me at all" (*Till We Have Faces* 73). Orual tries to consume Psyche's emotional strength by playing emotional games.

After the offering, when Orual finds Psyche on the Mountain, she discovers that "she is ten times happier, there in the Mountain" than she could ever make her" (*Till We Have Faces* 138). Psyche is married to the god of the Mountain, but the god hides his face from Psyche. Orual tells the Fox that she would rather kill Psyche than let this go on, and the Fox responds: "there's one part love in your heart, and five parts anger, and seven parts pride"

(*Till We Have Faces* 148). The Fox realizes that Orual is not acting out of love, and she is again ready to consume Psyche's emotions for her own emotional benefit. After returning to the Mountain, Orual puts a dagger through her hand and swears to her blood that she will kill both Psyche and herself if Psyche does not try to reveal the god's face, an action that breaks trust between Psyche and the god. Psyche's world is turned upside down: "You are teaching me about kinds of love I did not know. It is like looking into a deep pit. I am not sure whether I like your kind better than hatred" (*Till We Have Faces* 165). Psyche looks at the face of the god, it destroys their relationship, and Psyche is banished from the Mountain and from the kingdom. Her happiness with a god is devoured by Orual. At the end of the book, Orual admits to Psyche in a vision: "I never wished you well, never had one selfless thought of you. "I was a craver" (*Till We Have Faces* 305).

Orual's obsession with Psyche also damaged the life of her other sister – Redival: "First of all Orual loved me much; then the Fox came and she loved me little; then the baby came and she loved me not at all" (*Till We Have Faces* 255). The text implicates that while Orual was occupied by Psyche and the Fox, Redival was left out. Once when Redival hit Psyche in anger, Orual found herself strangling Redival by her throat. These events that occurred during Redival's infant years influenced her adult life spent in searching for love through sex. Sauders agrees that "Redival's problem could be blamed on Orual's lack of response to her need for love" (3). When Redival shows a lack of remorse for Psyche on the day before the offering, Orual threatens: "Redival, if there is a single hour when I am queen of Glome, or even mistress of this house, I'll hang you by the thumbs at a slow fire till you die" *Till We Have Faces* (63). Orual devours Redival in order to protect Psyche as her possession.

Another character that is consumed by Orual is Bardia, her highest military officer. Even though he has a wife and children, she starts feeling possessive towards him. She wants him to be completely consumed by serving her at her court, and one time when he asks to go

home to his wife because "the day's work is over" (*Till We Have Faces* 223), Orual admits being completely crushed because he used the word *work*. When Bardia dies of sickness, his wife hints to Orual: "He was tired. He had worked himself out – or been worked" (260). Orual gets the hint to a degree, and the wife decides to be more explicit: "Your queenship drank up his blood year by year and ate out his life" (*Till We Have Faces* 264). Orual finally realizes her real feelings towards Bardia: "A love like that can grow to be nine-tenths hatred and still call itself love" (266); "it stank; a gnawing greed for one to whom I could give nothing, of whom I craved all." (*Till We Have Faces* 267) As Ungit, it is in Orual's nature that she loves and devours at the same time. This is confirmed by Bardia's wife who takes a final swing at Orual using common belief that kings and queens are of divine blood: "Yours is Queen's love, not commoners'. Perhaps you who spring from the gods love like the gods. Like the Shadowbrute. They say the loving and the devouring are all one, don't they?" (*Till We Have Faces* 264-265)

Sauders sees Orual's feelings towards Psyche as a "possessive Need-love" (5), drawing parallel to Lewis's The Four Loves. Sauders sees the same in her relationship with Bardia (6), and the Fox (5). Lewis explains Need-love as "the son of Poverty", meaning that it originates from the feelings of loneliness, inadequacy. Lewis believes that we need others "if we are to know anything, even ourselves" (*The Four Loves* 12). But Lewis does not see Need-love as completely selfish; he sees it as an irreplaceable part of some of the highest loves like man's love towards God (*The Four Loves,* 12-14). We saw that Orual's possessive Need-love is still called love even with all the hatred, jealousy, and possessiveness, which roughly fits the description of Need-love in *The Four Loves.* This parallel with The Four Loves labels possessive devourers as ones who *lacks,* and therefore crave others. This applies to Orual, but also to Ungit as the original possessive devourer who Orual represents.

2.6. Ungit as a comforting figure

In spite of all her flaws and weaknesses, Ungit defies being characterized in a solely negative fashion. The first moment in the novel when Ungit jumps out of this purely negative framework is when the King attacks the Priest of Ungit because The Priest implied that the Accursed comes from the royal family. The King pierces the Priest's skin with a blade and threatens to go deeper, but the Priest remains outstandingly calm: "I am here in the strength of Ungit" (*Till We Have Faces* 54). This display of faith impresses Orual who was otherwise convinced that the Priest was just a politician (*Till We Have Faces* 54). He appears to be deeply convinced in the protective power of Ungit. In another event, Orual visits the house of Ungit and spots a peasant woman entering and offering a pigeon for sacrifice. The woman appears to have been crying all night. Orual watches her:

> "The peasant woman sank down on her face at Ungit's feet. She lay there a very long time, so shaking that anyone could tell how bitterly she wept. But the weeping ceased. She rose up on her knees and put back her hair from her face and took a long breath. Then she rose to go, and as she turned I could look straight into her eyes. She was grave enough; and yet (I was very close to her and could not doubt it) it was as if a sponge had been passed over her. The trouble was soothed. She was calm, patient, able for whatever she had to do." (*Till We Have Faces* 271-272)

When Orual asks her did Ungit really give her comfort, she responds: "Oh yes. Ungit has given me great comfort. There's no goddess like Ungit" (*Till We Have Faces* 272). Later on, Orual is also surprised by the people watching a ritual that marks the birth of the New Year:

> It was the joy of the people that amazed me. There they stood where they had waited for hours, so pressed together they could hardly breathe, each doubtless with a dozen cares and sorrows upon him (who has not?), yet every man and woman and the very

> children looking as if the whole world was well because a man dressed up as a bird had walked out of a door after striking a few blows with a wooden sword. Even those who were knocked down in the press to see us made light of it and indeed laughed louder than the others. I saw two farmers whom I well knew for bitterest enemies (they'd wasted more of my time when I sat in judgment than half the remainder of my people put together) clap hands and cry, "He is born!" brothers for the moment." (*Till We Have Faces* 273)

What Orual sees is sincere joy and belief. As frightening as she is, Ungit is also a source of confidence, assurance, and protection.

So far we've seen Ungit as hiding her face and her character. She is also a jealous, lacking figure that strives to possess and to devour. On the positive side, she comforts and gives assurance. These findings on her character will help us explore her role and her role within the novel, and her meaning within Lewis's Christian framework. If Ungit represents the Christian God, her character traits should be solely virtuous and noble. If she represents the fallen human nature or Satan, it should be the other way around. We have seen that neither is the case. Even though she is predominantly a malign figure, she still hides her face as do the real gods in the novel, and she gives comfort and assurance. This points to the goal of this thesis which is describing her as a mixture of Christian entities that Lewis embodies in her. However, her character is only one aspect of the analysis, and we need to go further before reaching any final conclusions. The next step will be defining the God of the Mountain: what is he like, and what does he represent in Christianity. This is an unavoidable step in interpreting Ungit because if the god of the Mountain is the Christian God, his relationship and similarities/differences to Ungit will be an important step in solving the mystery of Ungit.

3. Ungit's son the god of the Mountain as *a real god*/God

As already mentioned, Ungit is believed to be the mother of the god of the Mountain. We will explore his characteristics, his role within the novel, and his metaphorical meaning. To begin with, his name shows both mysteriousness and his whereabouts. The novel does not say anything else about him until Psyche and Orual start meeting him face-to-face. As it was already mentioned, Psyche is offered to the god of the Mountain because Ungit is jealous of her.. The other entity mentioned in this event is the Brute. He is described as "demonlike or bestial" (*Till We Have Faces* 137), "very black and big, a terrible shape" (*Till We Have Faces* 47), and the sacrifice should be offered in order to make him go away (*Till We Have Faces* 47). He is a threatening figure whose undesired presence means danger. The Priest says that "the Brute is, in mystery, Ungit herself or Ungit's son, the god of the Mountain, or both" (*Till We Have Faces* 48), and then continues: "for, in holy language, a man so offered is said to be Ungit's husband, and a woman is said to be the bride of Ungit's son. And both are called the Brute's Supper" (*Till We Have Faces* 49). In a way, we have a trinity of gods who are different and same: Ungit, a jealous and possessive goddess that devours, the Brute that marries but also eats his victim, and the god of the Mountain. Looking at The Chronicles of Narnia, the word brute is commonly used in labeling dangerous beasts. There is one occurrence of the word brute being used on lion named Aslan, a metaphor for the Christian God; it is when a character mistakes him for a dangerous and threatening creature (*The Magician's* 50). The god of the Mountain, as we will see, also serves as a metaphor for God. He is a supernatural force throughout the novel. It is possible that both in The Chronicles of Narnia and in Till We Have Faces the word brute is tied to a misconception of God, mistaking him for a violent and aggressive being – something like Ungit. However, there is one more thing that needs to be mentioned: Aslan is repeatedly described as not being "a tame lion" (*The Lion* 77, *The Voyage* 68, *The Last Battle* 8), and this description serves as a truth rather

than misconception of Aslan. Therefore, the Brute can tell something about the nature of the god of the Mountain, but it can also be a misconception of him.

After the concept of Brute has influenced how the god of the mountain is perceived, the events after the Great Offering change Orual's perception of the god of the Mountain, and reveals more about what is he like in the universe of Till We Have Faces. Orual decides to go to the Mountain and give a proper burial to whatever remained of Psyche. She is joined by Bardia, captain of the king's guard. As they approach the Mountain, Orual experiences a strange feeling, as if words were coming to her saying "why should your heart not dance" (*Till We Have Faces* 96). The sensation even stops her feeling ugly (*Till We Have Faces* 96). She puts these sensations aside because of her previously established belief that the god of the Mountain is just like Ungit who she hates. They pass a cursed black valley, and here Orual feels that "the gods ceased trying to make me glad" (98). Here the God of the Mountain talks to one's heart, trying to influence emotions in an inviting way. The same influence can be seen with Psyche. Her attitude towards her offering is fascinating: she looks forward to it, even if it means dying, as "everything seemed to be saying, Psyche come" (*Till We Have Faces* 74). She states: "All my life the god of the Mountain has been wooing me" (*Till We Have Faces* 76). What is sometimes added to these warm, inviting feelings is a sensation of terror: when Orual hears the voice of the god of the Mountain, she records the sound as arousing "a swift wave of terror", even though the sounds was not "ugly", but "golden" (*Till We Have Faces* 171). This mix of terror/horror with pleasant inviting emotions is also present in relation to Aslan:

> At the name of Aslan each one of the children felt something jump in its inside. Edmund felt a sensation of mysterious horror. Peter felt suddenly brave and adventurous. Susan felt as if some delicious smell or some delightful strain of music had just floated by her. And Lucy got the feeling you have when you wake up in the

morning and realize that it is the beginning of the holidays or the beginning of summer. (*The Lion* 30)

The god of the Mountain also influences one's visual perception. He gives Psyche a palace, servants, exotic food, clothes, and Psyche is able to see and feel everything the god of the Mountain provided for her, but Orual cannot (*Till We Have Faces* 115,116). Later on Orual sees the palace for a moment, but then it becomes "invisible again almost at once" (*Till We Have Faces* 112). This is why Orual refuse to believe Psyche that there is a palace, etc. This also correlates with Aslan as visually spotting him depends on individual perception: ""Will the others see you too?" asked Lucy. "Certainly not at first," said Aslan. "Later on, it depends." "But they won't believe me!" said Lucy" (*Prince Caspian* 63).

The next characteristic of the god of the Mountain is beauty. Orual sees him: "This great light stood over me as still as a candle burning in a curtained and shuttered room. In the center of the light was something like a man... …A monster – the Shadowbrute that I and all Glome had imagined – would have subdued me less than beauty this face wore (*Till We Have Faces* 172). Psyche describes the god of the Mountain having a "human shape. But you couldn't mistake him for a man" (*Till We Have Faces* 111). She continues that he looks compared to a healthy person the way a healthy person looks compared to a leper (*Till We Have Faces* 111). She says that his voice is "unmoved and sweet; like a bird singing on the branch above a hanged man" (*Till We Have Faces* 173), and "sweeter than any music, yet my hair rose at it too" (*Till We Have Faces* 113). Again, we find the same with Aslan: "in beauty he surpassed all that is in the world even as the rose in bloom surpasses the dust of the desert" (*The Last Battle* 79), and his voice is "beyond comparison, the most beautiful noise he had ever heard" (*The Magician's* 46)

Moreover, the god of the Mountain is surrounded by beauty. When Orual and Bardia climb to the top of the Mountain, and find no remains of Psyche around the Tree, they continue further to the other side of the Mountain, a sacred area where maybe no man has ever dared to cross (*Till We Have Faces* 100). The beauty astonishes Orual: "It was like looking down into a new world" (*Till We Have Faces* 100). "I never saw greener turf. There was gorse in bloom, and wild vines, and many groves of flourishing trees, and great plenty of bright water - pools, streams, and little cataracts" (*Till We Have Faces* 101). The god of the Mountain takes Psyche to a house that was more beautiful than anything she ever imagined, a house where he lives (*Till We Have Faces* 112-113). In the house we find invisible spirits that give her wonderful food (*Till We Have Faces* 113), bathe her in sweet water (*Till We Have Faces* 114), and give her the most beautiful clothes (*Till We Have Faces* 115). As we have seen earlier, Orual stops feeling ugly when in the presence of the god of the Mountain, which means that everything that he touches with his presence turns beautiful, and water turns sweet. And through The Chronicles of Narnia we also find astonishingly beautiful nature whenever the main characters near God's presence. For example, when Caspian and his companions travel to the world's end, they find an astonishingly beautiful flower-covered sea; they taste the water, and it is sweet (*The Voyage* 102). Overall, through his ties to Aslan who represents God in The Chronicles of Narnia, the god of the Mountain represents the same in Till We Have Faces.

The god of the Mountain being a metaphor for "the real gods", or God, is in harmony with what the novel itself says about the real gods. The real gods are also beautiful (*Till We Have Faces* 304). Moreover, there comes a day when the gods will become "wholly beautiful" (*Till We Have Faces* 304). However, there is one aspect where the god of the Mountain differs to Aslan: he, just like Ungit and Cupid, hides his face. Psyche testifies: "He comes to me only in the holy darkness. He says I mustn't – not yet – see his face or know his

name. I'm forbidden to bring any light into his – our chamber" (*Till We Have Faces* 119). The moment where he stops hiding his face is when Psyche uncovers it, and his face appears in front of Orual too. Still, this differs to Aslan who is a more transparent figure, frequently walking aside mortals with all his beauty and strength. But the place where the god of the Mountain and Aslan differ is also the place where the most important point about the real gods is made, and that only confirms the god of the Mountain as the real god. We have seen that because the gods are so beautiful, they instill jealousy in mortals, and this is why they need to hide their face. We already saw Orual as jealous at the beauty of the gods, and the real gods encounter this problem by simply hiding their face: "The Divine nature wounds and perhaps destroys us merely by being what it is" (*Till We Have Faces* 284). In the following quote that is perhaps the central point of the novel, it is explained that the real gods hide their faces to avoid jealousy, but also because mortals hesitate to show their own real faces:

> When the time comes to you at which you will be forced at last to utter the speech which has lain at the center of your soul for years, which you have, all that time, idiot-like, been saying over and over, you'll not talk about the joy of words. 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?" (*Till We Have Faces* 294)

This famous quote of C. S. Lewis explains that showing face is a reciprocal act. If mortals hide their faces through self-delusion powered by their life agenda that battles reality, the real gods cannot meet the mortal face to face, and therefore, this mortal is denied of the gods' face as well. Here Gruenler helps us acquire a deeper understanding of what *face* means:

> Orual comes to acknowledge that the reason the gods don't speak clearly has to do with the veil that has covered her own face from herself and prevented her from

> seeing. Indeed, as she puts it in the line from which the book's title comes, her deficiency is a more fundamental matter of not being fully formed as a person. (Gruenler 21)

The god of the Mountain, otherwise mirroring Aslan, is different in the aspect of appearance because of the special point Till We Have Faces (the title itself shows the centrality of the point) tries to convey – the point that differs this novel to The Chronicles of Narnia. And we saw that it only confirms the god of the Mountain as the real god, or Christian God: "How can [the gods] meet us face to face till we have faces?" (294). This line alludes, of course, to 1 Corinthians 13:12, "We see now through a mirror in an enigma, then face to face," and no doubt Lewis had in mind the first part of the verse as well" (Gruenler 22).

Hence, the god of the Mountain takes the role of the real god within the novel, and his meaning in Lewis's Christian framework definitely points to the Christian God. Now that we have established Ungit's character, and the role and meaning of the god of the Mountain, we can use the findings to focus on Ungit's role and meaning.

4. Ungit's role within the novel through Lewis's Christian framework

4.1. Ungit as the embodiment of mystery and enigma

In the first part of the thesis we saw that Ungit is hiding her face and her character, and that she is a comforting figure to the people that go to her temple for encouragement. She even shows supernatural qualities in exercising her will. In the second part we saw that her son the god of the Mountain is a real god in the novel, or a metaphor for the Christian God. These elements convey Ungit as divine herself – she is a goddess after all. However, we also saw that she is jealous (Lewis sees the greatest source of jealousy to be the magnificence of God), possessive, and devouring, and these elements convey her to be something opposite of

divine, or false divinity if we observe her through Christian lenses. She cannot be divine and human, as this would contradict to Lewis's worldview, but she can be, and is, a mixture of both. The crucial quote for adopting this view is said by the Fox inside one of the visions Orual received: "the way to the true gods is more like the house of Ungit … oh, it's unlike too" (*Till We Have Faces* 295). Ungit serves as an imperfect, erroneous, introductory image of the real gods.

In contemplating Ungit's role in relation to the real gods, we have to include two events unmentioned so far. The first one is a range of changes to Ungit after the death of the Priest of Ungit, the second one is the introduction of the goddess Istra, but that will be dealt with later. The Priest of Ungit is replaced by Arnom who has somewhat different views at spirituality. Comparing Arnom to the old Priest of Ungit, Orual feels that "there was no feeling that Ungit came into the room with him", that Ungit is weakened (*Till We Have Faces* 205). The change is also evident in the names: the old Priest's name is never mentioned because his identity is completely tied to his service under Ungit. On the other hand, Arnom's name makes him less a priest - more a common man. Arnom

> had opened new windows in the walls and her house was not so dark. He also kept it differently, scouring away the blood after each slaughter and sprinkling fresh water; it smelled cleaner and less holy. And Arnom was learning from the Fox to talk like a philosopher about the gods. The great change came when he proposed to set up an image of her – a woman-shaped image in the Greek fashion – in front of the old shapeless stone." (*Till We Have Faces* 234)

The people also sense that something has changed for worse; they see the new Ungit as a Greek version for "nobles and learned men", and that "there is no comfort in her" (*Till We Have Faces* 272). Orual herself concludes that "the people got something from that shapeless

stone (the old Ungit) which no one ever got from that painted doll of Arnom's." (*Till We Have Faces* 295)

The Fox plays an important role in this change. It is evident from the novel, as well as confirmed by authors like Whitmer, Burkholder, and Wagner, that the Fox represents reason. He comes from Greece, he believes that everything should be transparent and logical both in the realm of mortals as well as in the realm of the gods. Whitmer comments the introduction of light in the house of Ungit:

> It is hard not to see this as the intellectual light of Reason being allowed in where once the mystery of what the Fox would call superstition had prevailed… The interplay of shadow and dim light has been replaced with the bright light of the sun, with the superior wisdom of seeing things as they are. (56)

Whitmer sees the new Ungit as religion where there is heavy emphasis on social customs, and creative work or art:

> "The blood of the sacrifices was now being treated as filth to be washed off, rather than as something sacred, holy. The sanitizing of religion begins to make religion less real, less relevant, and little more than a social custom, a symbol devoid of any reality." (56)

> "A common theme with both Arnom's image and this temple is the growing presence of what might truly be considered "art" as part of worship. This brings the focus of the worship away from the god and onto the creative work of those who have built the temple or the image. Again, Lewis is depicting the undercutting of a sense of dependence on and fealty to divinity through both Arnom's changes to the temple of Ungit and this temple." (58)

Whitmer argues is that the changes to Ungit made her less as an enigma (56). Burkholder agrees: "Ungit is a goddess of myth and mystery, while Aphrodite (the new Ungit) is a mockery of it. If Ungit is the myth, than Aphrodite is the cheap imitation, which is the fairytale. Aphrodite is just a physical being made to look like man's notion of beauty and desire – she has no mystery." (81) Arnom's changes, born out of need to be in touch with the Greek intellectualism, were actually a step back in representing a divinity; and because the people rejected the new Ungit, Burkholder concludes: "clearly the myth is more powerful" (81).

This sparks the debate between reason and faith, and how they are represented in the novel. They are stirred as Orual starts receiving series of visions which confuse her from differing between dreams and reality: "But I must give warning that from this time onward they (the gods) so drenched me with seeings that I cannot well discern dream from waking nor tell which is truer" (*Till We Have Faces* 276). And Wagner notices that

> The rest of the narrative is so mixed between dream and waking that it destroys the tenuous boundaries between reality and dream: in this state all dichotomies are shattered and reason and faith can merge as one. In this new state of religion, Orual can thrive without fear. Her experience in the dream visions allows her to merge her own self—rational and yet ultimately Ungit-ish—with the faith and beauty of Psyche's. (72)

Wagner argues that in Till We Have Faces Lewis displays faith and reason being not just compatible in religion, but perfected (Wagner 80): "Faith and reason should be considered inseparable, two crucial and interlocking pieces of the same religious puzzle" (Wagner 80). What Wagner seems to say is that Lewis presents the divine as making more and more sense in terms of reason when there is faith involved. In another words, as faith grows, it is less

contradictory to one's reason or one's judgment. The question that arises is whether Wagner stresses reason more than the book does. In other words, does Lewis develop the theme of faith and reason perfecting each other? Whitmer disagrees: "A clear corollary of this discussion of the religion of Glome is that the gods are "untame": they are outside the boundaries of human understanding and expectation and are not accountable to humans, thus they work in ways that confound the expectations of mortal minds" (61)

While Wagner correctly notices that reason is being perfected towards the end of the book (as Orual understands the gods more and more clearly), it is difficult to say that the novel develops a theme of reason and faith fitting together perfectly. If it does, it seems to be in the shadow of Orual developing mystery and awe towards gods. At the end of the book Orual says: "I know now, Lord, why you utter no answer. You are yourself the answer. Before your face questions die away. What other answer would suffice? Only words, words; to be led out to battle against other words" (*Till We Have Faces* 308). This epilogue reminds of the Book of Job where Job is also arguing his case against God. He enters a vigorous debate with his friends, and after a few dozen chapters of arguments and debates God appears and starts talking about his creation of the world and of the animals. God does not provide arguments to Job; He simply entices awe as he talks about all the wonders He has created. As a result Job stars feeling awe, and he responds to God:

> "I know that you can do all things; no purpose of yours can be thwarted. You asked, 'Who is this that obscures my plans without knowledge?' Surely I spoke of things I did not understand, things too wonderful for me to know. "You said, 'Listen now, and I will speak; I will question you, and you shall answer me.' My ears had heard of you but now my eyes have seen you. (King James Version Standard, 42.2-5)

As Orual, Job also sees the answer in God himself. Therefore, while Lewis does try to use reason as far as it goes in describing God (a perfect example being his explanation of Trinity in Mere Christianity), the theme of Till We Have Faces is more turned towards conveying the importance of mystery, enigma, and awe. That conclusion shows us the way in which Ungit is pointing towards the real gods/God: she is an embodiment of mystery and enigma that makes mortals feel awe, and she prevents reason from fashioning the divine to be more human. This is in accordance with Whitmer:

> By emphasizing the mystery and unpredictability of the gods, Lewis reflects a common theme that appears throughout his fiction: the numinous quality of the Divine. For example, Aslan, a picture of Christ, is said not to be a tame lion; likewise, the eldila of the Space Trilogy are virtually imperceptible to humans, suggesting the mystery that surrounds them. (Whitmer 61)

Now it is important that we include the goddess Istra to the discussion. Orual encounters Istra's temple on one of her travels:

> It was clean and empty and there were none of the common temple smells about it, so that I thought it must belong to one of those small peaceful gods who are content with flowers and fruit for sacrifice. Then I saw it must be a goddess, for there was on the altar the image of a woman about two feet high carved in wood, not baldly done and all the fairer (to my mind) because there was no painting or gliding but only the natural pale colour of the wood. The thing that marred it was a band or scarf of some black stuff tied round the head of the image so as to hide its face – much like my own veil, but that mine was white. (*Till We Have Faces* 240-241)

The temple of Istra is very similar to the altered temple of Ungit: it is bloodless and clean, without the "common temple smell", and the statue is of human shape. It turns out that this

goddess originates from the story of Psyche whose second name is also Istra. A local priest tells her story:

> "Once upon a time in a certain land there lived a king and a queen who had three daughters, and the youngest was the most beautiful princess in the whole world. "How Talapal (that's the Essurian Ungit) was jealous of her beauty and made her to be offered to a brute on a mountain, and how Talapal's son Ialim, the most beautiful of the gods, loved her and took her away to his secret palace. He even knew that Ialim had there visited her only in darkness and had forbidden her to see his face. But he had a childish reason for that: "You see, Stranger, he had to be very secret because of his mother Talapal. She would have been very angry with him if she had known he had married the woman she most hated in the world… Her two sisters had seen the beautiful palace and been feasted and given gifts… When these two wicked sisters had made their plan to ruin Istra, they brought her the lamp and… They wanted to destroy her *because* they had seen her palace…. …because they were jealous. Her husband and her house were so much finer than theirs… …and (Istra) wanders over the earth weeping, weeping, always weeping… (*Till We Have Faces* 244-245)

This is actually a reference to the myth of Cupid and Psyche from *The Metamorphoses of Apuleius* - Lewis's inspiration for writing *Till We Have Faces*. There are two fundamental differences between the story of Istra/Cupid's Psyche and the main plot of Till We Have Faces. First, the god of the Mountain hides his face because of the deficiencies of mortals, while Ialim/Cupid does the same because he is afraid of his mother. Second, the sisters of Istra/Cupid's Psyche see the palace clearly and intentionally plot against her, while Orual sees the palace in a glimpse, and thinks that she is protecting her sister from self-delusion. Whitmer advocates that what separates Lewis from Apuleius is Lewis's belief that "while man may be created in the divine image, divinity should not be recreated in man's image"

(59); Whitmer points out that Cupid/Ialim is a sort of a "super-human" – a god with human flaws (59). Therefore, both the temple of Istra and the gods in her story show that Istra's religion is filled with human elements replacing divine ones. The religion of Istra is in a way an extended version of the religion of new Ungit, constructing the character of Cupid in the same humanlike way the temple is constructed.

Yet, the story does reveal something authentic that also becomes crucial for the development of the plot. It exposes the character and motives of Orual, and is the first major collision of Orual with the notion that her life has been driven by jealousy; it motivates her to write her book where she would vindicate her motives and condemn the gods'. In this pool of human elements Istra' religion does provide something divine: it reveals exactly what the real gods think of Orual. This speaks of the role of pagan myths and religions, and this includes Ungit too: no matter how misrepresentative they seem of the true gods, for Lewis they still uncover something genuine, something originating from God. An example of something like that can be the information of necessity of sacrifice told by the Priest of Ungit which hints at the sacrifices of the Old Testament, and especially at the crucifixion of Jesus, pointing that the victim must be "perfect" (*Till We Have Faces* 49), and that "one should die for many (*Till We Have Faces* 61): "The way to the true gods is more like the house of Ungit … oh, it's unlike too, more unlike than we yet dream, but that's the easy knowledge, the first lesson; only a fool would stay there, posturing and repeating it. The Priest knew at least that there must be sacrifices. They will have sacrifice – will have man." (*Till We Have Faces* 295)

4.2. Ungit as the fallen human nature, and as Satan

We learned that Orual serves as a parallel for Ungit in terms of character. However, Till We Have Faces does not only represent Ungit to be like Orual, or Ungit to be Orual, but also Ungit to be something in Orual that needs to be dealt with: "To say that I was Ungit

meant that I was as ugly in soul as she; greedy, blood-gorged" (*Till We Have Faces* 281-282). Orual understands that there is a nature inside of her that makes her hurt people around her. She realizes that she needs to change, and this change starts with introspection she undertakes while writing about her life in her book against the gods (*Till We Have Faces* 253). She continues that the writing "was only a beginning – only to prepare me for the gods' surgery," (Till We Have Faces 253-254) Her Christian tone becomes more and more obvious: "Our passions and desires and vain opinions" must die" (*Till We Have Faces* 279). Orual describes the Christian notion of the fallen human nature. In the context of the real gods she calls herself a rebel (*Till We Have Faces* 280), just like Lewis in Mere Christianity calls a fallen man "a rebel that must lay down his arms (33).

However, Orual is not successful in changing, tries to commit suicide, and the real gods stop her: "You cannot escape Ungit by going to the deadlands, for she is there also. Die before you die. There is no chance after" (*Till We Have Faces* 279). Here is Ungit represented as an entity that should be escaped from. Orual asks: "Then there is a real Ungit?" (*Till We Have Faces* 279), and the notion of the escape is repeated: "All, even Psyche, are born into the house of Ungit. And all must get free from her. Or say that Ungit in each must bear Ungit's son and die in childbed – or change" (*Till We Have Faces* 301). These quotes from the novel undoubtedly point to Satan as he is the entity which, in the Christian universe, needs to be escaped from. Lewis writes in Mere Christianity that "putting Yourself first—wanting to be the center—wanting to be God, in fact, that was the sin of Satan" (30). And we have described the jealousy of Ungit, and Lewis's belief that the greatest source of jealousy is the majesty of God. We have seen Ungit as a possessive devourer, also pointing to Satan. Therefore, in Till We Have Faces Ungit also plays the role of Satan, and points to the fallen human nature as an "an image of the demon within" (*Till We Have Faces* 295).

5. Conclusion

Using direct text analysis with the interpretational tools from other Lewis's works that speak of his Christian beliefs and metaphorical habits, and helped by the other authors dealing with the topic, the aim of this thesis was to place Ungit within Lewis's Christian framework as a metaphor for several Christian entities. We have seen Ungit as a mysterious figure that opposes being easily labeled like Aslan the lion from *The Chronicles of Narnia* or his equal the god of the Mountain. Helped by Lewis's *The Four Loves*, we have seen that Ungit is characterized by mixture of qualities that sometimes point to God (hiding face, giving comfort) and sometimes to the opposite (jealousy, possessiveness, devouring relationships). Comparing the god of the Mountain with Aslan, we have seen that *he* is the character that serves solely as a metaphor for the Christian God, and that Ungit as his mother must be something along that path, but also something different. With the further text analysis combined with other Lewis's work, and helped by the interpretations of other authors, we have seen many clues that show Ungit as an imperfect way of representing the Christian God, arousing awe and sense of mystery in her subjects. The greatest proofs were direct quotes from the novel comparing Ungit to *the real gods*. On the other hand, the opposing quotes were brought to light comparing Ungit to Satan, and to Orual whose character flaws serve as a sample of the fallen human nature. Overall, we have seen that the solution offered for the enigma of Ungit is the right way of interpreting her presence and role within the novel. She cannot be solely a Christian nemesis embodied in a pagan deity; she cannot be solely the Christian God next to the perfectly virtuous the god of the Mountain; and she cannot be solely human in character because she emphasizes the difference between men and gods. The only proper answer, and the one that this thesis stands behind, is that Ungit is all three.

Therefore, In Lewis's last novel, the one which he labels as his best work, we find another of his apologetic efforts of depicting God as beautiful, mysterious, and perfectly

virtuous. But the special quality of Till We Have Faces is found in Ungit whose mutually contradicting godlike/satanic/humanlike qualities make this late masterpiece of Lewis as confusing, as complex, and as deep as it gets – "far below any dens that foxes can dig" (*Till We Have Faces* 275). And since other Lewis's works helped interpret this piece, it is only right that the same goes the other way round. This novel has the potential of changing the Christian framework of Lewis: what is he trying to say with placing God, Satan, and humanity in the same character – that remains to be explored.

6. Bibliography

Burkholder, Rachel. *A Myth Retold: How Till We Have Faces Confirms That a Myth Is Not a Fairytale.* Liberty University, 2011. PDF file.

Gray, Cora. *Oural's Quest for Identity: C.S. Lewis's Till We Have Faces in 1950s British Society.* Cedarville University, 2013. PDF file.

Gruenler, Curtis A. *C. S. Lewis and Rene Girard on Desire, Conversation, and Myth: The Case of Till We Have Faces.* University of Michigan, 2011. PDF file.

King James Version Standard. *King James Bible Online*. Cambridge, 2016. Web. 20. May 2016 Cambridge, 2016 <http://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/Job-Chapter-42/>

Lewis, C. S. *Mere Christianity.* London: Macmillan Publishing, 1952. PDF file.

Lewis, C. S. *Prince Caspian. London:* Geoffrey Bles, 1951. ePub file.

Lewis, C. S. *The Four Loves*. New York: Harcourt, 1960. PDF file.

Lewis, C. S. *The Last Battle*. London: The Bodley Head, 1956. ePub file.

Lewis, C. S. *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe. London:* Geoffrey Bles, 1950. ePub file.

Lewis, C. S. *The Magician's Nephew*. London: The Bodley Head, 1955. ePub file.

Lewis, C. S. *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader. London:* Geoffrey Bles, 1952. ePub file.

Lewis, C. S. *Till We Have Faces*. New York: A Harvest Book, 1984. Print

Lukens, Matthew. "The Refiguration Of Body and Soul: Time And Narrative In C. S. Lewis's Retelling Of The Cupid And Psyche Myth." *Amaltea. Revista de mitocrítica* 11.4. (2012): 115-129. PDF file.

Sauders, Paulette. *Through the Lens of The Four Loves: The Idea of Love in Till We Have Faces.* Taylor University, 2012. PDF file.

Wagner, Erin K. *"How Can They Meet Us Face to Face?": The Faith-Reason Debate in C. S. Lewis's Till We Have Faces and Medieval Dream Visions.* Ohio University, 2010. PDF file.

Whitmer, Jonathan, A. *Place as Plot: A Comparison of the Use of Place in C. S. Lewis' Till We Have Faces and John Milton's Paradise Lost.* Grand Valley State University, 2011. PDF file.

Karakter, uloga, i značenje Ungit u C. S. Lewisovom kršćanskom okviru unutar "Till We Have Faces"

Sažetak

C. S. Lewis u svom posljednjem romanu "Till We Have Faces" prerađuje mit o Psihi i Kupidu iz perspektive Psihine sestre. Ungit (Afrodita), služeći kao pogansko božanstvo u ovom kršćanskom romanu, pokazuje da je mnogo više od pukog suparnika kršćanskog Boga. Kroz direktnu analizu teksta, usporedbe sa ostalim Lewisovim djelima, te uz pomoć drugih autora koji se bave Lewisom, ovaj rad pokušava prikazati Ungit kao metaforu ne samo za jedan kršćanski entitet, već više njih. Teorijski okvir su Lewisovi kršćanski pogledi sadržani kroz njegova djela, i unutar njegove teologije se traži Ungitina uloga. Prvi dio rada pokazuje Ungit kao ljubomornu, posesivnu i proždirajuću; ona također krije svoje lice što je i božanska karakeristika u ovom djelu, te nudi sigurnost i utjehu svojim podanicima. U drugom djelu rada se Ungitin sin "the god of the Mountain" uspoređuje sa Aslanom iz Lewisovog djela "Kronike iz Narnije" što pokazuje da je on metafora za kršćanskog Boga. U trećem dijelu rada se povezuju Ungitine karakteristike sa njenim odnosom sa njenim Sinom da bi se otkrilo koji sve kršćanski entiteti stoje iza nje. Osvrćući se prije svega na Whitmer, te na Lewisovo "Kršćanstvo", Ungit se pokazuje kao slika kršćanskog Boga jer upućuje na strahopoštovanje i misterioznost kao nezaobilazne elemente u pristupu Bogu. Također, Ungit se pokazuje kao metafora za Sotonu jer se opisuje kao entitet od kojeg čovječanstvo mora bježati. I konačno, Ungit stoji i kao metafora za palu ljudsku prirodu simbolizirajući nešto u čovjeku što se mora odbaciti da bi se približilo Bogu.

Ključne riječi: Ungit, Bog, Sotona, ljudska priroda.

Ungit's Character, Role, and Meaning in C. S. Lewis's Christian Framework of Till We Have Faces

Abstract

In his last novel *Till We Have Faces*, Lewis adapts the myth of Cupid and Psyche, telling the story through the perspective of Psyche's sister Orual. Ungit (Afrodite), serving as a pagan deity in this Christian novel, shows to be a lot more than a mere adversary of the Christian God. Through direct text analysis, through comparison to other Lewis's works, and with the help of other authors dealing with this topic, this thesis attempts to define Ungit as a metaphor for not just one Christian entity, but several. Lewis's Christian views serve as a theoretical framework, and Ungit's meaning is being searched within them. The first part of the thesis describes Ungit as jealous, possessive, and devouring; she also hides her face which is a divine characteristic in this novel, and she also provides a sense of protection and comfort to her subjects. In the second part, Ungit's son the god of the Mountain is being compared to Aslan from The Chronicles of Narnia, proving to be a metaphor for the Christian God. In the third part of the paper Ungit's characteristics and her relationship to her Son are used in discovering which Christian entities she embodies. Ungit is shown to be an image of the Christian God because she points to awe and mystery as crucial elements in approaching God. Also, Ungit is shown to stand as a metaphor for Satan as she is something that humanity must run away from. Finally, Ungit stands as a metaphor for the fallen human nature, symbolizing something within a human being that must be cast away.

Keywords: Ungit, God, Satan, human nature.