



Satire and Social Criticism
in C. S. Lewis' *That Hideous Strength*

Marika Österberg

Supervisor: Ulrika Andersson

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Introduction

The imagination is, according to C. S. Lewis, the prerequisite for moral choices. It is not surprising then that he writes his war time social criticism in the genre of fantasy. He further writes in the dystopian and satiric modes, both of which characteristically comprise criticism of society. Modern society of Lewis' time, he believed, denied absolute values, and wrongly considered goodness and badness to be subjective measures. This vacuum of objective values took several expressions on a societal level. One that Lewis found troublesome was science. Though science made progress in many ways in the first decades of the twentieth century, its utilization of nature, animals and humans threw dark shadows on it. Totalitarian governments took this to an extreme; was humanity going to survive?

Science itself Lewis considered good. He even believed that science might bring the cure (1944, 76). What Lewis then means by a denial of objective values is that the wisdom of old ages is missing among scientists and others, a wisdom which wise individuals accumulated in their efforts to conform their souls to reality, and which they achieved through "knowledge, self-discipline and virtue" (1944, 77). In contrast to this, he argues, for applied science: "the problem is how to subdue reality to the wishes of men: and the solution is a technique." The old wisdom of objective values that Lewis calls the Tao is similar the Chinese Tao, meaning "the reality beyond all predicates, the abyss that was before the Creator Himself. It is the Nature, the Way, the Road" (1944, 18). What Lewis calls the Tao is "this conception in all its forms, Platonic, Aristotelian, Stoic, Christian, and Oriental [...] it is the doctrine of *objective value*, the belief that certain attitudes are really true, and others really false, to the kind of thing the universe is and the kind of things we are" (1944, 18). According to Mineko Honda, Lewis is representing not just Christianity, "but the whole objective Reality" that is crucial for us as human beings and that "is appealing to that which is common among almost all the people of all the faiths" (147). Reality, to Lewis, is the supernatural realm of God and he sees "the phenomenal world as standing in relation to absolute Reality" (Honda, xi).

Moreover, he believes in the rationality of both the universe and of humankind, and reason to him is the organ of truth. Imagination to him is the organ of meaning or “a power of intuition to metaphysical reality of this world and heaven, and a power of communication of that reality,” and this, in turn, is based on his view on metaphor “as fundamental to all linguistic activities” and even as indispensable for logical thinking (Honda, 1, 25).

C. S. Lewis (1898-1960) is most widely known as the author of the *Chronicles of Narnia*. Many also know him for his Christian apologetics. Perhaps less known is in what a considerable number of other genres this professor of literature expressed his ideas and visions. One of these less known genres is fantasy fiction. In 1938, he published what was to be the first book in his space trilogy, *Out of the Silent Planet*. The second, *Perelandra*, was published in 1943 and the third, *That Hideous Strength* in 1945. Although these books form a whole they can be read separately.

When *That Hideous Strength* was first published it got a mixed reception. Most people sharing the author’s sympathies for Christian doctrine applauded it. Literary critics discerned its medieval elements and acknowledged the level of sophistication with which the author used them in his tale. The novel’s wealth of intertextuality and its participation in the debate of the time did not go unnoticed. Unfortunately, however, the negative criticism that the book received from several instances was a reflection of the book’s problem, namely its excess of material. Chad Walsh remarks that the novel is intellectually overstuffed: in it “everything Lewis disliked about twentieth century life” is put on the scaffold (qtd in Adey, 134). The literary critic Joseph McSorley, wrote in 1946: “Mr Lewis has too many exceptional gifts” (qtd in Hooper, 240). In the midst of this frank criticism, there is a voice that points out a new aspect to this controversial book. Literary critic Peter Schakel has examined the writer’s special gift of satire, arguing that Lewis wrote more and better satire than he did fantasy until rather late in his career.

This essay will examine the satire in *That Hideous Strength*, and, as satire inherently seeks to attack something which the writer strongly disapproves of, I will seek to discover the subjects of this disapproval. Attempting a New Historicist reading of this novel, I will aim at uncovering how

the novel participated in the discourse of the time and how its publication can be seen as an attempt to make this world a better place. The idea behind New Historicism, generally, is that literature is best understood in the light of history. According to Claire Colebrook, New Historicism rather than being an answer to the difficulties of history-writing is “the opening of new questions” (VI). Questions typically posed by new historicists include the following: How was the work composed? What were the author’s intentions? What events and ideas does the work refer to? How have readers responded to the work? and What does the work mean for people today? (Griffith, 182). These questions will, to greater and lesser extents, inform this essay. There are two more ideas of New Historicism that are important for my reading: 1) that it uses a breadth of disciplines to illuminate the reading; and, 2) that it has aspirations to lessen injustices of race and class and gender (Griffith, 179, 182). My reading will therefore be informed by the disciplines of history, psychology, social science, theology, philosophy, and literary criticism. These disciplines are complementary, and so emphasize the fact that there is not merely one perspective, but many perspectives, on the world and on humankind. Of the disciplines chosen, history and philosophy are complementary in a special way: Whereas history deals with matters that change through space and time, philosophy deals with matters that are unchanging and universal.

Lewis calls his story “a tall story of devilry” (7). Consequently, in order to pave the way for a deeper analysis of the satire, and for an understanding of the targets of its critique, the concept of evil will be scrutinized through the eyes of the disciplines mentioned, including a presentation of the text the novel retells, the Biblical story of “The Tower of Babel.” Lewis’ view of evil as an aversion from objective values will be explained. Three phenomena of the time the novel was written will be accounted for. These are: 1) Totalitarian regimes, in particular the Nazi state; 2) Science and the treatment of animals; and 3) Education. The underlying idea with this essay is that once the evil is spotted – that is, the satire’s targets uncovered – then the culprit’s world view will be clarified and the alternative the author offers will emerge.

This essay, then, will examine the satire of *That Hideous Strength* along with the targets of its social criticism. One of my two central arguments is that Lewis's main theme centers on the evil that surfaces in the denial of objective values among persons in the leadership of nations, scientific institutions and in educational systems. Lewis' main focus in his social criticism is on their willingness cynically to use science, human beings and animals to achieve power and control. The other is that a cultivation of the heart through the development of moral imagination, which has to be passed on from one generation to the next, is needed if humankind is not going to lose its humanity.

Chapter I

A Background to a New Historicist Reading of *That Hideous Strength*

In this chapter, the foundation for a New Historicist reading of the novel *That Hideous Strength* will be laid, following three steps. Firstly, the relevant literary concepts, "fantasy," "satire" and "dystopia," will be discussed. Secondly, the essay will explore the concept of evil from the angles of theology, philosophy, behavioral psychology, and social science, starting with a presentation of the biblical story of "The Tower of Babel." This will be coupled with an exploration of the concept of goodness, in the way that Lewis understood it, for a description of evil needs to be contrasted against a description of the good to be complete. This inter-disciplinary measure is taken in order to understand how the novel possibly spoke to its contemporary readers at a deep level. Thirdly, phenomena of Lewis' time, the Totalitarian states, in particular the Nazi state, animals in research, and a failing educational system, will be considered.

Satire in Fantasy and Dystopian Fiction

The literary genres that are significant for this essay are fantasy and dystopia. The first concept, fantasy, is fiction that is dependent for effect on strangeness of setting, spatially or temporally, and of characters (Webster's, 823). In Edward Quinn's *Dictionary of Literary Terms* it is described as "a form of literature characterized by highly imaginative and supernatural events" (121). Quinn goes on to say that science fiction is one of the many literary types included in the broad category that fantasy constitutes. However, science fiction is distinguished by its scientific or pseudo-scientific themes. It must be noted that as science fiction *That Hideous Strength* is atypical. Unlike the two earlier books in the space trilogy, where the settings were imaginary Mars and Venus respectively, the setting of this novel is Tellus.

The second concept, dystopia, is perhaps best understood in contrast to that of utopia. Dystopia is, like utopia, an imaginary place, but whereas utopia is one of “ideal perfection, especially in laws, government and social conditions,” dystopia is the opposite: one where people live dehumanized and often fearful lives (Merriam-Webster’s, 390). The Second World War gave rise to dystopian fiction. George Orwell’s *1984* (1948) is one of the most well-known dystopias. Dystopias may provide a context for social criticism. Keith Booker states that “the principal technique of dystopian fiction is defamiliarization” which means that by focusing their critique of society on distant settings, spatially or temporally, dystopian novels “provide fresh perspectives on problematic social and political practices that might otherwise be taken for granted or considered natural or inevitable.” Dystopian fiction is often associated with the genre of science fiction. Booker claims that many texts belong to both categories, but it is dystopian fiction that is distinguished in its “attention to social and political critique” (19).

The third, and for this paper most central, literary concept is satire. Satire, like dystopia, often deals with social criticism, but is otherwise distinct. Childs and Fowler argue that satire attempts to “juxtapose the actual with the ideal,” and argue that it is from this “need to project a double vision of the world that it derives most of its characteristics” (211). Satiric strategies include: double entendre, replacement and inversion of values, caricature and exaggeration, juxtaposition, comparison and analogy (Childs & Fowler, 211; Wikipedia, “Satire”). According to Quinn, central to satire is also parallelism or parody, or the “imitation of a particular style or genre for the purposes of satirizing it” (291). Wit is the main weapon of satire, and this wit is, according to Childs and Fowler “either fantastic or absurd” (211).

Irony or sarcasm is the defining feature of satire. Northrop Frye says that the irony of satire is militant (qtd in Childs & Fowler, 211). This irony “often professes to approve (or at least accept as natural) the very things the satirist actually wishes to attack” (Wikipedia, Satire). Northrop Frye elaborates that “irony is consistent both with complete realism of content and with the suppression of attitude on the part of the author. Satire demands at least a token fantasy, a content which the

reader recognizes as grotesque, and at least an implicit moral standard” (Childs & Fowler, 211). Like Frye’s, some definitions of satire, but not all, stress its moral quality. As Griffin says the sometimes extraordinarily persuasive quality of the satirist’s ‘truth’ has been considered by some to influence people’s moral choices (Griffin, 128). According to E. P. Lock, its effect was to “keep up the spirit of its own side.” This in turn could “maintain the momentum of a political movement toward a political victory” (qtd in Griffin, 128). However, Griffin holds that the suggestion of the Soviet critic Lunacharsky is likely more convincing: that satire provides a “moral victory” as a substitute for “material victory”. Indeed, as literature has been considered to constitute or promise compensation for loss in our lives, the specific compensations of satire would lie in “the sentiment it fosters of superiority in morality or in wit or in power” (Griffin, 155-56). In other words, satire would uniquely offer a mental place of strength where there is want.

Satire and history are thought to have much in common. They are both concerned with “recording the crimes and punishments of the great” and “exposing the vices and follies of the common people” (Pope qtd in Griffin, 115), and Jonathan Swift has argued that as history at times “lacks the essential nerve” satire needs to take over its function (qtd in Griffin, 115). Robert Elliott presents Wyndham Lewis’ (1882-1957), a contemporary with C.S. Lewis, wonderfully and powerfully formulated ideas about satire. W. Lewis defines satire as “an art of the outside” (Elliott, 226). The means of satire in his view is laughter, “the bitter, cold, tragic laughter in accord with satire’s cruelty and destructiveness. [...] [Satire stands in the] “midway between tragedy and comedy: a ‘grinning tragedy, as it were. Or... a comedy full of dangerous electrical action, and shattered by the outburst of tears” (Elliott, 226). W. Lewis’ ideas of satire’s relation to truth are of particular interest here. He argues that satire is found in everything good. He also holds that satire is the truth of natural science, which could be understood in the way that the satirist has the truth of natural science in mind when he attacks vice, for instance through ridiculing views that are not grounded in natural science. This is in line with C. S. Lewis’ understanding of science as consistent with objective truth. “‘Satire’”, W. Lewis further argues, refers to “an ‘expressionist’ universe

which is reeling a little, a little drunk with an overdose of the ‘ridiculous’ – where everything is not only tipped but steeped in a philosophic solution of the material, not of mirth, but in the intense and even painful sense of the absurd” (qtd in Elliott, 227). The philosophic solution, which is mentioned in the quote, will be recognized in the reading of the novel.

So far, W. Lewis’ ideas about satire are not in conflict with C. S. Lewis’ ideas, but there is one great difference between W. Lewis’ and C. S. Lewis’ views. It becomes apparent when W. Lewis argues that the satirist expresses nihilism, meaning “not the moralist satire directed at a given society, but a metaphysical satire occupied with mankind” (Elliott, 227). For, whereas W. Lewis was, according to Elliott, a great artist of satire as it was understood in his time, and a man who embraced nihilism, C. S. Lewis is a great artist of satire in a more unusual sense for his time, in that he uses satire to fight nihilism. As Elliott explains, previously, either Stoic or Christian principles “provided ample justification for roasting their enemies” (229). It deserves to be noted that though C. S. Lewis fights nihilism, this does not mean that he is a moralist, for, as Kreeft explains, moralists place morality above religion (Kreeft, 87). C. S. Lewis has stated instead: “Morality exists for the purpose of helping us to become one with Christ” (Hooper, 560). With his satire C. S. Lewis thus fights for universal, objective values, values that also Christianity embraces (he makes explicit references to Christianity in the novel), attacking a society or societal phenomena that have drifted away from these values.

Babel and the Concept of Evil – Averting from Objective Values

“That hyddeous strength” is poet David Lindsay’s (1486-1555) name for the tower of Babel, and this is where *That Hideous Strength* got its title from. It refers to the story of “The Tower of Babel” in Genesis 11:1-9 (see appendix). According to Christian tradition, the story is about humankind’s pride, saying that it is humankind who secures that the divine exists in the world. Pride is considered the most serious of the seven cardinal sins, and the origin of the others. Cardinal sins may lead to deadly sins. To be called a deadly sin, it is thought and acted in full consent, full knowledge and full intent, and is serious in relation to the Ten Commandments (Catechism, 500). The sin that takes place in the story of the tower of Babel can be classified as deadly sin, since in it men want to be God instead of obeying Him. According to Chad Walsh, in the myth of Babel humankind, being aware that individuals perish, jump to a sort of collective immortality. Though the individual perishes, he continues, a nation and its language can live on. The catch, as he elaborates, is that it is God who gives eternal life as a gift; it is not gained by building a fortress against death. God thwarts their efforts, confuses their language and scatters them in different locations (Walsh, 109-10).

In a sermon at Pentecost, Deacon Holmberg has argued in relation to the story of the tower of Babel that many times in history humankind has tried to build a universal community without God, but it has always resulted in ruins and death. According to Christian tradition, it is with the aid of the Holy Spirit that humankind can build an eternal and loving community that does not result in ruins and death. The difference between the absence and the presence of the Holy Spirit in the church can be compared to the absence and presence of love in human relationships. Indeed, as Holmberg argues, the Holy Spirit leads people to speak a language that everyone can understand – and that is the language of love.

The good, in Lewis’ thinking, is that which is informed by universal objective truth. To him reason is the organ of truth. He uses the concept of objectivity that usually is connected with

science, but for another purpose. Lewis explains in his philosophical piece, “The Abolition of Man,” that objective values, which he for convenience calls the Tao, and which, he says, others may call Natural Law, the Axiom of Practical Reason, the Wisdom of Old Ages or Traditional Morality, “is not one among a possible series of systems of value. It is the sole source of all value judgements” (1944, 43). In relation to this, as he explains in his *Mere Christianity*, the natural moral law, the Law of Nature, or the two facts – 1) that we know what is right, and 2) that we break against it – is true all over the earth. Then he states: “These two facts are the foundation of all clear thinking about ourselves and the universe we live in” (2002, 8). The Tao, then, is the belief that certain sentiments are really true and thus good and others really false. Thus to Lewis the objective reality includes the moral dimension of good and evil. Further, adhering to the Tao includes emotion as a necessary element; the Tao is about being human and the heart to him is what makes human beings human. Lewis argues that adhering to the Tao means, for instance, recognizing defects in one self, such as not enjoying the society of children or being tone deaf. He continues to say that “our approvals and disapprovals [...] are responses to an objective value order, and therefore emotional responses can be in harmony with reason or out of harmony with it.” Moreover, he states that “the heart never takes the place of the head: but it can, and should, obey it” (1944, 19).

In practice, adhering to the Tao is acting out the four cardinal virtues. These are the opposites of the seven cardinal sins, which are: pride, wrath, greed, laziness, lust, envy and gluttony. The cardinal virtues are: 1) *prudence*, or practical common sense, 2) *temperance*, or going to the right length and no further, 3) *justice*, which includes truthfulness, honesty, give and take, keeping promises, and 4) *fortitude*, meaning courage (Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, 2002, 76-79). As becomes evident in my reading of *That Hideous Strength*, the cardinal sins can be practised on a societal level as well as on an individual one. If a regime averts from objective values it will cause its people great harm.

Lewis’ view on evil then is, basically, that it is a lack of objective values. Philosopher and C. S. Lewis critic, Peter Kreeft’s systematic analysis of his philosophy, “The Abolition of Man,” has

provided much insight into Lewis' ideas of evil. He elaborates: "Only when objective truth is denied are we 'free' to recreate new 'truths' in the image of our own desires" (69). So, this recreation of new "truths" is the root to sin, or to the hubris of the Tower of Babel. Lewis claims:

There has never been, and never will be, a radically new judgement of value in the history of the world. What purport to be new systems or [...] 'ideologies' all consist of fragments from the Tao itself, arbitrarily wrenched from their context in the whole and then swollen to madness in their isolation, yet still owing to the Tao and to it alone such validity as they possess. (1944, 43-44)

In relation to this, Lewis distinguishes between modern times and times before that, arguing that before thinkers did not doubt the validity of value judgements, whereas in modern times value judgements are considered only sentiments or complexes produced by a community and differing between communities (Lewis qtd in Kreeft, 70). From this springs, among other heresies, relativism or the "relativity of goodness and badness to place or culture" (Kreeft, 68). Contrary to the relativist notion, Lewis claims that values are surprisingly the same in different cultures. Another heresy that springs out of subjectivism, and that I consider important for the reading, is pragmatism, or the belief in "the weakness of goodness and the power of badness" (Kreeft, 68). Typically the pragmatist would say that "the end justifies the means" (79). Kreeft observes that good philosophers or novelists like Lewis can help convince us that "the pragmatic premise is false" (80).

Since evil is so central to the novel, some further elaboration on it is appropriate, and in order to achieve a balanced understanding, we will now include other disciplines. The perspectives on evil presented below are those of religion, behavioural psychology, and social science. To start with: The question of evil's source is known to be a question hard to answer. As Miller observes, while good experiences are generally accepted without much reflection, negative experiences, called evil, tend to be an inexplicable problem. Religion's answer to the so-called theodicy problem: Why does

evil exist if there is a God that wants the best for all of us? deals with the meaning of evil. Leibniz explains: “The best of all possible worlds cannot be a world consisting only of complete things, because then it would only be a doubling of God. [...] If God is to create a world in the first place, something evil has to be allowed” (Höffe, 140, my translation). Kreeft and Tacelli explain that “the fact that we wonder why evil happens in the first place implies a solution to the problem of evil. [...] Exactly the fact that we are shaken by the bad shows that we have contact with a norm according to which we deem this world defect” (147-48, my translation). Can evil then be defined in some absolute sense as opposed to good? Ronald Paulson comes to the conclusion that “ambiguity appears to be what distinguishes our sense of evil” (xv). Here literature, such as Lewis’ novel, may play an important role, offering insights where theories only get so far.

If we turn to behavioural psychology, and consider what causes evil to appear according to this discipline, we get a different perspective. According to Hans Schwartz, Konrad Lorenz, one of the leading behavioural researchers, has sought to illuminate the nature of evil by identifying it with aggressive behaviour. Lorenz claims that when aggression is advantageous for the future of a species it can be judged to be positive. When this same aggression is applied to our contemporary cultural-historical and technological situation, however, Lorenz considers it “the greatest of all dangers” (Schwarz, 5). This happens if the aggression drive does not find any peaceful outlet in our civilization, such as competition, athletics or other similar activities. Then both a negation of the creation process and “an active hostility toward that which we hold to be upright and good” takes place, Lorenz states. What is interesting here is that he blames what he calls “a false development of civilization”, which is quite in line with Lewis’ philosophy as we shall come to see in the reading of the novel. Lorenz argues that the individual is not genetically inclined to show responsibility for an unknown and anonymous member of a mass society in the same way as toward acquaintances and close friends. Lorenz especially points to “a technocratic system that leads to an over organization and incapacitation of humanity” (Schwarz, 5), which is also in line with Lewis’ thought.

Turning to social science, according to Arthur Miller, social scientists Baumeister and Vohs distinguish four roots of evil: instrumentality or resorting to violence in order to get what one wants; threatened egotism; idealism or doing good by doing bad; and sadism or the joy of hurting (90-98). The form of evil that is of specific interest, since it concerns World War II, is idealistic evil, a term used by social scientists. Evil deeds done for an ideal's sake are often far more brutal than evil done for other reasons. Baumeister explains: "Idealistic perpetrators believe they have a licence, or even a duty, to hate. They perceive the victim in terms of the myth of pure evil: as fundamentally opposed to the good" (186), implying that ordinary restraints may be ignored. For this reason, so-called 'holy' wars tend to be more merciless than 'ordinary' wars.

Lewis does not use the term idealistic evil but he attacks this kind of evil, more specifically the Holocaust and the Nazis' purported "utopia" of a pure Arian race, in his novel. For Lewis this is a dystopia. Utopias tend to turn into dystopias, and the reason for that, as could be deduced from the philosophy above is that utopias are not grounded in objectivity, not realistic. As discussed above, Lewis' conviction was that subjective values are the root of evil, and that subjectivity has a number of daughter heresies (Kreeft, 68). As Kreeft explains, Lewis believed that the heresy of positivism, or "the view that man posits values – led to the Nazi death camps" but, he points out, it was emotivism or "the gentle, and innocent-sounding, 'liberal', 'tolerant' moral dogma that moral dogmas are only feelings, [that] laid the tracks for the train that took us to Auschwitz" (71-72).

The ideas about evil expressed in the different disciplines above are relevant to understanding Lewis as he was very concerned with justice on a societal level. Further, understanding how evil operates in individuals in relation to society at large, as discussed here, is important for my reading of the novel. The Bible identifies the word as a double-edged sword, and defends an angry Jesus (Hebrews 4:12, John 2:15-16). Anger when well directed can make a great difference, and in my understanding this is exactly what the satiric aggression in *That Hideous Strength* does. I interpret Lewis' text *That Hideous Strength* as an expression of the above discussed ways of understanding

evil and it is my argument that evil as a rejection of a universal objective moral law is where the main focus of his social criticism lies.

Societal Phenomena in Lewis' Time:

Totalitarianism, Laboratory Animals, and Education

In order to pave the way for my analysis of the satire and social criticism in the novel, I will now move away from theories about evil to consider some very real dangers of the world of the 1930s and 1940s – for targets of satire and dystopia are from the real world. Additionally, discussing historical phenomena that the author refers to favorably adds to the understanding of literature, according to New Historicist theory. The three phenomena to be considered are: 1) totalitarian regimes, the Nazi state in particular; 2) the reality of animals used for research; and 3) education, especially that of children. This section examines facts and ideas to which the novel refers.

A totalitarian state is defined as “a state that is under centralized control under a leader or hierarchy” (Merriam-Webster's, 1320). In order to grasp Nazi totalitarianism it must be briefly put in its historical context. There had been a great overall depression after the First World War. Nazi and Fascist movements with the leaders Hitler and Mussolini, and General Franco in Spain, had developed as a solution, it was claimed, to put society in order, decrease unemployment drastically and give a new sense of order. The rest of Europe only realized what Hitler and his allies were up to when these nations had had all the time needed to prepare for war. All in all, “the Second World War claimed some 16 million human lives, the majority of which were civilian victims of Hitler and Stalin” (Henry & Walker Bergström, 185).

To help understand how evil operates at its worst, and how one individual is able to cause such immense destruction, a glance at Nazi dictator Adolf Hitler's (born 1889) biography may be useful. His close friend as a teenager, Kubizek, writes that Hitler was a shy and insecure young man who “hid his insecurities behind a facade of self-confidence that bordered to arrogance”, that he was “exceedingly violent and high strung,” and impatient: “everything aroused his interest and disturbed him” (Crowe, 82). Hitler's father was occasionally bad-tempered. Hitler bonded very closely with his mother and her early death caused him to despair. It is well documented in psychology, for

instance by Gerhardt, that too much stress in the lives of children may cause an unsound development of their emotional life. Then, certainly losing one's mother is one of the greatest possible traumas for a child and might help explain Hitler's personality. He left school as a teenager, was delusional in his relation to women, and had grandiose ideas. Already in his teens he "hated the multiethnic Austrian empire and identified more closely to the German Second Reich" (Crowe, 83). Later, Hitler's perspective was that "a campaign against the Jews was a vital part of the war for Aryan survival and expansion" (Crowe, 103). We recognize the idealistic evil here. The campaign moved on in stages, getting worse as it proceeded. People were suffering unfathomable torture and were treated like laboratory animals in medical experiments. All in all, three million Jews were killed in the death camps, and another three million Jews were killed in other ways under the Nazi regime.

The second phenomenon to be regarded is that of laboratory animals. The silent majority is in the hands of humans, of society, and as Clive Phillips notes: "A just society does not allow the abuse of children or animals" (188). In Europe, animals have been used for research from the late seventeenth century. At that time, an emerging view of some philosophers, Descartes for instance, was that animals were just machines. Although this was not a common belief, some researchers justified their experiments by it (Phillips, 173). The crucial moral question is whether an individual animal can be sacrificed for the benefit of other animals or humans. According to Phillips Regan's philosophy provides the answer that individual's rights "cannot be forfeited for the benefit of others" (113). The opposite, the utilitarian, view, is the view that an individual "can be sacrificed if it brings overall benefit (or increased happiness) to the population."

In the twentieth century, vivisection, or the operation of cutting up a living animal, usually for physiological or pathological investigation (Merriam-Webster's, 1400), has been exercised. This is one of the most painful procedures that exists, and it has understandably caused fury among animal friends, to whom Lewis belonged. He argues that beasts do not deserve pain and they cannot be improved by pain since they are neither capable of sin nor virtue. "All factors that render pain more

tolerable or make it less than totally evil in the case of human beings”, he says, “will be lacking in the beasts. ‘Soullessness’ in so far as it is relevant to the question at all, is an argument against vivisection” (qtd in Linzey 27). The view of Lewis should be understood as a total lack of acceptance of animal pain caused by scientific experiments. In his view, pain should exclusively be a way for humans to grow morally.

The third phenomenon to be discussed here is education. Britain has a history of being a society with clearly separated classes of people. Harry Hendrick shows that at the turn of the last century, chances for working-class children to enter higher education simply did not exist. Elementary school was seen as providing for their limited needs, and so it was “not seen as the first stage in a two-tier system with secondary education to follow” (66). Secondary education was designed for a fee-paying middle-class. Smart working-class children could continue their schooling, but only 9.5 percent did so by 1914. Proposals for providing better chances for these children were made and also implemented in the 1930s. By 1944, the so-called “eleven plus testing system” determined that the ones who failed could not enter secondary education, and the number who failed was 75 percent. It could reasonably be concluded that the possibilities to advance in education were, by this time, still very class-bound.

Another kind of danger in the educational arena in Lewis’ time is given voice in the author’s own philosophical writing. In his published lectures, “The Abolition of Man”, Lewis gives an example of teacher attitudes. A new school book on the English language had been published. In the book a badly written advertisement is quoted as a warning example. “The advertisement tells us that those who buy tickets for the cruise will go ‘across the Western Ocean where the Drake of Devon sailed’, ‘adventuring after the treasures of the Indies’, and bringing home themselves also a ‘treasure’ of ‘golden hours’ and ‘glowing colours’” (6). The writers leave the advertisement at that. Lewis criticizes this attitude, saying that if the writers were to teach their young readers the art of English composition, in which they claim they are experts, it would be their task to put this advertisement “side by side with passages from great writers in which the very emotion is well

expressed, and then show where the difference lies” (6). Lewis views their example, along with a few others that he gives, as nonsense, and argues that the writers are blocking the pupils’ true understanding of language. He argues that the power of the writers of the school-book has cut out of the pupils’ soul, “long before he is old enough to choose, the possibility of having certain experiences which thinkers of more authority than they have held to be generous, fruitful, and humane” (9). Lewis hints at how we can distinguish between the wisdom of a great thinker and inessential knowledge. He compares a theorist of language with a great poet. The theorist of language approaches his native tongue from the outside, “regarding its genius as a thing that has no claim on him and advocates wholesale alterations of its idiom and spelling for commercial convenience or scientific accuracy.” The great poet, “who has ‘loved, and been well nurtured in, his mother tongue’, may also make great alterations within it, but his changes of the language are made in the spirit of the language itself.” Lewis then claims that the two are as different as Basic English is from Shakespeare, and finally draws a parallel to being inside or outside the Tao (1944, 45).

Lewis further argues that emotions should be ordered into stable sentiments to achieve a cultivated heart, or what he calls Magnanimity, and in this the study of literature and the arts can be helpful. He explains education’s role in this, referring to Plato: The child “must be trained to feel pleasure, liking, disgust, and hatred at those things which really are pleasant, likeable, disgusting and hateful” (Plato qtd in Lewis, 1944, 16). By contrast, those educationalists that do not embrace the Tao, “if they are logical, must regard all sentiments as equally non-rational, as mere mists between us and the real objects.” They can then choose between removing all sentiments from the mind of the pupil, or, arbitrarily selecting some sentiments without consideration of their innate value (1944, 20-21). Lewis shows, philosophically, what world view and view of man the educationalists in question must consequently hold. These will be discussed in the second chapter.

This chapter has focused on highlighting issues and concerns that will help the reader to properly follow the inter-disciplinary reading of *That Hideous Strength* in the second chapter. The presentation of the literary genres of fantasy / science fiction and dystopia, and of satire as a literary

device, has the function of providing tools for understanding how the social criticism operates in the novel. The concept of evil is a complex one, and the different aspects of evil presented show different sides to it, and invite an exciting discovery of what *That Hideous Strength* may bring to this discussion. Finally, the historical context is meaningful, on the one hand, because satire and social criticism aim at real dangers and real injustice, and, on the other, because literary works are best understood in the light of history.

Chapter II

Satire and Social Criticism in *That Hideous Strength*

This chapter will explore how satire and social criticism operate in C. S. Lewis' novel *That Hideous Strength*. The satirist's attack on the phenomena of totalitarian governments; science and the treatment of animals; and education will be examined. Peter Schakel's analysis of satire in *That Hideous Strength* has served as an inspiration for my analysis below. The ideas of evil of different disciplines presented in the first chapter will be compared to ideas of evil in the novel. The chapter will conclude by discussing the alternative that rises forth in contrast to the evil.

Societal Phenomena under the Satirist's Attack

If one imagines a voice of good fatherly authority, but where the message is not one of a humane cause, but one of oppression and destruction, then one has an idea of the mixed and absurd feelings that are awakened in the reader when encountering the National Institute of Coordinated Experiments, the N.I.C.E., in *That Hideous Strength*. However, the satiric tone with which the Institute is described throughout offers the reader comic relief. If the Institute succeeds in doing what it intends, "Hell would be at last incarnate on Tellus" (201). The novel is a retelling of the story of the tower of Babel where men want to have unlimited power: "Where we see power we see a sign of his coming," (77) as Straik, the mad parson, says, referring to a superhuman and not to Christ, thus misinterpreting the gospel. The N.I.C.E. is concerned with power in all possible ways.

The description of the N.I.C.E. satirizes autocratic regimes. The Institute mirrors the hopes of better societies promised by totalitarian dictators such as Franco, Mussolini, and Hitler, and publishes fantastic propaganda in the papers: "We expect a solution of the unemployment problem, the cancer problem, the housing problem, the problem of currency, of war, of education" (130).

Lionel Adey puts forward the idea that the novel makes concrete a fear of the New Order that the totalitarian governments tried to establish (140). The character Frost voices the ice-cold notion of war that the Institute has when he says that “the effect of modern war is to eliminate retrogressive types” (255). The novel was written in the final two years of the Second World War, the time when the Holocaust became known to the public. In *That Hideous Strength*, the Second World War Nazi issues are drawn to an ultimate extreme, a dystopia, an apocalypse.

Vital to the N.I.C.E. is its police force, or its “Sanitary Executive” (129), where its name is a sarcastic reference to racial hygiene. Fairy Hardcastle, the middle aged female boss of this police force, introduces the idea of “humane remedial punishment” (67). Through controlling the press the ordinary citizen is to be lured into wanting this form of punishment that contrary to deserved punishment, “need have no fixed limit” (68). Kath Filmer elaborates that “humane remedial punishment” in the novel equals brainwashing (73). The dystopian mode is unmistakable, and it deepens when Fairy expresses this police force’s connection to sociology; “there is no distinction in the long run between the two” (68). Here the satirist is attacking the oppression of certain classes of people. A good satirical touch in connection to the Institute’s notion of punishment is the ambiguous position of the Institute’s director, Jules. This puppet director, “the dupe with whom it duped the public” (329), a renowned old scientist with humane ideas on how to deal with criminals, is, all the time, misled calling the Institute a magnificent “peace-effort” (129).

The N.I.C.E. is fundamentally science-orientated. It is “the first attempt to take applied science seriously from a national point of view” (36). The Institute’s scientists use animals in experiments to further the autocratic society’s own interests without regard to how the animals suffer: “An immense programme of vivisection [...] was one of the plans of the N.I.C.E. [...] There were all sorts of things in there: thousands of pounds worth of living animality, which the Institute could afford to cut up like paper on the mere chance of some interesting discovery” (100). The view expressed here is not even utilitarian, for then there would be a clear benefit with an experiment, such as a new medicine to cure disease. The fellows at the Institute simply resort to violence in

order to get what they want, which is instrumentalism, and are very disrespectful of animals. This view of animals is part of the idea of planetary hygiene that the Institute has, as Schakel points out, and, as he notes, the satirical exaggeration comes at the point when Filostrato has cut down a row of fine beech trees and explains (2000, 143):

The forest tree is a weed. But I tell you I have seen the civilized tree in Persia. [...] It was made of metal. [...] No leaves to fall, no twigs, no birds building nests, no muck, no mess. I foresee nothing but the *art* tree all over the earth. In fact we *clean* the planet. [...] Like abolishing pretty well all organic life. [...] It's simple hygiene. (170-71)

This idea of planetary hygiene is, like the idea of the “Sanitary Executive”, of course a clear reference to and attack on the racial hygiene implemented on certain groups of people, like Jews, Roma, Jehova's Witnesses, and disabled people, by totalitarian regimes. Thus the novel takes a political stand.

Part of the plans of the Institute is the education of children. The Institute's director Lord Feverstone accounts for what it is going to be like:

Then real education, including pre-natal education. By real education I mean one that has no ‘take-it-or-leave-it’-nonsense. A real education makes the patient what it wants infallibly: whatever he or his parents try to do about it. Of course, it will have to be mainly psychological at first. But we’ll get on to biochemical conditioning in the end and direct manipulation of the brain. (40)

In Feverstone’s vision, the common people are puppets who can be completely controlled by the authorities, and the children are viewed as mere raw material to be manipulated, and science is

made to serve these perverted ends. This is, apart from the satirist's attack on totalitarianism, also his attack on class oppression. How the leaders of the Institute explain their right to control the common people is expressed by Frost: "The great majority of the human race can be educated only in the sense of being given knowledge: they cannot be trained into the total objectivity of mind which is now necessary" (256). To Feverstone, the difference between subjectivity and objectivity is what makes the difference between the common people and the élite, and so there is a reason to extinguish people; and again, the satirist lets the hegemony of scientific thought go to an extreme so vast that it becomes ridiculous – on grounds of objectivity the majority of the human race can be extinguished. The whole idea of objectivity is used ironically, for objectivity is exactly what the leaders at the N.I.C.E. do not have, as we shall see below, and is also an example of an inversion of values, one of satire's devices that Childs and Fowler list (211). The world view held by the people of the N.I.C.E is purely materialistic. They also look forward to a pure technocracy, which is another thing the author views as dangerous: "The individual is to become all head. The human race is to become all Technocracy" (256). Interestingly, this correlates with behavioural psychologist Lorenz' view, as Lorenz, according to Hans Schwartz, sees a technocratic system as leading to "an over organization and incapacitation of humanity" (5). What is needed for a society to be healthy are moulding political power and vision. In a newspaper article Richard Swartz argues that in the absence of moulding political power and vision in the leadership, technocrats and experts take over, which is hardly compatible with democracy, and the people are not likely to support the leadership.

To get an idea of what the author might wish to promote here, his philosophy becomes important. In his philosophical piece "The Abolition of Man," Lewis argues that regardless of political affiliation there is a process going on that could abolish man:

The process which, if not checked, will abolish Man goes on apace among Communists and Democrats no less than among Fascists. The methods may, at first, differ in brutality. But many a mild-eyed scientist in pince-nez, many a popular

dramatist, many an amateur philosopher in our midst, means in the long run just the same as the Nazi rulers of Germany. Traditional values are to be ‘debunked’ and mankind to be cut out into some fresh shape at will (which must, by hypothesis, be an arbitrary will) of some few lucky people in one lucky generation which has learned how to do it. (73-74)

These are strong words. Neither science nor education will by themselves cause harm or destruction, but the lack of scientists and educators with sober values will. A point that Lewis makes is that men who do not embrace objective values base their judgements only upon whichever of their emotional impulses is strongest (1944, 65-66). Consequently, increasing use of power or increasing violence would follow, or crueller animal treatment.

A satirical idea in the novel, that Schakel among others directs his attention towards, is that the actual Head of the Institute is the head of guillotined alchemist Alcasan, sustained by machines – which is undoubtedly the horrific climax in the book. In a dream Jane, the clairvoyant young female of the protagonist couple, sees the Head, and a macabre description is offered to the reader. It has

the top part of the skull taken off and then... then... as if something inside had boiled over. A great big mass which bulged out from inside what was left of the skull. [...] It was green looking and the mouth was wide open and quite dry. [...] Then came a most horrible thing: the mouth began to dribble” (178-79).

The playful satiric ridicule in the quote is unmistakable. Straik adds to the headless show when he strikingly proclaims: “The resurrection of Jesus in the Bible was a symbol. [...] This is the real man at last” (174), “the first sketch of the real God” (176).

Lewis' main philosophical point behind this and other satirical inventions in the novel is that it is the wisdom of old ages that is missing among the scientists. They deny the Tao, or universal

objective values. Lewis writes in his philosophy: “In the Tao itself, as long as we remain within it, we find the concrete reality in which to participate in to be truly human: the real common will and common reason of humanity, alive, and growing like a tree” (1944, 74-75). The state of being within the Tao, Lewis further explains, is “truly analogous to an individual’s self-control”. Tao-denying persons, then, “have sacrificed their own share in traditional humanity in order to devote themselves to the task of deciding what ‘Humanity’ will henceforth mean” (1944, 63). What is taking place is “the abolition of Man” (64). It is in this light, I would suggest, that the novel is most fruitfully read.

That Hideous Strength has a wealth of amusing satiric descriptions of men and situations that are lacking Tao. One such description is that of the Institute’s Deputy Director, Wither, who is just a shell of a person, for, the real Wither “floated far away on the indeterminable frontiers of ghosthood” (329). The protagonist, Mark, experiences his encounters with the Institute as very perplexing and frustrating in general as he cannot get any clarity as to his position, and he experiences his encounters with Wither particularly so. Wither expresses himself very ambiguously. His sentences are usually so long that the thread is lost, or else he is piling fine words on each other saying nothing. For instance: “Everyone in the Institute feels that his own work is not so much a departmental contribution to an end already defined as a moment or grade in the progressive self-definition of an organic whole” (53). Shakel argues that “Wither’s speech is full of half-promises and evasions”; that he “has brought the technique of bureaucratise to complete indeterminacy” (2000, 144). Further Wither regards “Elasticity” as “the key note of the Institute” (117), but, true as that is of the Institute in general, it is also true for Wither himself, for neither has any reliable solidity. Adey observes that “Wither’s language and demeanor evince the constant shifts of front Lewis somewhere remarks as characteristic of evil” (135-36). The social criticism on the intellectual level here corresponds well with the idea of evil proposed by literary theorist Ronald Paulson, as he defines it as a sense of ambiguity (xv). This both literal and moral ambiguity, are

also reflected in a passage in the Bible that says: “Simply let your Yes be Yes, and your No, No; anything beyond this comes from the evil one” (Matthew 5:37).

Another way that evil is presented in the novel is through the depictions of those that have wandered too far on the Tao-less road to be able even to acknowledge it. An example of this, and of the satirical quality of grotesque exaggeration, is Lord Feverstone, the director of the Institute, and his nihilism. He uses whatever dirty tricks necessary to achieve a high position: He has “a perfectly clear conscience. [...] He had never slandered another man except to get his job, never cheated except because he wanted money, never really disliked people unless they bored him” (353). In this quotation, Feverstone’s bad deeds are expressed as if in a parenthesis, and are justified at the same moment by his egoistic drive. In the climactic fall of Babel in the book, when his fellow men are torn and trampled to death by the wild beasts, and by each other, he offers them no route of escape, but simply saves his own life. Moreover, he has known all the time that a disaster like this may be at hand, and so he has prepared a position for himself as “a protector of the university against the N.I.C.E.” (353). On the other hand, he may stay, he reasons, “if there is any chance of figuring as the man who saved Belbury at the moment of crisis”. I would hold that what is so frightening with Feverstone is that he has no moral scruples, no bad conscience, and no shame. Consciousness of one’s sin or guilt is a quality that we are expected to have in the Christian tradition. Feverstone’s intellect is very sharp, his nerves are excellent, but he has no empathy. In this regard, I would suggest, he resembles Hitler, who, as his biography seems to imply, probably was damaged from the start. But contrary to Hitler, Feverstone is not interested in ideals, but it is Wither and Frost who are the idealists of the N.I.C.E. Thus Hitler’s traits, if one wants to search for them in the novel, are split among different individuals.

Contrary to reality, where we have to deal with evil as part of life, in a fairy tale, good stands against evil, and evil has to lose – Lewis has indeed called *That Hideous Strength* a fairy tale for grown-ups. The N.I.C.E. fellows’ deaths give to the bad people what they deserve, in ways that are curiously consistent with their flat caricatured characters. Frost’s death proves nihilism wrong. Only

in an act of suicide with inflammables, is he able to suspect “that death itself might not after all cure him from the illusion of being a soul” (355-56). For him objectivity and the existence of the soul stand in opposition; objectivity for him is the killing off of all specifically human expression. Facing death “he became able to know (and simultaneously refused the knowledge) that he had been wrong from the beginning, that souls and personal responsibility existed” (355-56). The fact that he refuses the knowledge is implying the double entrance of souls to heaven and hell. (Deacon Per-Anders Österberg says in an interview that part of Christendom rejects the idea that souls enter hell after death). The same kind of destruction is at hand for Frost’s closest companion Wither who “had willed with his whole heart that there should be no reality and no truth” (350). The last thing this master bureaucrat, who, like Frost, has embodied no specifically human expression, faces is, ironically – one of the released beasts at Belbury, a huge bear. Just before he has become a murderer, for as his and Frost’s animal instincts have raged freely in the destruction of Belbury they have killed off their companion doctor Filostrato by his own little guillotine, a shutter in a hole in the wall, where he has once beheaded Alcasan for the purpose of creating eternal life. Filostrato, who has been the chief advocate of planetary hygiene is now worried primarily that he is being killed “unscientifically”, and without proper white laboratory garments. Feverstone’s death is telling in yet a different way. He is buried alive under a great cataract of earth in an earthquake (365). Though this man can escape any human threat to his life, he cannot escape nature’s threat or the judgment of God. The destruction of all these leaders, then, ironically creates the conditions for their self-destruction and eternal punishment, which is a powerful defeat of evil, and of pragmatism, in the story.

A different dimension to the evil that the satirist attacks is an egoistic drive in educators at the academy. Their great responsibility to educate students is wholly over-shadowed by the unsound drive to achieve social positions. As Lewis argues in his philosophy concerning some educationalists: “Their heads are no bigger than the ordinary: it is the atrophy of the chest beneath that makes them seem so” (1944, 25). The novel offers satiric ridicule of this: The leading group of

college dons at Bracton College self-consciously calls itself “The Progressive Element,” while not being “a specially distinguished body” (55). The only one of these dons who has a reputation abroad is the chemist Hingest, but he is regarded as “that hateful anomaly.” Language as a reflection of the inner motivation of this group (as well as for others) in the novel is worth consideration. Filmer points out that at Bracton jargon is used “all too accurately”, and this can, I would suggest, be interpreted as satiric exaggeration. It has the effect of belittling their self-importance. They also talk deceptively. For instance they persuade the College committee to sell a historically significant wood that the College owns. Being as poor in the content of their souls as in their jargon, they do not want to discern that the N.I.C.E. fellows have an agenda that is highly destructive to society, and Bracton College is the instance through which the N.I.C.E. enters the small university town. Their jargon in connection to this goes: “committed to” repeatedly (23). Or as Watson babbles: “We appear [...] to have pledged ourselves as a college to the fullest possible support of the new Institute” (23). Filmer argues that, in the novel, “jargon is itself a form of linguistic destruction” (73). This mirrors what the building of the tower of Babel eventually led to. Language certainly is a telling theme in the novel.

Finally, another of the satirist’s attacks on educational systems points to their total corruption. All the ghastly proceedings at Belbury, Headquarters of the N.I.C.E. turn out to be the practice of doctrines that lecturers have preached at Edgestove University. Mr. Dimble mentions Churchwood as an example – his lectures were devoted to proving the impossibility of ethics. When the lecturers realize this, they are astonished: “It was their own child coming back to them: grown up and unrecognisable, but their own” (369-70). Educators, the text seems to imply, have an immense responsibility to shape members of society and train them to work for society’s development. An unethical educational system has vast and sad consequences.

The Alternative

Various forms of evil as they appear in the novel have been discussed above. Now it is time to move on toward the good, to the alternative to the vice of men in power. To get there, much focus will be on the folly of the young protagonist Mark, his strategies to survive and his development. Leaning on comparisons of good and evil, the alternative the novel offers in the debate at the time, as I read it, will be discussed.

In his encounters with the National Institute of Coordinated Experiments, Mark finds himself very much in trouble. At the outset, Mark has difficulties seeing his own part in the problems he finds himself in. He blames outer circumstances in his life for causing him to face difficulties. Additionally, he also seems to wish to possess a higher status. “Why had he such a rotten heredity? Why had his education been so ineffective? Why was the system of society so irrational? Why was his luck so bad?” (221). Mark is naively willing to do almost anything to be in an inner circle. It is actually this drive that causes him to face so many trials.

One of Mark’s trials is his training in so-called objectivity in the Objective room at the N.I.C.E. Headquarters. The objective room is “ill-proportioned, not grotesquely so, but sufficiently to produce dislike” (294). It also has paintings with distasteful mixtures, like many beetles under the table in the last supper. In this room, “the intent is to frustrate and then kill off the sense of order and proportion that Lewis believed is part of the human imagination, just as right and wrong are part of the human soul” (Adey, 164). The name of the room correlates directly, and of course ironically, with ‘the doctrine of objective value’, in the author’s “The Abolition of Man”; to name the room ‘the objective room’ is a misuse of language. The misuse of language here is an example of the deep irony that professes the very things the satirist wishes to attack.

Something curious comes to happen in this room: Instead of being deceived by the experiment he starts to become aware of the room's opposite, of something Straight in opposition to the Crooked, of the existence of something he vaguely calls the Normal. Even more curious is his

reaction to a religious experiment: “On the floor lay a large crucifix, almost life size, a work of art in the Spanish tradition, ghastly and realistic” (334). Frost instructs Mark to “trample on it and insult it in other ways”. As Mark fears for his life, he goes very deep in his inward process. This process is threefold. In the first stage, Mark, instead of discarding the symbol, starts reflecting upon it. “He found himself looking at the crucifix in a new way – neither as a piece of wood, nor as a monument of superstition but as a bit of history” (334). In the second stage, Mark's reductive view of man, man as merely animal, encompasses Christ, which is shown through the witty use of the word fable: “Christianity was a fable. [...] This Man himself, on that very cross, had discovered it to be a fable, and had died complaining that the God in whom he trusted had forsaken him, had, in fact, found the universe a cheat” (334). In the third stage comes the leap of faith:

But this raised a question that Mark had never thought of before. Was that the moment at which to turn against the Man? If the universe was a cheat, was that a good reason for joining its side? Supposing the Straight was utterly powerless, always and everywhere certain to be mocked, tortured, and finally killed by the Crooked, what then? Why not go down with the ship? (334)

The novel here sensibly depicts a first step of conversion to Christianity; if the universe was a place where lies and hate prevailed, and Christ offered truth and love, it did not matter that He was mocked and killed – he offered the values that really mattered. So, opposite to what Frost and Wither have expected, Mark's strategy for surviving in the life threatening situation is to start considering believing in Christ – a victory in the story that ridicules these two nihilists.

Mark later comes to meet the company at St. Anne's. There is a sharp contrast between their party and that of the N.I.C.E. and his academic friends. At St Anne's feelings are expressed openly, joy, hurt and anger alike, and shared among its members, and also charity, the most unselfish of the loves, which “hopes all things” (219). This contrast awakens many slumbering feelings in Mark. “It

may seem strange to say that Mark, having long lived in a world without charity, had nevertheless seldom met real anger. Malice in plenty he had encountered, but it all operated by snubs and sneers and stabbing in the back” (218). Along with expressing feelings openly, the members in the company at St. Anne’s share an understanding of language and literature. This understanding is coupled with a joy, a joy of fighting a good battle. Jane, the newcomer in the company discovers this expression of joy: “For never in her life had she heard such talk – such eloquence, such melody (song could have added nothing to it), such toppling structures of double meaning, such skyrocketing of metaphor and allusion” (318). The most remarkable contrast in the novel in relation to speech, as Schakel suggests, is that between the director at St Anne’s, Elvin Ransom, and both the deputy director and the director of the N.I.C.E., ambiguous Wither and manipulative Feverstone respectively (2000, 143). In his meeting with Merlin, the magician, whom it is vital to have on one’s side in order to win the battle, Ransom experiences “heavenly pleasure” owing to his study “for many years in the realm of words” (319):

It was well that both men had some knowledge of poetry. The doubling, splitting, and re-combining of thoughts which now went on in them would have been unendurable for one whom that art had not already instructed in the counterpoint of the mind, the mastery of doubled and trebled vision. [...] He found himself sitting in the very heart of language, in the white hot furnace of essential speech. (319)

It can be concluded that the magnificent communication that Ransom and his group engage in points to “unseen layers of meaning” which Filmer has shown that Lewis uses referring to unseen reality, namely the kingdom of heaven on earth and beyond (99). The last words in the quote above, “the white hot furnace of essential speech,” refer to the Holy Spirit for which language and fire are symbolic expressions. As mentioned in the first chapter: Where the Holy Spirit leads, the language of love that everyone understands is spoken (Holmberg). As Schakel points out, Ransom’s speech is

characterized by clarity and precision, and I add, truthfulness, and thus it is the opposite of the ambiguous speech that is typical of Wither, or the deceptive speech of Feverstone that reflect their man-made subjective “truths” only.

It is in relation to the company at St. Anne’s that Mark starts to become aware that he lacks something; he sees himself as “vulgar, dull, inconspicuous, frightened, calculating and cold” (358). He wonders why people he now meets at St. Anne’s “find it so easy to saunter through the world with all their muscles relaxed and a careless eye roving the horizon, bubbling over with fancy and humour, sensitive to beauty, not continually on their guard and not needing to be?” (358). To gain a deeper understanding of why such pleasant qualities are displayed in the company at St. Anne’s, we will again turn to Lewis’ philosophy and consider the term “Magnanimity,” that he uses in his philosophy, meaning “emotions organized by trained habit into stable sentiments” (1944, 24-25). The heart, he holds, is what makes man human. It may be stated that Magnanimity is what makes the difference between good and bad in the novel. It is the essence of the alternative to the denial of Tao discussed above. Magnanimity is expressed in a wealth of ways in the book, and often in subtle juxtaposition with the expressions of Tao-lessness.

Before we turn to examples of Magnanimity, a further exploration of the character Mark seems necessary, because through it the novel illustrates how a lack of cultivation of the heart, of Magnanimity, has sad effects in the life of the individual. The portrait of the young protagonist in the novel reveals the issue of failing education. “His ‘scientific’ outlook had never been a real philosophy believed with blood and heart. It had only lived in his brain, and was a part of that public self that was now falling off him” (244). He further struggles with the truth: “His education had the curious effect of making things that he read and wrote more real to him than things he saw” (85). Mark’s sociologist training makes him focus more on class than on humans with a human value as such. In the novel, this is contrasted with the last true scientist’s, Hingest’s, loathing of sociology, a fact that Schakel points out (2000, 142). In Hingest’s world, sociology’s numbers and statistics about people and social class are meaningless. He wants to meet a person, face to face, and

he takes a stand against the Institute's manipulation of people on the basis of class, thus expressing Magnanimity. What Mark suffers from is what Schakel calls "an undernourished artistic imagination" (2002, 163-64). The fact that he, out of shame, has not allowed himself to continue reading good children's stories after his tenth birthday (358), might be one of the underlying reasons to the draught he experiences in his soul. Be that as it may, Mark's schooling has left him lacking not only artistic imagination. As Schakel argues:

More serious than his insensitivity to the arts and literature [...] is his moral obtuseness. He lacks ethical standards and alert judgment, allows himself to be seduced into joining an organization that seeks absolute social and political control over England, and slides without noticing it into writing fraudulent news stories as part of its propaganda campaign. (2002, 163-64)

What Mark lacks most, according to Schakel, is "moral imagination," a term that became popular in the 1980s and 1990s. Lewis did not use the term, but he did present the concept some decades earlier in a clear and powerful way. Only when principles of morality become meaningful and internalized, do they begin to have a practical effect. Moreover, Schakel argues that to Lewis, imagination is the organ of meaning, and he believed that the artistic imagination could serve the moral imagination. Schakel further observes that Lewis believed that children would be helped in their development by learning that certain sentiments are true and others false, as well as through engagement with the arts.

When the imaginatively impoverished Mark awakens from his long slumber, he realizes the need to invest more in his marriage relationship. In contrast to Mark, his wife Jane is sensitive. She has been sensitized through literature and the arts. She embodies a cultural opposite to her husband. Mark is facing their difference, and his own clumsy importunity.

Inch by inch, all the lout and clown and clod-hopper in him was revealed to his own reluctant inspection; the coarse, male boor [...] not rushing in – for that can be carried off – but blundering, sauntering, stumping in where great lovers, knights and poets, would have feared to tread. (379)

In this quotation, Mark's comparison of himself with great lovers, knights and poets causes shame in him, but shame with the positive effect that makes him long to be a better husband. He starts to learn to let his heart influence his relation.

The alternative, a life that is guided by the cultivated heart, finds touching expressions in descriptions of animals and their relations to humans. For instance, Merlin, the medieval magician who has risen from his grave to help in the fight against evil, contrary to the fellows of the N.I.C.E., does not let animals suffer: "The animals that were already maimed he killed with an instantaneous motion of the powers that were in him, swift and painless as the mild shafts of Artemis" (348). Another sensitive expression of the love of animals is the depiction of Mr. Bultitude, the tame bear and his undertakings. One example of this is the empathic quotation that deals with the specific loves of the bear: "The appetencies which a human might disdain as cupboard loves were for him quivering and ecstatic aspirations which absorbed his whole being, infinite yearnings, stabbed with the threat of tragedy and shot through with the colours of Paradise" (303). The quotation reflects the view that animals do have feelings, an understanding that is the basis for a consequent respectful treatment of them. The difference between the ways the two parties in the novel are dealing with and viewing animals reflects the bottom line of the book, namely that where nobility of the heart is allowed to guide people's actions, there is love, and that in the absence of that love there can only be exercise of power of men and slavery of their captives.

Finally, the polarity of good and bad is expressed on a historical level by Dimble: "Haven't you noticed that we are two countries? After every Arthur, a Mordred; behind every Milton, a Cromwell: a nation of poets, a nation of shopkeepers: the home of Sidney – and of Cecil Rhodes. Is

it any wonder they call us hypocrites?” (367). By coupling great men of English history, like Sidney, one of the great authors, with men that certainly are recorded in history but that were driven by hunger for power, like Cecil Rhodes, chief imperialist of Southern Africa, Dimble takes a stand against racism and, more widely, against power used to bad ends.

The novel combats racial, class and gender injustice. Examples of this are given above. What must be noted is that although the novel opposes injustice, it is not quite innocent of injustice itself. Some critics have pointed out that it is guilty of misogyny. Filmer, for instance, calls the novel nasty in its treatment of women (99). To mention an example, Jane as she ponders her thesis is described as a thinker who is not very original. Lewis has claimed, though, that he created Jane for other purposes than for intellectual equality between man and woman. He says that he created Jane to illustrate “the problem of everyone who followed an imagined vocation instead of a real one” (qtd in Hooper, 236). It becomes clear to the reader that Jane is created for the sake of family values. Speaking up for family values in war time, as could be imagined, provided hope rather than strain. The fact remains that in its treatment of women the novel reflects its time but also the author’s commitment to traditional Christianity, and does not very generously offer women vocations apart from motherly or domestic ones, for good and bad.

This chapter has dealt with the satirical elements in the unique fantasy novel *That Hideous Strength*. In the first chapter, it was stated that central to satire is parody or “the imitation of a particular style or genre for the purpose of satirizing it” (Quinn, 291). It was also stated that the novel is nonconforming science fiction. The novel plays with the science fiction genre, and it is one of the many ways it operates to thwart and surprise the reader’s expectations to make its specific philosophical point.

It is my argument that the main targets of the satire are the leaders of oppressive regimes, their lack of ethical values, and their willingness to use science, humans, and animals brutally and cynically to obtain more control and power. They are willing to manipulate the truth and to misuse language in order to achieve the ends of the élite. Other targets are educators and their lack of

ethical values. It is the educator's responsibility to impart to the new generation what great thinkers have held to be fruitful and humane; when they fail to do so, it makes of them distorted pictures of what their profession has called upon them to be. If educationalists fail to give pupils and students emotional training, among other means, through passing on to them texts of great thinkers, the consequences are a generation with impoverished hearts. The role of the satirist's aggression in the novel, as I read it, is to unmask what evil-doers in positions of power are up to by using the same sharpness of intellect that they do, but with the purpose to make them powerless.

Language use is an important theme in the novel, bearing meaning in different ways. The unethical characters use ambiguous speech, on the one hand, to thoroughly conceal their real agenda; they use language to deceive people. On the other, they use overly accurate jargon, words being an end in themselves without carrying the meaning and content that would be expected of persons in their societal positions. Their speech becomes more and more meaningless and is eventually confused, as in the story of the Tower of Babel. In contrast, the good party's use of language is full of meaning. They express their hearts openly, and experience the joy of eloquent talk and language's rich qualities, having been sensitized by the study of literature and by Christian stories. In this latter group, men and women are not focussed on class but on genuine meetings between people of different backgrounds, and they share a respect for all living creatures.

Conclusion

At the outset of this essay, I presented the goal of making a New Historicist cross-disciplinary reading of C. S. Lewis' novel *That Hideous Strength*. The overriding aim has been to uncover how the novel contributed to the debate of its time with its satire and social criticism. Three phenomena of Lewis' time have been discussed: totalitarianism, failing education and cruel animal treatment. The horrors of these phenomena, I have suggested, have been treated creatively and playfully in the novel with one purpose – to make the culprits powerless. Behind this attack lies the satirist's vision that materialism in its pure form is not compatible with ethics and, ultimately, not with human life. If upbringing and education fail to give emotional training and to develop moral imagination, then the new generation becomes occupied with a lust for treasures and power, and is ready to use any dirty means, like the abuse of science, in order to get them. This drive makes them cold towards fellow men and animals, and at its extreme it would manifest itself as totalitarianism.

The reader of Lewis's time could recognize in the novel fears and horrors that for them were very real and present, the novel being Lewis' most overtly political fiction. The fears are given voice in the novel both biblically – “For the Hideous Strength confronts us and it is as in the days when Nimrod built a tower to reach heaven” (285) – and in many other ways. The reader at the time the novel was written probably found comfort in the clearly felt victory of the book. As Griffin argues, satire compensates for loss in our lives through “the sentiment it fosters of superiority in morality or in wit or in power” (155-56). This is certainly the way in which the publication of *That Hideous Strength* sought to make this world a better place.

The various disciplines applied were used for this essay's argument illuminating both ideas of evil and existing evils from the time the novel was written. This essay has illustrated that ideas of evil from religion, psychology and sociology can, to a high degree, be found in the novel. Moreover, just as the text shows that the problem of evil is not only a Christian problem, but universal, the choice of many disciplines for the reading displays this universality also. Of all the

disciplines used, philosophy and history are complementary in a special way. In a newspaper article Lena Andersson observes that historicizing and philosophy are very different as to moral interpretation: Historicizing, (“in that time people thought and acted like that and we cannot have any moral attitudes about that”) is relativist while universalizing or philosophy, (“right and wrong remain about the same since time does not change humans in their humanity,”) is about absolute values (Andersson, my translation). Historicizing, however, she continues, is needed because the universal idea needs to be guided by a continuing discussion and mental activity around what, in the given situation, are the basic needs and necessary individual space? The novel relies on the dynamics between history and philosophy, and in my essay I have sought to illuminate these dynamics.

To further explain why evil is a major focus in the novel, as well as in my essay, I borrow Leibniz' answer to the immensely difficult theodicy problem that he coined in war time: Why are there catastrophes if there is one God who wants the best for all of us? Leibniz's answer was that catastrophes exist for the reason that in contrast to them, the good in the world looks so much better (Rasmussen). It could be speculated that one important reason for the novel's theme of good and evil is exactly this. Otfried Höffe explains Leibniz's philosophical idea as follows: “The metaphysical, physical and moral evils (however not man's own sin, which needs discouragement) is not something that God wishes as evil, but something that He allows to thereby make a greater good exist” (140-41, my translation). Evil in humans is very disturbing, but, according to physician and researcher Christina Doctare, we cannot curb people's spite, since we have our free choice (Svensson, my translation). This is in line with Christian tradition (Catholicism). Doctare argues that the good is what we want and is always a conscious decision, but we also do wrong, hastily and without reflection, because evil comes from the level of the reptile brain. She further argues that since we as humans have to live with this conflict, it is so important that the basic concept of goodness is codified in legislation (Svensson, my translation). Obviously, in the novel links in the chain from such legislation to implementation are disturbed.

The novel shows in a number of ways that a lack of belief in the Tao, in objective values, leads to vice and folly. Much of its essence and fascination lies in how the exaggerated character descriptions portray human vice and folly that anyone can discover within them, at least in some instances, and to some degree. In contrast to this, the novel also portrays characters who embrace objective values, and that possess what Lewis calls moral imagination. In Lewis' philosophy there is a connection between moral imagination and artistic imagination; pursuing arts and literature develops the imagination that Lewis believed is a prerequisite for moral choices. Consequently, he believed it is important for educators to wholeheartedly embrace this understanding and to pass these subjects and true sentiments on to the new generation. In his fiction, Lewis demonstrates his philosophy. Honda has argued that "his fiction [...] makes the reader naturally long to be good without preaching or exhorting" (78). As Lewis puts it, "let the pictures i.e. images tell their own story" (Lewis qtd in Schakel 2002, 169). Further, Honda claims that Lewis' conviction was that reality is fundamentally good and that the good is stronger than evil – and this conviction and this belief is transmitted to his readers through imagination (78). Regarding imagination's role in this, as has been explained above, imagination is the organ of meaning to a metaphysical reality (Honda, 1). Conclusively, moral imagination is the powerful tool that Lewis uses in *That Hideous Strength* for bringing about the love of the good in his readers in his time and beyond.

Appendix: The Story of the Tower of Babel

The whole earth was of one language, and of one speech. And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Šin'âr, and they dwelt there. And they said one to another, "Come, let us make bricks and burn them thoroughly." And they had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar. And they said, "Come, let us build us a city and a tower whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth."

And the Lord came down to see the city and the tower which the children of men built. And the Lord said, "Behold, the people are one and they have all one language, and this they begin to do; and now nothing will be withheld from them which they have imagined to do. Come, let Us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech." So the Lord scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth; and they left off building the city.

Therefore is the name of it called *Bâbel* (that is "Confusion") because the Lord did there confound the language of all the earth; and from thence did the Lord scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth. [*Genesis* 11.1-9; tr. King James 21st Century]

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