

ABSTRACT

Rhetorical Manipulation in the Works of C.S. Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien

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Familiar with the verbal persuasion of leaders and dictators of the 20th century, C.S. Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien offer insight into the power of speeches, including those of malicious intent. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*, along with Lewis's *The Screwtape Letters* and *That Hideous Strength* characterize evil speakers with similarities that my thesis explores. Using textual analysis and the insight of other scholars, I specifically address the shared goals of these rhetoricians, which arise in the speeches themselves or through their effects on other characters. This thesis suggests that Tolkien and Lewis's manipulative speakers share the same three-fold goal to distort people, to enslave them, and to isolate them from others. Through the scenes, these authors suggest the ways that such speakers target human inadequacies and how one might respond to their words.

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RHETORICAL MANIPULATION IN THE WORKS OF C.S. LEWIS AND
J.R.R TOLKIEN

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To my family and friends.
And all to Christ.

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Most of us experience the persuasive effects of words. When aware of another person's intentions, we often construct mental guards if the message clashes with our own beliefs, or allow closer consideration if we agree. Other times, the message might be more subtle, such that those who hear it begin to believe the claims unwittingly. Certainly people seem to fear the even the most primal versions of words' hidden, influencing effects upon humans, as shown by the outrage over James M. Vicary's supposed subliminal messaging experiments in the 1950s. The psychologist claimed to have projected phrases like "eat popcorn" and "drink Coca-Cola" on movie screens for "1/3,000th of a second," and that these flashes increased beverage and popcorn sales (Broyles 392). Vicary later admitted that he falsified the whole experiment for publicity, but the "outcry" and paranoia surrounding these tactics in marketing methods since then shows that the public fears such "manipulation" (404).

Whether subliminal messaging truly achieves these kinds of persuasive effects or not, certainly consciously experienced words manipulate people as well. Speeches that present ideas with beautiful language, reasoning, passion, or some other verbal strategy sway others, too. Twentieth century Oxford writers J.R.R. Tolkien and C.S. Lewis address the danger of this reality in a few of their texts, and in similar ways. Scenes in *The Lord of the Rings* and Lewis's *The Screwtape Letters* and *That Hideous Strength*

especially include moments of persuasion, often with characters they cast as villains. My thesis focuses especially on what Lewis and Tolkien suggest about the goals of villainous rhetoricians. This introduction first explains the primary claim of my thesis, how the backgrounds of the authors contribute to it, and finally my methods of gathering evidence for this claim.

Thesis Claim

In general, speakers in the works of both Tolkien and Lewis seek to cause drastic changes in others through verbal manipulation. In Tolkien's narrative, some of the most striking examples include Gríma Wormtongue's effect upon King Théoden and what happens through the voice of Saruman: a wizard who uses speech to control others. In Lewis's epistolar, the foremost evil speaker, a demon named "Screwtape," explicitly states what he hopes his trainee, Wormtongue, will do to his "patient" on earth through suggested temptations and ideas. Similarly, the third book of Lewis's *Space Trilogy*, *That Hideous Strength* shows characters like Mark and entire populations controlled by the speeches of "N.I.C.E.," a dubious organization. The components of the speech itself and the changes that occur in a listener reveal the goals of these speakers.

This thesis suggests that these evil speakers address the same three aspects in their speeches: the listener's condition, freedom, and community. More specifically, these speakers have the three-fold goal to distort people, to isolate them from others, and ultimately to control them. I present these goals in such an order since the more that these speakers change and isolate a listener, the easier it is to control the person. For both

authors, as I speak about the *distortion* of the listener, I mean the attempted twisting of the mind and the heart. When targeting the mind, their evil speakers utilize lies, twisting a victim's view of themselves or their situation. These speakers also twist a person's heart through encouraging emotions and desires. For example, in *The Lord of the Rings* Wormtongue tries to distort Théoden's heart by feeding him fears (*LOTR* 521), causing him to desire safety, and Screwtape encourages Wormwood to fill the patient's mind with fear of the future (*SL* 12).

When these speakers seek to *isolate* their listeners, they often encourage similar steps. They usually encourage others to abandon or look down upon faithful and virtuous friends; second, these speakers suggest the supremacy of their own friendship circle. By the end of all these persuasions, speakers seek to *control* others through conforming a listener's decision-making to their own will. Sometimes this control looks like the removal of a listener's will to act, as when Wormtongue causes King Théoden's inactivity. Other times, the control involves a pressure to submit one's actions to another power, which occurs when Saruman tries to convince Gandalf to join him, and when N.I.C.E. members push Mark to participate in dishonest journalism practices in *That Hideous Strength*.

Each of the evil speakers investigated in this thesis instill fear or pride within their listener, in order to accomplish this three-fold goal. Terry Cooper suggests in *Sin, Pride & Self-Acceptance* that pride tries to "compensate for deeper feelings of inadequacy"; on the other hand, our attempt to become "the center of our existence" also disorders lives (2). Evil speakers often target such feelings of inadequacy or desires for self importance.

For Tolkien's speakers, Wormtongue's speech most usually distorts, isolates, and controls Théoden through inadequacy, causing the king to focus on his supposed shortcomings. On the other hand, Saruman seeks to achieve these shared goals of evil speakers by encouraging his listeners to think highly of themselves, and so his methods often promote a high self-regard. In *The Screwtape Letters* the demons recognize that working from either side can be useful, and "it all depends whether [the person] is of the desponding type who can be tempted to despair, or of the wishful-thinking type" (19). Finally, in *That Hideous Strength*, evil speakers entice others, particularly Mark, by emphasizing his importance and enticing him to join their "inner ring." Regardless of which side of the rhetorical spectrum these speakers operate from—making their listeners focus on their own fears and deficiencies, or their greatness—all of these villains seek to accomplish the same three-fold, evil task. This thesis seeks to follow and show this shared goal as it appears throughout these scenes.

For these authors, I focus on a couple of chapters specifically, though several other works/textual moments by these authors surely contribute to such an argument as well. In *The Lord of the Rings* I specifically investigate evil speeches in "The King of the Golden Hall" and "The Voice of Saruman"; I do not address other famous scenes involving verbal persuasion, such as "The Council of Elrond," in which a variety of speakers offer solutions for what ought to be done with the Ring of power. Since most of the speakers in this scene are characterized as heroes, not malicious or manipulative, their goals and methods differ from the aims of my paper. As for Lewis, a few of his other writings include scenes with verbal manipulation, including the first two books of his

Space Trilogy, such as *Out of the Silent Planet* and *Perelandra*. I choose to focus only on the third book for a few reasons. The first and most practical one is for the length and close focus of the paper. Furthermore, similar themes between *That Hideous Strength* and *The Screwtape Letters*, like the power of the written word, occur since both are set on a modern earth: a world which, unlike the first two planets described in the space series, is sinfully fallen and technologically developed. These common themes make my investigation of these Lewis works more seamless.

The lives of Lewis and Tolkien reveal the basis for the goals of their evil speakers, and my upcoming presentation of these two writers serves two purposes. First, it helps familiarize the reader of this thesis with the type of texts involved. Second, it examines the ways in which Lewis and Tolkien's experiences with manipulative speeches influence their texts. Third, it suggests that the collaboration of the authors served to stimulate not only the texts involved, but also an understanding of the shaping power of words.

The Authors and Their Inspiration for the Texts: Tolkien

Tolkien's interest in words is first evident from his personal vocation. Before and during the time that he wrote *The Lord of the Rings* he worked in philology, the study of language and its development. From his earliest years at Oxford starting 1911, he chose to study "Comparative Philology," fascinated by languages like Welsh (Carpenter 63-64), and he started creating his own personal language that "would eventually emerge in his stories as 'Quenya,' or High-elven," beginning in 1912 (67). His correspondences from 1947 reveal that he continued to engage such philological interests, through research at

Oxford, ever since that time (*Letters* 124). By this point of his life, Tolkien said of himself: “I realized that I am a pure philologist... [history’s] finest moments for me are those in which it throws light on words and names” (264). This statement suggests how he created his own languages and stories as well. Tolkien writes that “the invention of languages is the foundation. The ‘stories’ were made rather to provide a world for the languages than the reverse” (219). Altogether, this brief history and statements by Tolkien reveal the importance of language to him. Not only did he choose the study of languages in the “real world,” but he also created words and speech as the very “foundation” of the secondary world that he invented. That way that the language of the elves precedes the creation of Middle-earth in Tolkien’s history supports this notion. For Tolkien, words represented the “finest moments” of his study and served as the reason for creating stories from the start.

Tolkien’s familiarity with history and literature, within his studies and beyond, contribute to his understanding of the power of speech. For example, Wormtongue’s name, coming from the Anglo-Saxon “wurm,” connects this speaker not only to “the verbally dangerous dragon Fáfñir of the Northern tradition, but also to the deceptive serpent of Eden” (Kightley 128). Tolkien’s studies of such “verbally dangerous” characters in literature thereby influence the naming and characterization of his own speaker. Chad Chisholm also finds that Tolkien’s studies of orators and writers like Plato, Demosthenes, Cicero, and others lead him to represent the values and flaws of “Sophist and Classical views of rhetoric” through characters like Gandalf and Saruman (89). Such studies, suggests Chisholm, cause Tolkien to create narrative battle lines of not only

weapons, but also the forces of “opposing rhetorics and their philosophical implications” (90). Tolkien’s familiarity with these historical examples, along with many others, cause him to cast such as another kind of “weapon,” whether for good or evil.

Tolkien’s goal of creating an Anglo-mythic text with Christian influence appears in textual similarities between *Beowulf* and his own works. Tolkien critics like Michael Kightley find “strong associations” between *Beowulf* and *The Lord of the Rings* (119), from the “Riders of Rohan” and “Anglo-Saxons of poetry,” to specific scenes. I address the roles of all major characters involved, such as Wormtongue, in their respective scenes for a better understanding of the characters and speeches involved. These examples of Anglo Saxon influence suggest that Tolkien truly sought to build upon this type of literature in a similar fashion.

Tolkien’s Catholic faith also contributed to his understanding of the power of words. For his text as a whole, Tolkien writes that *The Lord of the Rings* is, of course, a fundamentally religious and Catholic work” (*Letters* 172). Words hold spiritual significance, since “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (John 1:1 ESV). God brought everything into existence with words, and in his image, mankind exercised “lordship” over creation through naming its creatures (Weaver 149). Raised in the Catholic religion, Tolkien surely considered this spiritual significance of words as well, and his faith influenced his linguistically-informed academic work (Carpenter 32). He follows this idea that words have the power to shape since his books’ speakers often accomplish the same, though often in the negative sense. This discussion of Tolkien’s Anglo-Saxon model and faith become especially relevant,

not only for understanding Tolkien's understanding of the spiritual power of words, but also for making sense of his narrative.

Finally, events of the twentieth century that enveloped the life of Tolkien, not to mention the entire world, contributed to his understanding of speech as well. In Jerome Donnelly's article on Nazi-like influences seen in the Shire near the end of Book III, he suggests examples of speech-related influences upon Tolkien. He mentions Hitler's "widely publicized speech to the Reichstag" in 1941, and the following: "[Saruman's] spellbinding speech, so powerful that it nearly mesmerizes his hearers, is reminiscent of Hitler, whose feats of oratory had captivated a nation" (91). Donnelly suggests that the widely watched, broadcasted oration of the persuasive dictator made their mark upon the creative decisions of Tolkien for his story's villains. Evil speakers like Saruman enchant their hearers similar to the way Hitler "captivated" Germany. This characteristic of Saruman also aligns with his tendency, as an evil speaker, to control and thereby enslave through his speech. Though Tolkien's studies and faith show that Hitler's speech is not the only influence upon his understanding of speech's power, this example of how words contributed to twisted individuals and entire communities still parallels the motives of Tolkien's evil characters. The way in which Tolkien draws inspiration from literature, faith, and this era reveals his belief in shaping power of words by manipulative speakers.

C.S. Lewis's Background

Lewis's history, too, shows his shared understanding of the power of words, particularly the written word. Also a student at Oxford, starting in the 1920s, C.S. (Clive

Staples) Lewis studied English and ‘Greats.’ Robert MacSwain and Michael Ward write that the program “involved ‘the study of Greek and Latin language and literature, philosophy and ancient history’... [but Lewis’s] first love was English literature” (5). In this way, his beginnings somewhat resembled Tolkien’s through his interest in languages and the “love” of literature. A fellowship of English at Oxford’s Magdalen College kept him at the school, where he taught for the next twenty-nine years. He left in January 1955, however, once he became “the first occupant of the Chair of Medieval and Renaissance Literature at the University of Cambridge” (6). Throughout these decades he wrote a variety of books in multiple genres, starting with *The Pilgrim’s Regress: An Allegorical Apology for Christianity, Reason and Romanticism* (1933) and ending with *Letters to Malcolm: Chiefly on Prayer* (1964). His line of work suggests a deep interest in literature, and biblical and theological themes. In *The Screwtape Letters*, Lewis seems motivated by a desire to understand temptation and encourage sanctification, and the demons use persuasion in the temptation process; *That Hideous Strength* also shows spiritual issues which underly the major struggles of the narrative.

Like Tolkien, Lewis responded to drastic changes taking place in the world, including those that stemmed from the persuasive effects of words. Lewis responded to the modern ideologies of Freud, Darwin, and Nietzsche for *The Screwtape Letters* in particular (Coyle 39). In “A Case Study in the Rhetoric of Eternity with C.S. Lewis’s Infamous Imp Screwtape,” Daniel Coyle suggests that “the Screwtape discourses constitute a satirical rhetoric which spiritualizes everyday human activity... raising [Lewis’s] arguments against modernity to the ultimate realm” (67). Lewis’s concerns

about how these ideologies might influence eternity, the “ultimate realm,” therefore led him to satirize these views through the voice of Screwtape.

His concerns about the press, too, lead him to criticize its patterns. In his text, the elder demon explains that because of demonic exploitation of “the weekly press and other such weapons,’ modern humans have largely lost the faculty of reasoning” (*SL* 83-84). The spread of modern ideologies through written media like the press, again, served as an impetus for Lewis to warn his readers through the voice of Screwtape—as he believes that these articles removed the public’s capacity for “reason.” Thus, Lewis shows that he is greatly concerned for the power of speech as it works in both spoken and written format, and that *The Screwtape Letters* was meant to be a warning for these forms of persuasion. His concern for the “reasoning” capabilities and spiritual condition of others appears in his satire, where the devils seek to twist others’ minds and hearts, whether through the press or other means. Certainly the press is a major concern in *That Hideous Strength*, too, where Mark is employed by N.I.C.E. to “re-educate” the public through journalism (*THS* 43).

Lewis’s faith also played an important role in this and most of his other popular works. Until his friendship with Tolkien, though, Lewis stood strong as an atheist, backing his rejection of the faith with thoughtful “moral and intellectual grounds” (Macswain and Ward 6). Only “philosophical difficulties over naturalism” and his growing friendship with Tolkien, whom he met at Oxford, made him more open to the “possibility of theism.” A conversation in 1931 with Tolkien and Hugo Dyson, another member of the Inklings, finally led Lewis to accept Christianity as “a true myth: a myth

working on us in the same way as the other, but with this tremendous difference that *it really happened*” (*Collected Letters of C.S. Lewis*). Lewis’s conversion thereby serves as one example of the great influence he and Tolkien had upon one another, not just in their interests, but also in their faiths. It is possible, write Macswain and Ward, that had this writer not journeyed into the “Christian faith, he . . . would probably only be remembered today by a few specialists for some exceptionally erudite but obscure works of scholarship” (7). If these authors’ argument is true, Lewis’s faith not only changed the type of work he made, but also his legacy. His concern for the theological impact of written speech certainly appears in *The Screwtape Letters*, which Lewis modeled as “demonic epistles”: a hellish equivalent of letters found in the Bible (Dickieson 9).

Collaboration Between the Authors

I also suggest that Lewis and Tolkien’s collaboration through the “Inklings,” as detailed by Diana Glycer’s research in *Bandersnatch*, influenced these authors’ views of how speech influences other people, though mostly in the positive sense. The Inklings formed a space to weekly discuss and receive input for their writing, though loyal fans like to think that Tolkien and C.S. Lewis created entirely from their own genius, ideas, and motivation. Even Lewis seems to share this thought when he claims that “No one ever influenced Tolkien—you might as well try to influence a Bandersnatch” (Glycer 151). If “Bandersnatch” is meant to refer to “a wildly grotesque or bizarre individual” (Merriam-Webster), it would seem from Lewis’s quotation that trying to change Tolkien’s mind seemed irrational to him. However, Glycer finds a different story through her

investigation of C.S. Lewis and Tolkien and suggests that the nature of their collaboration greatly influenced creative decision-making on many occasions, and the texts involved in this thesis are no exception.

The Inklings' collaborative setting welcomed critiques, which in turn greatly influenced writing decisions. Its very name, Glycer writes, points to the nature of the group as one which receives "half-formed imitations and ideas," provides comments, and then responds to the feedback (Glycer 18). Glycer writes that the criticism used within the Inklings worked effectively since it was "frank but friendly" (24), and because the members wanted to act upon it. As an example, Glycer cites Tolkien's "heartfelt appreciation for the liveliness and candor of the group, [free of] contention, ill will, detraction, or accusations without cause" (25). Glycer finds that Tolkien's reaction to the criticism, one of gratitude, shows that he was not opposed to being influenced by the group, as others might suggest. The informal speeches of the group thereby shaped ideas across Tolkien and Lewis's texts. They were active participants of a setting in which speaking created and corrected their work, and they welcomed it.

Glycer cites instances in which such spoken criticism did, in fact, influence the end result of the these authors' works. The first one, which Glycer considers the "breakthrough" moment of her research, appears in Tolkien's letters on the progress of *The Hobbit* (4). When comparing earlier and later drafts, Glycer finds that in 1937 Tolkien reworked his story to remove excessive hobbit talk, even though the dialogue "amuses" him—because of the "excellent criticism" he receives from Lewis, who liked the early chapters despite their flaws (5). According to Glycer, this example exhibits Lewis's

personal involvement in Tolkien's writing process, as he shared what he "liked" and what he thought should change. Again, Tolkien's high view of Lewis's criticism suggests that his work includes much of Lewis's input, including the speeches of characters. The same sort of influence took place in C.S. Lewis's work in 1943. During the process of creating *Perelandra*, his second *Space Trilogy* novel, Lewis received a critique from Inklings members about the use of excessive metaphors. Lewis reduced his "duplication of duplicates" in response to his friends (62). Like Tolkien's early chapters, Lewis's work became more concise and a better reading experience for his readers, thanks to the Inklings. As they weekly experienced the ways that verbal and written critiques influenced their works for the better, it makes sense that Lewis and Tolkien portray the shaping force of words in their texts.

Glyer suggests that Tolkien and Lewis's involvement in the Inklings also contributed to the formation of "community" themes in their works; the importance of community becomes clearer in this thesis when I explicate the goal of harmful speech to isolate a listener throughout the next chapters. Glyer writes that "In *The Lord of the Rings*, we see a fellowship... joining forces against a common foe. In *That Hideous Strength*, Lewis creates the household of St. Anne's" (172). Because the Inklings themselves represented a community of diverse individuals who worked towards a common goal, both Lewis and Tolkien show appreciation for it. In this last *Space Trilogy* novel, along with *The Lord of the Rings*, heroes must depend upon their fellows in order to stand against their respective "foes." Thus in each text, the enemy seeks to fracture the

fellowship. My thesis suggests that evil speakers within these texts often employ manipulative rhetoric to create such fracturing.

Glyer also shares times that harmful speech influenced the environment of the Inklings. Hugo Dyson, one of the members, was “loud in his manner and derogatory in his remarks” towards Tolkien’s work (69), and consequentially he “eroded the spirit” of the group (70). His speech instead produced negative impacts upon the others’ writing and relationships. Glyer notes that the result of this failure—shortened meetings and loss of group spirit—suggests the damaging effects of spoken criticism that lacks kindness. These results of damaging speech sound similar to the reactions of King Théoden, explored in the upcoming chapter, as his “spirit” and confidence shrink because of Wormtongue’s degrading speech. Glyer suggests that if not for Lewis, who would push back by telling Hugo to “shut up” and for “Tollers” to continue, Tolkien might have been “silenced” altogether in the group (69). Through this contrast between Lewis’s support and Dyson’s attack, Glyer shows the value of positive speech as a defense against unkind, unfair critics. When my conclusion addresses possible responses to harmful speech, I suggest that a similar sort of approach is adopted by Gandalf to restore King Théoden to health.

Given all of the ways that Tolkien and Lewis influence one another through their friendship and collaboration, similarities in *The Lord of the Rings* with *The Screwtape Letters* and *That Hideous Strength* should not prove strange. Furthermore, with this understanding of how the Inklings worked, being a group that bounced around ideas and suggestions, the timeline of these works becomes especially relevant. Lewis published

The Screwtape Letters throughout 1941 in *The Guardian* (britannica.com), and Tolkien is believed to have written “The Council of Elrond” in 1939, and then ‘The King of the Golden Hall’ and “The Voice of Saruman” in the beginning of 1942 (tolkiensociety.org). Amidst this time, Lewis wrote and published his *Space Trilogy*. He finished *Out of the Silent Planet* in 1937, followed by *Perelandra* in 1943, and *That Hideous Strength* in 1945 (Glyer 40).

The proximity of these years suggests that the authors spoke to one another about the nature of their character’s speeches during their writing processes. These dates, paired with the collaborative spirit of the Inklings may therefore represent one reason for the similarities. Through the close work of Lewis and Tolkien and their experience of a setting that spoke encouragement, and occasionally discouragement, over the projects, both received a greater understanding of the power of words to shape people. Though I provide such information to give context for the origins of these texts, this thesis will not be a study of the ways that these authors influenced one another. I group similar moments and themes during the upcoming chapters for the sake of clear organization, but claims about which author influenced the other are reserved for future studies.

Methods and Concessions Addressed

This thesis, as mentioned, splits evil speakers into two categories: those who primarily achieve their three-fold goal by encouraging fears, and those who most often encourage pride. Though the speakers I explore are not limited to instilling *only* fear or pride, I have separated them in the areas of their focus. With this division, we see more

clearly the themes and strategies of these methods. The one exception to this organization occurs when I study the ways that Screwtape in *The Screwtape Letters* instills fear and pride, since his methods fall into each category pretty evenly. In *That Hideous Strength*, the evil seekers I study primarily appeal to pride, and I investigate Tolkien's characters in both categories. Therefore, Chapter 2a looks specifically at Tolkien's Wormtongue, and Chapter 3a is for the chapters which detail Saruman's speeches. Chapter 2b looks at speeches by Lewis's Screwtape, and Chapter 3b includes a few more Screwtape moments that focus on pride. Finally, Chapter 4 includes speeches by Feverstone and Frost. In summary, Chapter 2 addresses instances of speech that primarily induce fear to accomplish the three-fold goal of evil speech; Chapter 3 addresses speeches of pride; and Chapter 4 addresses pride-inducing speech that relates, most usually, to the exclusivity of what Lewis calls the "Inner Ring."

In Chapter 2, my first stage of investigation involves looking at Tolkien's chapters. I detail each speech, categorizing its phrases as examples of distortion, control, or isolation of the listener. With this model, I turn to Lewis's work. I consider again whether each section of speech follows one of these goals, and if additional similarities to Tolkien's work appear in them—such as specific diction—I note these as well. While showing, for example, a time in which Wormtongue seeks to distort Théoden's heart by tempting him to desire food and comfort, I later describe a similar example from Lewis's text in which Screwtape suggests how easily he tempted a human through the temptation to eat lunch. Such similar diction does not *always* exist when comparing these speeches, but if they do, I pair them for the benefit of helpful organization.

Having used this method, and through explicating these texts, obvious differences must be acknowledged. The genres of the texts hold differences, one being a series of letters, and the other two narrative driven. One of the most important things to realize from this difference is the point of view when speech is presented. For Tolkien's work, characters actually speak to one another, and the changes are visualized through what happens next. Something similar occurs in Lewis's *That Hideous Strength*, with people who speak directly to one another. In Lewis's *The Screwtape Letters*, however, the primary speaker corresponds through written words, and he describes what he hopes will happen through the type of speech he recommends. Their speech also occurs primarily in the thoughts of their victims, rather than audibly, making factors like "voice" less significant. In both kinds of texts, the goals of the speakers appear, but in some cases it is more difficult to compare the specific *way* in which Lewis's devils attain their goal.

The genre difference also changes the types of audience that these speakers address, too. Because he writes to another devil in *The Screwtape Letters*, Screwtape speaks about humans with very little respect, sometimes calling people "insignificant" and "simpling" (45). Saruman, Wormtongue, and characters in *That Hideous Strength* speak directly to their victims, however, and so their speeches may include pretended respect. Furthermore, since listeners in *That Hideous Strength* and *The Lord of the Rings* chapters recognize the speaker's presence—whereas Screwtape and other devils are often forgotten by those they speak—ethos plays a more important role for the first category. Sometimes, it could be argued, a major goal of these speakers is actually to develop a listener's trust. However, since this deception can still fit into the category of mind-

distortion, and trust-related lies also confuse a listeners' understanding of their speaker, these sentences will be considered as an example of distorting the listener's mind.

A final concession includes the reality that, for all the ways speeches affect characters in these books, other forms of persuasion and power seem to appear as well. Chapter 2 in this thesis, for example, explores the ways that Tolkien's Ents retake control of Saruman's fortress and its territory; Ent conversations, which spur such action, do not rely upon manipulation (*LOTR* 486). Second, in *That Hideous Strength*, Mark undergoes a period of "rehabilitation" that includes not only lengthy speeches but also forced time in disordered rooms; the evil speakers also employ sensory manipulation upon him, though these efforts fail (297-99). These tactics are described at the end of Chapter 4. The investigation of these sorts of manipulation and/or power could potentially create another whole thesis, and so they are worth mentioning. Still, there is no question that manipulative speeches induce dramatic change in the scenes explored here.

Overall, these authors continually highlight the power of words and what speakers intend to do with them. Since a person's condition, community, and freedom remain important many years after these published works, this paper concludes with some reflections about Tolkien and Lewis's warnings and encouragements for their readers. I will suggest that with an understanding of manipulative rhetoric, as these authors describe it, one may be equipped to see not only the destructive potential of words, but also to better recognize and combat them.

CHAPTER 2

Rhetorical Manipulation that Encourages Fear

Introduction

Alongside *The Screwtape Letters* this first chapter examines Tolkien's "The King of the Golden Hall." I present these two texts together in order to point out the similar methods of evil speakers who create fear in their listeners, so that the reader may better recognize the themes which appear. Before this investigation, however, an overview of Tolkien's scene's place in the greater plot and both authors' characters helps one to better understand the issues at stake. Wormtongue and Gandalf encounter one another near the beginning of *The Two Towers*, the second book of Tolkien's saga. At this point, Gandalf reunites with a remnant of the Fellowship of the Ring and reveals that Saruman, the treacherous wizard who rules over Isengard, "threatens the Men of Rohan" (*LOTR* 497) — and worse, that "there is war in Rohan, and worse evil: it goes ill with Théoden" (500). Gandalf's subsequent conversation with the king reveals the connection of these two issues: the 'evil' that Théoden personally encounters contributes to delays in war actions that could have protected his people (521). In response to this news, the company seeks out the King of Rohan to bring "light" back to the kingdom and the king himself, and they certainly find both of these in great need.

Gríma Wormtongue represents the evil speaker for this scene, and Tolkien continually portrays him as a liar. This label presents itself down to his very name, since

as the introduction of my thesis first described, “Wormtongue’s deceitfulness is reinforced by [the] Anglo-Saxon “wurm” meaning serpent, which connects him... to the deceptive serpent of Eden” (Kightley 128). This name, amongst other references to Wormtongue as a “snake” (*LOTR* 514) or “a beast” with a “long pale tongue” (519) emphasize his role as a deceiver just as the Edenic serpent, through persuasive lies and other methods, deceived the first humans. Repeated references to his “forked tongue” (519)—rather than, for example, his hands or feet—also serve to highlight the way in which his words have created more damage than physical actions. Second, Wormtongue’s presence in the kingdom of Rohan directly responds to his orders from Saruman, such that his “speeches truly represent the interests of the enemy” (Kightley 128). Through later examinations of Saruman, which cast him as another great liar (*LOTR* 580), one sees that Wormtongue’s goals align with those of the wizard. Wormtongue seeks to extend the lies of Saruman beyond Isengard and undermine the power of Rohan through continually “poisoning [the king’s] thought” (521). These characteristics emphasize the deceit that Wormtongue uses as he sways the king.

As for the primary speakers in Lewis’s work, Screwtape and Wormwood receive a similar characterization and role in a different kind of kingdom. Lewis writes in his introduction to this work that he seeks to avoid two sorts of errors in depicting these devils: one in which the beings are “disbelieved,” and the other which encourages an “unhealthy interest in them” (*SL* 2). The mean between these two might instead be called a “healthy belief” in devils, since he also encourages his readers in the preface of the work to remember that “the devil is a liar” and cannot be trusted. In this way, these speakers

follow the characterization of Tolkien's evil speaker, Wormtongue, as liars. Furthermore, the mission and names of Lewis's speakers resemble those of Tolkien. Just as Wormtongue receives his bidding from Saruman, both of whom ultimately follow Sauron, the younger devil Wormwood follows the bidding of Screwtape, both of whom ultimately follow the "Father" of Hell (3).

Furthermore, Lewis's character Screwtape, too, on occasion follows snake-like imagery. In one scene in which rage overcomes the elder devil, he finds that "I have inadvertently allowed myself to assume the form of a large centipede... and a distorted account of [such a change] appears in the poet Milton, with the ridiculous addition that such changes of shape are a "punishment" imposed on us by the Enemy." (46).

Screwtape's reference to Milton recalls a scene in which multiple demons turn into snakes:

He would have spoke,
But his for hiss return'd with forked tongue
To forked tongue, for now were all transform'd
Alike, to Serpents all (Milton 10.518-21)

Lewis knew such passages well, having written *A Preface to Paradise Lost*, which David Urban suggests is "arguably the most influential work of Milton criticism ever written" (192). Though Milton's account of "forked tongues" and "serpents" sounds a bit more like Tolkien's description of his evil speakers than Lewis's, there is no mistaking that Lewis intended for Screwtape's "punishment" of transformation to evoke images of hissing snakes cast to the ground. In this way, the characterization of Tolkien and Lewis's speakers as lying snakes points to their deceptiveness.

For Screwtape, the only speaker in *The Screwtape Letters*, and the first of Tolkien's evil rhetors, Wormtongue, one sees a similar pattern of malicious words. Both speakers follow the threefold goal of evil speech to distort, isolate, and control their listeners. Each of these three categories shall receive subheadings at the beginning of their respective sections to aid the reader. As noted in the introductory chapter of my thesis, this chapter focuses on the times in which Wormwood and Screwtape try to encourage insecurity and fears in others. Wormtongue's work is often visualized through the changes he causes by speaking to King Théoden, and the work of the devils, whether effective or not, is usually measured by changes in the patient's inner state and actions.

Mind and Heart

In *The Lord of the Rings* Wormtongue achieves the first part of this evil speaking pattern, distorting a listener's mind and heart, through lies about the king's identity as a ruler. As Gandalf and the travelers enter Théoden's kingdom and enter his hall, they find him far less than kingly. Upon the "gilded chair," they discover, "sat a man so bent with age that he seemed almost a dwarf; but his white hair was long and thick and fell in great braids from beneath a thin golden circlet" (*LOTR* 512). Adjectives here reveal the dichotomy between Théoden's actual identity as a king of power and what he now believes about himself, thanks to Wormtongue's lies. Kingly words like "gilded," "golden" and "great" appear, but amidst these descriptions arise words like "bent" and "dwarf," which visualize his hunched position. What exactly Wormtongue told Théoden to create such changes is implied later, particularly through what he tells the king about

weakness due to his “age” (515). Lies about the king’s identity thus follow the pattern of evil speech to distort this person’s understanding of himself.

Next, Wormtongue’s lies invade Théoden’s mind such that he forgets his position and power. Even though Théoden is in reality a king, listening to and believing Wormtongue’s speech results in a shrunken demeanor. Markers of age and weakness, characteristics emphasized by the speaker of lies, hide his true identity from others just as Théoden has forgotten it. His appearance thus serves as the the physical consequence and visible evidence of his belief in Wormtongue’s persuasions. Through his methods, Wormtongue distorts Théoden’s view of himself, first in terms of the position he holds, and second through influencing the forgetting of past kingly deeds. Théoden’s appearance indicates the state of his mind: that he has forgotten who he is in the kingdom and his great service of the past.

Other physical consequences of Wormtongue’s speech upon Théoden’s mind, in regard to his view of personal strength, are similarly apparent. After all, the companions of Gandalf recognize a former, less pitiful condition of Théoden: they see that though the king leaned “heavily upon a short black staff... he was still tall” and his “eyes still burned with a great light” (512). Although the king relies upon a staff, others see that his “eyes” and form “still” possess great strength. Théoden, however, remains blind to his own potential; the adjective “heavily” emphasizes his belief that he greatly needs the support of the staff. Gandalf later explains Wormtongue’s methods, which persuaded the king to believe in such weaknesses. He tells Théoden that “Wormtongue’s whispering was in your ear, poisoning your thought, chilling your heart, weakening your limbs”

(521). Just as poison weakens the heart and limbs, Wormtongue's speech enfeebles the once-strong king. The effect of these lies upon Théoden's mind is evident through his physical condition, which again shows the pattern of evil speech to holistically distort one's listener. Wormtongue usually accomplishes this goal through feeding Théoden words of fear and insecurity.

Speech-related manipulation, for mind distortion specifically, also appear throughout Screwtape's speech. The devils seek to influence their patient's understanding of identity, Screwtape recognizes that the goal of his "enemy," God, is to make "sons" and daughters of humans (*SL* 5). Since their patient recently converted, adopting this identity, he tells Wormwood that they must seek to confuse his sense of belonging. He considers that they "make the patient an extreme patriot or an extreme pacifist" in order to have him "acquire the uneasy intensity and the defensive self-righteousness of a secret society or a clique" (15). In other words, the devils hope that their patient will see himself not as a devoted follower of God but rather a defender of a movement or of a small, exclusive group. As long as his "extremism" and view of himself receives no influence from God, the devils' enemy, the patient follows the false identity that they encourage. Similar to the way that Wormtongue distorts Théoden's view of his identity as a king, the devils distort the patient's identity as the son of a king. Through this distortion they seek to diminish their patient, as any identity held apart from God, the greatest king, is immediately lesser.

Wormwood and Screwtape also seek to diminish their patient's authentic self. Screwtape suggests that Wormwood make him waste time "in conversations with those

he cares nothing about on subjects that bore him. You can make him do nothing at all for long periods... so that at last he may say, as one of my own patients said on his arrival down here, 'I now see that I spent most of my life in doing neither what I ought nor what I liked'" (24-25). The end goal of Wormwood's temptations and persuasions, to "make" the patient spend his life doing what he dislikes, what he should not do, or "nothing at all" sounds similar to what Wormtongue achieves in Théoden. Through the speech of these evil characters, both the patient and the king forget what they truly enjoy. Readers see the same in *The Lord of the the Rings* as Wormtongue certainly leads Théoden from what he ought to accomplish with his identity—leading his kingdom—to doing nothing.

Lewis's evil speakers seek to twist the mind and heart of their listener through replacing notions of reality with fear or false hope. Screwtape tells Wormwood that to prevent the awaking of the patient's reason, "Your business is to fix his attention on the stream [of immediate sense experiences]. Teach him to call it 'real life' and don't let him ask what he means by 'real'" (3). And later, in speaking about the inevitable highs and lows that a person faces throughout life, Screwtape says that "the first step is to keep knowledge out of his mind. Do not let him suspect the law of undulation ... It all depends on whether your man is of the desponding type who can be tempted to despair, or of the wishful-thinking type who can be assured that all is well" (19). Screwtape reveals through these statements that he seeks to distort his patient's mind through removing any sense of reality. He does not want his patient to use his capabilities for reason, but rather hopes to twist what the patient sees as "real." Screwtape shows his goal of keeping

knowledge from the mind and replacing it with thoughts of despair, as he withholds truth and promotes fear.

This section written by Screwtape also suggests the way that he and other speakers personalize their methods. The statement “it all depends” points to the different kind of rhetorical strategies which Screwtape knows he could use. King Théoden, for example, falls into one of Screwtape’s categories as a type of person who might be “tempted to despair.” The other kinds of people who Screwtape thinks should be assured that all is “well” might instead be subject to methods of speech that encourage pride. His insight offers a reason as to why some of the speakers in my thesis seem to focus on one version or the other: it depends on the personal weaknesses of the listeners involved.

In *The Lord of the Rings*, this strategy becomes additionally clear when Wormtongue distorts Théoden’s heart, particularly through fears and tempting human appetite. Gandalf tells the king that “Wormtongue’s whispering was in your ear, poisoning your thought, chilling your heart, weakening your limbs” (521). Gandalf suggests that Wormtongue not only altered Théoden’s thought patterns, but also “chilled” his heart: a word that seems almost synonymous to disabled or weakened. This method also contributes to Wormtongue’s goal to control the king since, like his use of lies, the presentation of fears and temptations also results in the inactivity of the king. Later in the chapter, examples of Wormtongue’s temptations appear, and it seems likely that he used this strategy before this scene as well. He first tells the king, “Your meat is about to be set on the table. Will you not go to it?”; and second, “the wizard has bewitched you. Are none to be left to defend the Golden Hall of your fathers, and all your treasure?” (519).

The first suggestion by Wormtongue to eat and rest at the table surely appeals to the desire for comfort, while the second attempts to remind the king of his wealth and need for safety. It seems probable that these temptations, particularly comfort and safety, worked upon Théoden in the past, especially when considering his fearful condition. In this way, Wormtongue's speech distorts the heart of the king by leading him from hoping for the good of his kingdom to focusing on his own appetitive desires.

The strategies of the devils also resemble Wormtongue's when they tempt the heart and will of their patient. Screwtape writes of an "excellent opportunity for all sensual temptations... You are much more likely to make your man a sound drunkard by pressing drink on him as an anodyne when he is dull and weary (*SL* 19)." In other words, the "dull" and tired points of a person's life serve as moments in which these speakers of evil tempt their listener to appetitive sins. An even clearer example of this kind of tempting appears earlier in Screwtape's correspondences, when he offers an example of his own work. To distract a man who began to think about God, Screwtape says he "suggested that it was just about time he had some lunch.... And by the time I had added 'Much better come back after lunch and go into it with a fresh mind,' he was already half way to the door" and later, he decided that "'that sort of thing' just couldn't be true" (3). In this way, Screwtape diverts the man to a sensory task that seems much easier and safer than thinking about God. The closeness of this temptation and Wormtongue's is clear when one sees that he also suggests the king take a break to eat some "meat," and that in both cases the listeners are distracted from what they ought to do.

Screwtape also plans to distort the heart of the patient through emphasizing fear. Screwtape tells the second devil that “We want him to be in the maximum uncertainty, so that his mind will be filled with contradictory pictures of the future, every one of which arouses hope or fear” (12). By speaking to their patient about the uncertainty of the future, these devil hope that the emotions of fear, or of an improper hope in the future, arise. This improper hope in future events becomes more relevant when comparing the methods of these devils to Saruman, but certainly Wormtongue’s words about the grimness of the future lead Théoden into the second camp. As related to the patient’s fear of the future, Screwtape also suggests the following:

Get his mind off the simple rule (“I’ve got to stay here and do so-and-so”) into a series of imaginary life lines (“If A happened — though I very much hope it won’t — I could do B — and if the worst came to the worst, I could always do C”). Superstitions, if not recognised as such, can be awakened. . . . For remember, the act of cowardice is all that matters; the emotion of fear is, in itself, no sin and, though we enjoy it, does us no good. (*SL* 60).

Through this quotation, Screwtape again emphasizes the sort of fearful pattern of thought that he hopes to induce in Wormwood’s human. The sort of fearful diction they encourage includes words like “worst” and phrases like “I very much hope it won’t.” Through the thoughts they encourage, the devils show one of their goals: to distort the patient’s heart by causing him to focus on “imaginary” fears and superstitions.

Here, Lewis suggests a second underlying goal of the devils as they try to create fears in the patient’s heart. Inducing “the emotion of fear,” Screwtape suggests, matters only so long as the listeners act upon it. This emotion, according to Lewis, becomes “sin” if the human acts cowardly because of it. Thus, the evidence of the heart’s distortion

appears through a listener's actions. This is not to discount the goal of evil speakers to twist the heart through creating fear; Screwtape still prescribes methods to create worries about the future. He hopes, though, that these emotions lead into his later goal, to control the actions of his listener. In these passages, Lewis thereby warns readers about the destructive potential of such speech upon the human heart.

Community

In Tolkien's text, Wormtongue accomplishes another goal of evil speech— isolating the listener—through installing fearful perceptions of others. He confirms Théoden's fears and doubts about the arrival of Gandalf and his companions. Théoden's initial emotions and beliefs are clear through the way he greets the travelers, as he says to Gandalf, "Trouble follows you like crows... And with you come evils worse than before, as might be expected. Why should I welcome you, Gandalf Stormcrow?" (*LOTR* 513). Wormtongue, who similarly repeats, "Why indeed should we welcome you, Gandalf Stormcrow? *Láthspell* I name you, Ill-news; and ill news is an ill guest they say." Through such a response, Wormtongue emphasizes that Théoden ought to fear such a guest. He not only accuses Gandalf of bearing bad news but tries to rename the wizard entirely, as though Gandalf's entire identity is one of "ill news." And though they accuse Gandalf for the way that trouble follows him "like crows," it is Wormtongue whose repetition of Théoden's doubts evokes a crow's haunting cawing.

Having trusted Wormtongue's role and speeches as a counselor figure, Théoden believes in and mimics the speaker's desire to remove Gandalf from his presence. His

negative emotions towards the wizard, particularly suspicion and bitterness, become clear through his response as well. Having believed that Gandalf cannot be trusted, he uses diction like “trouble” and “evil” to describe the presence of the wizard. Questioning why he should welcome the wizard similarly shows that he holds bitterness towards Gandalf, rather than the kind of “rejoicing” he gave at the homecoming of Shadowfax, Gandalf’s borrowed horse. Before Wormtongue entered the kingdom, Gandalf points out, Théoden was even known for “courtesy” towards guests (513). Listening to Wormtongue’s view of strangers, however, influences the way that Théoden sees and feels about them. His desire to remove the strangers from his presence, which arises from Wormtongue’s speech, thereby also points to Wormtongue’s goal to isolate the king.

Further into Théoden’s conversation with Gandalf, readers learn that Wormtongue’s speech has encouraged such isolation much earlier as well. Théoden imprisons Éomer, a once trusted counselor and warrior, after the man stands against Wormtongue. Théoden explains that Éomer “rebelled against my commands and threatened death to Gríma in my hall” (516). Later explanations by Gandalf show the sort of ‘commands’ Éomer disobeyed: “[Wormtongue] persuaded you to forbid Éomer to pursue the raiding orcs” (521). Éomer’s ‘rebellion’ against Wormtongue shows his awareness of such persuasion and lies by the king’s counselor; Éomer sought to “pursue” war efforts despite a lack of participation by the king. In following Gríma’s counsel, however, Théoden imprisons and therefore loses a truly faithful and trustworthy counselor. Wormtongue’s false ethos as a counselor in the court, paired with his control over the king’s decisions, isolates the king from his community.

Wormwood and Screwtape also hold the goal of isolating their listener from others by encouraging inhospitality. Screwtape writes that “the great thing is to direct [his] malice to his immediate neighbours whom he meets every day and to thrust his benevolence out to the remote circumference, to people he does not know” (SL 14). This behavior towards others, if followed, prevents deep, meaningful friendships from forming. Kindness only towards “remote” individuals might reinforce neglect and even “malice” towards those nearby, whether friends, family, or neighbors. One cannot truly love these groups of people when succumbing to this goal of evil speakers. Wormtongue’s methods parallel the first part of this advice as he directs the king’s dislike to the strangers he meets and distrust towards his own people.

Screwtape provides an example of how he would encourage the patients to treat his community, while seeking to achieve the goal of a human’s separation from others. Screwtape, speaking of the patient’s mother, suggests that the less experienced devil prevent him from actually actively loving his mother, though he prays for her, so that “in time, you may get the cleavage so wide that no thought or feeling from his prayers for the imagined mother will ever flow over into his treatment of the real one” (7). In other words, the devil hopes that a division will form between thoughts and loving feelings for a family member and physical actions of love. The word “cleavage” emphasizes the kind of separation that the devils hope will occur.

On the other hand, the devils hope to isolate their patient from a healthy community by replacing it with bad company. Screwtape writes, “I was delighted to hear from Triptweeze that your patient has made some very desirable new acquaintances...

rich, smart, superficially intellectual, and brightly sceptical about everything in the world (21). Compared to a healthy community—which could be described through antonyms to these above words as simple, wise, and hopeful—the devils hope to encourage a different sort of crowd. As long as their patient remains with such poor company, they accomplish their goal of isolating him from those with venerable qualities, virtues, and faith. The exact sort of person the devils hope to keep their patient from comes later when he falls in love. Screwtape bemoans the fact that “Your man is in love — and in the worst kind he could possibly have fallen into . . . a vile, sneaking, simpering, demure, monosyllabic, mouse-like, watery, insignificant, virginal, bread-and-butter miss” (45). Though it is difficult to sift through the language of the devil, it would seem that most of all he detests the woman’s humility, her quiet spirit, purity, and contented attitude. In speaking with such hatred of these qualities, the devil reveals his goal to keep the man away from such people.

When comparing this example to Tolkien’s work, similarities appear here as well. Wormtongue also detests the presence of the wizard and uses all sorts of hateful diction to describe him, including a beggarly appearance. This sounds similar to Screwtape’s suggestion that the patient seek out only rich friends. Second, Wormtongue replaces Théoden’s trustworthy, caring community with the sort of acquaintance that Screwtape would desire: himself. Wormtongue, like the crowd that Screwtape encourages, seeks to appear smart and directs the king to think skeptically about others. Through these methods, both seek to remove good community from the life of the listener and tie him to

poor company. Together, these authors show the ways in which speeches of fear promote inadequate forms of community.

As noted above, there are also important differences between the two accounts, as related to the listener's awareness of the evil speaker. Théoden shows full awareness of Wormtongue's presence and his trust for the speaker by calling him "Gríma," a name that sounds much more benign. As suggested, this means that Wormtongue never directs the king to bad company; he fills this role himself. It also means that everyone around the king who is not influenced by the speech of Wormtongue fully recognizes the damage caused by the evil speaker. The soldiers who first greet Gandalf and his companions at the king's gate call the man "Wormtongue," and friends like Éomer attempted to speak out against him as well (*LOTR* 510).

On the other hand, Lewis's evil speakers hide their presence. Screwtape suggests that "Our policy, for the moment, is to conceal ourselves... If any faint suspicion of your existence begins to arise in his mind, suggest to him a picture of something in red tights" (*SL* 15). In this way, the strategy of the devils is not to make themselves trusted counselors, but rather to convince their patient that they do not exist. The suggestion of devils as mere caricatures in red tights might make a listener think of the devils as a cartoon-like character, not to be taken seriously. Regardless of whether their presence is known or not, Wormtongue and the devils, when isolating their listeners, convince their listeners to trust the words fed to them by poor influences, and to distrust or hate the advice given by a virtuous community. When unaware of a speaker's intentions or

presence—and when detached from those who care about them—such listeners become additionally vulnerable.

Control

Both sets of speakers in Lewis's and Tolkien's works twist their listeners, within hearts and minds, separated from the help of others, to accomplish their final goal of controlling the will of a listener. In *The Lord of the Rings*, Wormtongue's strategy to distort his listener's mind—which causes the king to forget his position and power—means that Théoden ceases to act upon them. When Gandalf and his companions first arrive in Rohan, the guards tell them that "Wormtongue came to us and said that by the will of Théoden no stranger should pass these gates" (509). From the onset, it becomes clear that although Théoden technically holds a position of power, someone else determines his "will" and speaks for him. Gandalf recognizes this reality, too, when he later tells the king that "your will was in his keeping" (521). Through his speech and influence over the king's mind, Wormtongue removes Théoden's capacity to make decisions freely; he becomes the king's voice. In this way, Wormtongue is not just the "spokesperson" of the Golden Hall, but "actually usurped the voice, and therefore the power, of Théoden himself" (Kightley 128). The word "keeping" similarly points to this speaker of evil's goal to control his listener, since it suggests that Wormtongue holds and directs the will of the king. After an extended period of Wormtongue's influence, Théoden loses the freedom to speak or act on his own. Additionally, this passage points to

Wormtongue's goal to isolate the king. The evil speaker intends to remain the only voice in Théoden's ear, in order to control him further.

Another example of Wormtongue's strategy to control the the king's will, by distorting his view of personal strength, appears after Gandalf leads Théoden from the throne room. Wormtongue tells the king to "not weary yourself or tax too heavily your strength" (*LOTR* 519). He emphasizes the limits of the king's strength by using words like "weary" and "tax" and "heavily." Surely speeches like these led the king to believe that he needed to avoid the straining activities that come with the role of being a leader. Through saying these things, Wormtongue reveals that he hopes Théoden will believe himself to be weak, and through identifying with weakness, become that way as well. Wormtongue thus follows the pattern of evil speech by continuing to distort his listener's view of himself, and here he again follows the goal of enslaving him, this time physically. Théoden's resulting physical inactivity binds him to his throne just as prisoners are bound to their cell.

In the same way, Wormtongue's lies and overemphasized dangers imprison the king. Gandalf later tells Théoden that Wormtongue wove "perils into [his] dreams" (516), "working on [his] fears" (521). Wormtongue's whisperings of peril and fears imprison the king by removing his sense of reality: shown through the reference to "dreams." The physical results of the speech mirror this goal of Wormtongue, as Gandalf and his companions find Théoden "sitting in shadows" (514), alone except for the presence of Wormtongue and Eowyn, the king's niece (516); the king describes himself in this condition as "nearly blind" (522). Much like a prison, isolation and darkness mark

Théoden's residence. The shadowy, prison-like residence and the "blindness" that Théoden describes visualize Wormtongue's effect upon the king. Though no full war has been waged by Sauron and his followers at this point of the narrative, this "rhetorical battle" which "neutralizes" the king (Ruud 146) also means the crippling of the people of Rohan.

In *The Screwtape Letters*, Screwtape and Wormwood also seek to control their patient's will through encouraging inactivity. Since their patient fears a war at hand, the elder devil tells Wormwood to "keep him comforting himself with the thought of how much he will enjoy his bed next night. Exaggerate the weariness by making him think it will soon be over" (61). Here, the call of the devils for the patient to remain in bed, and how "weary" he feels sounds greatly similar to Wormtongue's call for the king to remain seated or his suggestions of tiredness. Screwtape and Wormwood, therefore, appear to follow the same goal of evil speech: diminishing a listener's will through convincing him of weakness.

In a similar light, Screwtape later reveals his hope that Wormwood's speech will lead the the patient to inactivity. He adds that "You can keep him up late at night, not roistering, but staring at a dead fire in a cold room. All the healthy and outgoing activities which we want him to avoid can be inhibited and nothing given in return" (24-25). Again, the devil shows another one of his goals: imprisoning the patient in an idle, listless life. Again, the description of the patient's proposed setting sounds much like the dark hall of Théoden. Furthermore, these devils suggest the same methods of Wormtongue to prevent

“outgoing” or “roisterous” (celebratory) behavior. They, too, hope to keep the patient shut away from the world, and from beneficiary activities.

Altogether, these evil speakers seek to distort the mind and heart of listeners, isolate them from others, and remove their capacity to act. In Tolkien’s work, the king’s condition reveals the impact of these lies, as Gandalf and the others find him physically diminished, inactive, distrusting, and fearful. This work of Wormtongue’s speech, which shares the pattern of other evil rhetoricians, distorts the king through making him physically smaller, sedentary, and altogether quite useless in his kingdom. As noted in the opening of this section, this work by Wormtongue becomes quite effective for the side of evil in the war, since Théoden’s men must share his inactivity. In *The Screwtape Letters*, the devils reveal that they also hope to accomplish similar results, in terms of the spiritual war, specifically when the despair or lethargy of the patient is the goal. They hope that these goals will lead the human closer to despair and faithlessness, and thereby closer to hell. These patterns by Wormtongue and Screwtape depict the ways that manipulative speakers work through creating fears; I will treat examples in which Tolkien and Lewis’s evil speakers primarily fulfill this three-fold goal by puffing up their listener with pride and ambition within the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3

Rhetorical Manipulation that Encourages Pride

Introduction to The Lord of the Rings

This third chapter encompasses strategies of evil speakers who encourage pride in their listeners. As pride is a deep-rooted source of tension both in these texts and in our own world, it is unsurprising that the content for this topic is even longer. As such, I have broken up the content into parts A and B. In this Part A of this chapter I turn to Gandalf's initial interaction with Saruman and the majority of Tolkien's chapter, "The Voice of Saruman." This chapter suggests that within these scenes, the strategy of Saruman mirrors those of other evil speakers. He also seeks to distort, control, and isolate those who listen to him.

As with the previous chapter on fear, overviews for these moments prove helpful in establishing context for this claim. Gandalf explains his conversation with Saruman during the Council of Elrond, when he and several characters present ideas for what ought to be done with Sauron's great Ring of power. In his own speech, he details his encounter with Saruman, a wizard who he hoped would help "drive back the Nine" Ringwraiths (*LOTR* 257): Sauron's other ring-bearers. However, when he arrives, he finds that Saruman intends to persuade him to adopt a much different solution: that they would take the Ring's power for themselves.

Having refused Saruman, and imprisoned by him as a consequence, much time passes before Gandalf escapes and meets the wizard again. After freeing Théoden from the influence of Saruman's servant, Wormtongue, Gandalf seeks out the traitorous wizard. "Ents," a race of tree-people who shepherded the forests, recently freed Isengard from Saruman's tyranny, cleansing the filth of Saruman's operations by flooding the lands, thereby trapping him in his tower there. The way in which these tree shepherds operate suggest positive uses of persuasion, and so the end of this chapter considers their alternative. With Saruman stuck and nearly powerless, Gandalf pays him "a farewell visit," even though he considers it a "dangerous, and probably useless" task (576). A few from Gandalf's company, Théoden, and some of the king's men join Gandalf; some out of curiosity, and some to "speak with the enemy" who wronged them.

As for Saruman, readers of *The Lord of the Rings* know of his twisted background thanks to updates from Gandalf and other messengers throughout the story. Saruman supposedly used to use his powers for good, and he "long studied the arts of [Sauron] himself," allowing Gandalf and the others to "forestall" their enemy (257). Similar to Gandalf's original title of "Gandalf the Grey," Saruman held white as his color. When Gandalf encounters the wizard, however, he sees that Saruman exchanged his robes for ones "woven of all colors, and if he moved they shimmered and changed hue so that eye was bewildered" (259). Jay Ruud writes that though Saruman once represented a color of purity and simplicity, his change mirrors his rhetorical style, for in the wizard's speeches he "constantly equivocates, shifting from one view to another... ultimately resorting to abstractions that make it difficult to pin down what he means" (142). Especially when

comparing him to Gandalf, one sees that Saruman would rather persuade someone to his side than remain “truthful,” such that his voice often grips people more than the content of his words (Chisholm 91). Still, there is no question that Saruman’s speech “makes him so dangerous” (Ruud 143).

Similar to Wormtongue, the evil speaker who works on Théoden, Saruman’s name and physical descriptions suggest his deceptive and manipulative qualities. Sometimes the narrator or characters describe him with snake-like qualities: he “hisses,” and when he is angered, “it seemed that they saw a snake coiling itself to strike” (*LOTR* 581). Some characters accuse the wizard of his snake-like tendencies, like when Eomer questions why they should “stand at last amazed by an old liar with honey on his forked tongue?” (579). In this way, Saruman shares the characterization of Wormtongue as a deceptive snake, which thereby ties him to the snake described in the Garden of Eden as well (Kightley 128). Saruman’s name, too, suggests this deceptive quality. The old English root *searu* means “device, work of skill, cunning” and together the name means “cunning man” (Fisher 26). Altogether, readers are led to associate Saruman with his capability to skillfully manipulate words. His evil intentions, with these skills, become more evident through the narrative.

Heart and Mind

Saruman certainly puts these aspects to work when he seeks to persuade Gandalf and Théoden in their encounters. Following the pattern of other manipulative speakers in my thesis, he uses speech to distort, isolate, and control his listeners. For the first of

these, distorting the mind and heart of another person, Saruman usually seeks to build up pride. In the brief moments that he does appeal to fear, the tactic usually serves to manipulate the listener into a position of false trust in themselves or in his plans.

Saruman's desire to distort Gandalf and Théoden's hearts through encouraging pride and false hope becomes clear through their conversations. Saruman tries to entice Gandalf with a vision of their world, in which "our time is at hand: the world of Men, which we must rule. But we have power, power to order all things as we will" (*LOTR* 259).

Saruman uses a series of personal, plural pronouns in these statements, in order to lead Gandalf to adopt the vision as well. Furthermore, repeated diction related to their strength as wizards, such as "rule" and "power" and "will" build an image of what they might control together. In this way, Saruman presents Gandalf's abilities to him as the means for such ambitious goals. Through such a vainglorious presentation, Saruman seeks to draw Gandalf to his own plans.

Saruman also seeks to install false hope in Gandalf's heart during this first conversation. After foreboding statements like "The Elder days are gone" and "there is no hope left in the Elves or dying Númenor," Saruman's presentation of an alternative becomes especially appealing. He suggests instead that "The Younger Days are beginning" and that there is "hope" in the way of Sauron's power (259). Chad Chisholm suggests that what makes Saruman's appeal so "alluring" is that it follows his "attempt to make Gandalf despair over the futility of fighting for what is eternally right... Saruman hopes to move Gandalf into a state of hopelessness so that Saruman can again elevate Gandalf to a state of hope with his alternative vision" (92). When looking at Saruman's

appeal to Gandalf's heart in both senses—the installation of fear and then hope for his own plans—one sees the potential power of his words to change the wizard. By using words like “hopeless” and “dying” in descriptions of the elves or Númenor, who represent alternative means of help, Saruman seeks to kill any hope in the wizard towards these alternatives. Rather, Saruman appeals to a false hope in his own plans with lively diction like “younger” and “beginning.” As Chisholm suggests, such a strategy by Saruman targets Gandalf's heart, particularly related to where he places his hope. Though Saruman momentarily appeals to fear, he does not intend for Gandalf to remain in a state of despair, but he rather wants Gandalf to long for the promise of better days.

Next, and similar to the beginning of their earlier meeting, Saruman tries to grow pride in Gandalf's heart. He laments his “grief” that the wizard is loyal to such lowly companions, saying, “You are proud, Gandalf – and not without reason, having a noble mind and eyes that look both deep and far” (*LOTR* 581). Here, Saruman puffs up Gandalf's specific abilities and qualities. Among the list include Gandalf's sight, his nobility, and his proud position. Similarly, he says, “You are proud and do not love advice, having indeed a store of your own wisdom.... Are we not both members of a high and ancient order, most excellent in Middle-earth?” Saruman again emphasizes Gandalf's “wisdom” and their exclusive positions in a “high and ancient order” in an effort to convince Gandalf of his importance and “excellence.” Through claiming that Gandalf's “pride” prevents him from listening to his advice, Saruman twists the definition of the word, even as he hopes that Gandalf will succumb to the same thing.

Later, Saruman speaks to Théoden in a similar way, so that pride might distort the king's heart. He greets the king, declaring that "you, Théoden Lord of the Mark of Rohan, are declared by your noble devices, and still more by the fair countenance of the House of Eorl. O worthy son of Thengel the Thrice-renowned!" (579?). In one sense, this greeting serves as an effort to establish trust between he and the king. Such titles could be Saruman's way of pretending to show respect for the king, but like the wizard's treatment of Gandalf, he also puffs up the king's ego. After all, Saruman's adjectives include lofty adjectives and titles like "Lord," "noble," "noble," and "renowned." Altogether, his praise sounds disingenuous, but through it he tries to induce pride in Théoden and establish trust. These may be customary greetings for royalty, but I suggest the falsity of such praises because of what Saruman says later, when the king refuses an alliance: "What is the house of Eorl but a thatched barn where brigands drink in the reek, and their brats roll on the floor among the dogs?... I know not why I have had the patience to speak to you" (581). As soon as Théoden's usefulness fades, Saruman shows that he truly think of the king and his house as a place of "brigands" and "brats," and he shows that his patience has been forced thus far.

The effects of such speech are clearer through others' reactions. Though both he and Gandalf overcome Saruman's speech, descriptions of those who cannot withstand such words reveal this persuader's hopes. Tolkien narrates what happens to those who listen and respond to the wizard's voice: "All that it said seemed wise and reasonable, and desire awoke in them by swift agreement to seem wise themselves" (754). Saruman leads these men to "desire" not only his own wisdom and reasonable advice, but also their own

capacity for wisdom. They hope to “seem wise”—or said otherwise, to be *seen* by others as wise and powerful individuals—because the wizard’s words influence their hearts.

Saruman tries to distort the *minds* of his listeners by spinning lies about himself and the past. When speaking to Théoden, he suggests that “I desired to see you, mightiest king of western lands, and especially in these latter years, to save you from the unwise and evil counsels that beset you” (*LOTR* 579). Wary listeners and readers remember that such “evil counsels” of Wormtongue represent direct orders of Saruman himself, but Saruman tries to convince Théoden that he could have saved the king from them.

Through this statement, the wizard twists the king’s understanding about the source of Wormtongue’s counsel. Later, he tries to shift the king’s memory of the past when saying, “But my lord of Rohan, am I to be called a murderer, because valiant men have fallen in battle? If you go to war, needlessly, for I did not desire it, then men will be slain” (580). Through saying such things, Saruman tries to shift Théoden’s understanding of his role in the war.

Though in truth men rightly call Saruman a murderer, the wizard claims that he does not desire the deaths of “valiant” men. Chad Chisholm reaches a similar conclusion, suggesting that Saruman “blurs” and distorts “Théoden’s own knowledge of the past and of virtue” (94). Wormtongue emphasized the dangers of war as he twisted Théoden’s mind, but Saruman suggests that the war is unnecessary, and that he holds no blame for its previous strife. He also attempts to show that he cares for the king’s men by calling them “valiant,” insinuating that the king cares little for them if Rohan goes to war. This strategy again attempts to distort Théoden’s understanding of Saruman’s trustworthiness

and what it means for the king and his men to act valiantly, putting the needs of the kingdom before their own lives.

Towards Gandalf, too, Saruman tries to retell the story of their past. Referring to their previous meeting he suggests, “I fear that in my eagerness to persuade you, I lost patience. And indeed I regret it. For I bore you no ill-will; and even now I bear none” (581). This first of this statement by Saruman represents a gross understatement, for his “loss of patience” meant the imprisoning of Gandalf upon a bleak, “piercingly” cold tower of a thousands steps (*LOTR* 260). Such treatment instead represents the ‘ill-will’ of Saruman towards Gandalf, though he claims otherwise. Through this retelling of their past, Saruman attempts to accomplish one aspect of his goal, to twist the mind of his listener, particularly through the way Gandalf remembers him. through such words, Saruman tries to manipulate the way that Gandalf, Théoden, and all who listen remember the past.

With the use of enticing diction, Saruman also seeks to twist his listeners’ understanding of good and evil. He suggests to Gandalf that together, they could “Deplore the evils done by the way, but approving the high and ultimate purpose: Knowledge, Rule, Order... There need not be, there would not be, any real change in our designs, only in our means” (259). Here, Saruman seems to be making an ‘ends justify the means claim’ as he suggests that all the “evils” they may do still lead to a “ultimate” end. This proposal for achieving “knowledge” and “order” sounds good and promising, and through it such jargon masks Saruman's true plans: he calls evil actions “deplorable,” yet claims that those dedicated to the high and good must practice them. Through such

claims, he tries to blur the line between good and evil actions. Later, too, he claims that “Much we could still accomplish together, to heal the disorders of the world... For the common good I am willing to redress the past, and to receive you” (581). Again, Saruman attempts to twist his listener’s understanding of “the common good.” He presents himself as a healer of the world, as one who forgives, even as his true actions suggest the opposite. This second example of Saruman’s goal distort his listener’s understanding of evil and good thus relates to his own ethos, as he seeks to twist the way that others think of him. This strategy further ties into Saruman’s goal to distort community, below.

Community

Another goal of malicious speakers appears in the way Saruman addresses friendship and relationships. Through seeking to fill the hearts of Gandalf and Théoden with such ambitions and lies, Saruman attempts the second goal of evil speakers: to isolate his listeners. Wormtongue isolates Théoden through distrust of others, but Saruman tries to isolate his listeners by convincing them that only *he* serves as a worthy companion. To Théoden he suggests that “I alone can aid you now” and asks, “Will you have peace with me, and all the aid that my knowledge, founded in long years, can bring?” (*LOTR* 579). Saruman’s first statement emphasizes that he “alone” represents a source of aid, and his second that only his knowledge brings peace. In this way, Saruman insinuates that no other counselor holds the qualifications for the type of aid that Théoden needs, so that he might become the only voice in the king’s ears. As seen from scenes

with Wormtongue, opposing opinions weaken the speeches of these manipulative orators, and I these failures later in this chapter.

Saruman adopts the same alienating strategy towards Gandalf as he claims his sole worthiness as a counselor. First he laments that Gandalf shames himself by “enduring such company” and suggests instead, “Let us understand one another, and dismiss from thought these lesser folk!” (581). Saruman tries to grow Gandalf’s sense of superiority by speaking about the others as “lesser” and “unbearable.” Though the two wizards can “understand” each other at the same ranking of power, Saruman claims, the others must be abandoned. The end result of such a speech, if Saruman succeeded, would be the “dismissal” of Gandalf’s companions. Through such statements, Saruman attempts to isolate Gandalf by convincing him that the others are below their station. This persuasion utilizes language of superiority in order to convince Gandalf that friendships with his companions rank below one with Saruman.

Though Théoden and Gandalf stand strong against such speech, the alienating effects of Saruman’s words appear in the thoughts of their companions. While listening to this speech, the men feel the following:

They were shut out, listening at a door to words not meant for them... Of loftier mould these two were made: reverend and wise. It was inevitable that they should make alliance. Gandalf would ascend into the tower, to discuss deep things beyond their comprehension in the high chambers of Orthanc. The door would be closed, and they would be left outside, dismissed to await allotted work or punishment. (582)

Each of these thoughts, led by Saruman’s speech, parallels his speech to Gandalf. The companions see Gandalf as “wise,” capable of great “comprehension.” Saruman’s speech

about dumb subjects verses the greatness of Gandalf also leads these listeners to believe that the wizard's isolation is "inevitable." If Gandalf follows Saruman's words, they expect, he will ascend above their level and leave them behind a "shut" door. These beliefs which grow in the minds of Gandalf and Théoden's companions thereby reveal what Saruman hopes will happen: that Gandalf, puffed up by a pride, will abandon his community for the counsel and strength of the evil speaker. Again, Saruman seeks to grow this pride by emphasizing that Gandalf and Théoden are better than their friends.

As Saruman struggles to address such a varied audience, he tries to discount the worthiness of Gandalf and Theoden's companions. When Gimli accuses Saruman of being a liar, the wizard condescends to him, saying, "I do not speak to you yet... and small concern of yours are the troubles of this land" (579). Through such words, Saruman first implies that Gimli has no right to speak to him without first being spoken to, and secondly that his concerns are irrelevant. This rebuke dismisses Gimli from the conversation. Another dismissal occurs when Éomer, too, points out Saruman's lies: Saruman calls him a "young serpent" and then tells the man to "Meddle not in policies which you do not understand" (580). Through this interaction, Saruman tries to portray Éomer as a liar and one too young, too incapable of understanding such lofty "policies."

Since these rebukes occur during Saruman's attempt to persuade Théoden of his unique worthiness as a counselor, the subsequent dismissals support this point. When speaking to Gimli and Éomer, Saruman emphasizes what they lack—whether status, irrelevance, or inadequacy as counselors—in order to highlight his own importance and wisdom. These statements point to the way that, as a manipulative speaker, Saruman

seeks to replace the advice of friends with his own voice. At the same time, they also point to his limitations, as his frustrations cause him to lose his temper and forfeit his supposed respectable counselor role. Still, Saruman shows his hope that if his listeners are adequately detached from the counsel of trusted friends, he can better accomplish his final goal of controlling others.

Control

Saruman accomplishes the third goal of evil speech, controlling his listener, by seeking to conform their service to himself and his plans. In his first conversation with Gandalf, Saruman claims that “I have not brought you hither to be instructed by you, but to give you a choice” (259). Such a statement sounds as though it encourages freedom and the opportunity to make a decision, but when he imprisons Gandalf on the pinnacle of Orthanc for refusing the upcoming choice, Saruman shows that this statement is false (*LOTR* 260). Furthermore, even though Saruman claims that “I said *we*, for *we* it may be, if you will join me... If we could command [The Ruling Ring], then the power would pass to *us*” (260), Gandalf recognizes the falsity in such a claim. Gandalf responds, “Only one hand at a time can wield the One, and you know that well, so do not trouble to say *we*.” In one sense, Saruman’s statement again represents his goal to isolate Gandalf by leading the wizard to join him alone. But secondly, through Saruman’s claims and Gandalf’s response, readers realize another goal of the deceptive wizard. He masks his desire to hold power over Gandalf with the claim that they can share the source of the power, the Ring; the reality is that all power would belong to Saruman. Clearly, this

speaker of evil actually intends to imprison those who refuse him, and to wield power over those who join him as he converses with them.

Furthermore, while Wormtongue usually controls the will of his listener through fear and inactivity, Saruman intends to control his listeners through conforming them to his enticing, ambitious plans. Within this conversation with Gandalf, he spins a vision of a prosperous future, saying, “We may join with that Power. It would be wise, Gandalf. There would be hope that way. Its victory is at hand; and there will be a rich reward for those that aided it” (259). Saruman’s diction throughout these statements sounds good at a surface level with words like “wise,” “hope,” “victory,” and “reward” built into them. However, these words serve only to enchant his listener. Conformity to such a “Power,” after all, in truth means enslavement to it. Examples of those who adopted the power of Sauron’s ring and became addicted to its power include Gollum, the Nazgûl, and others. Noah Koubenee writes that Gollum’s attraction to the ring turns into a “possessiveness” that “consumes him” (127), and characters “*enslaved* to the ring,” like the Nazgûl, have had “their own wills completely destroyed” (129). Sauron and his spokesperson Saruman, desire to control those who follow them in a similar way.

The reactions of those who hear these words also show that Saruman intends to control his listeners. Their thoughts, revealed by the narrator, show the power of the wizard’s words and his goal to dominate others. The narrator suggests that the following:

The sound of the voice alone was enough to keep them enthralled; but for those whom it conquered the spell endured when they were far away, and ever they heard that soft voice whispering and urging them. But none were unmoved; none rejected its pleas and its commands without an effort of mind and will, so long as its master had control of it. (578)

This effect upon Saruman's listeners also shows his goal to control, as he uses the spell-like quality of his voice to "conquer" them and "urge" them to his biddings. These methods suggest that Saruman holds little regard for the free will of those to whom he speaks, as he utilizes his abilities for persuasion and enchantment to overcome them. Such a description also suggests the potential for power that Saruman's speeches possess. Though some still resist his voice by an effort of the "mind and will," no one who heard him was "unmoved." Even from afar, Saruman controls those exposed to his words.

Other descriptions of his words and effects upon his listeners suggest Saruman's desire to control others through the use of speech. To Gandalf and Theoden's companions he exclaims, "Let them wait on our decisions!" (581), and the internal reactions of these men respond to such words. They feel like "ill-mannered children or stupid servants overhearing the elusive discourse of their elders," waiting for their "allotted work or punishment" (582). Since Saruman places little value in these men, not needing to manipulate their power or position as he does with Gandalf and Théoden, the twisted wizard does not hide his desire to dominate them. He speaks to them as one would to "servants," and those persuaded by his words await his commands. Saruman reveals his goal to control others, whether he values their service or not, both through his speech and through what it causes in those who listen to him.

Persuasion Verses Manipulation

Tolkien reveals through these passages with Saruman what malicious orators seek, and what they often accomplish. Still, in a following chapter he shows that words

are not always used to persuade in the negative sense. A counterexample to the manipulative work of words appears in Tolkien's account of the Ents, a race of tree-people who shepherd the forests. In the Chapter, "Treebeard," the Ents gather to decide a course of action for dealing with the threat of Isengard. In these scenes, the Ents achieve great changes in others without relying on verbose manipulation. Instead, they operate as a community, using different kinds of communication, such as sounds, singing, and an "unhasty" language (480), in order to persuade their listeners. In other words, the Ents adopt a different speech and different timing to influence hearts, minds, and wills.

From investigating Ent speeches, it might seem at first that these creatures persuade without the extensive use of words. It is clear, after all, that Ents like Treebeard do not desire to speak very often. Examples of this Ent's view of speech include statements about his own language: "It is a lovely language, but it takes a very long time to say anything in it, because we do not say anything in it, unless it is worth taking a long time to say, and to listen to" (465). And similarly, he adds, "it is easier to shout *stop!* than to do it" (474). Such quotes could suggest that Treebeard and the other Ents purposefully avoid the use of speaking, and that they appreciate those who take the effort to actually do what they say. Treebeard gives forth a great call to gather the other Ents, which at least to the ears of Pippin and Merry, sounds like "*hoom, hom*" syllables. The call invites others to speak, which manipulative speakers usually do not allow or desire.

Compared to this invitation, a lengthy conversation is required to spur the Ents into battle. The gathered Ents spend three whole days communicating with one another, trying to decide what must be done about Isengard. Their introductory chants and

greetings, for example, show “no signs of slackening” for such a long time that Pippin wonders whether “they had yet got further than *Good Morning*” (480). Throughout the next few days, the hobbits regularly hear the “musical” Ent voices “still rising and falling in their conclave,” and Treebeard explains that the Ents must hear all the “facts and events” before making up their minds (482). When he first speaks to the hobbits to gather such information, Treebeard himself requests of the hobbits, “Now tell me your tale, and do not hurry” (471). Altogether, the Ents present information carefully and meticulously as they speak to one another. Whereas Saruman, as an evil speaker, hides information and offers little opportunity for questions, the Ents work together to gather every detail.

Changed hearts, minds, and wills remain goals of the Ents’ dialogue, as shown through what Treebeard mentions above, and later. When Treebeard suggests that the Ents desire to make up their minds by hearing stories and “facts,” he shows that the changing of minds still takes place through the Ent dialogue. With such an “unhasty” nature, the Ents simply desire the presentation to show more details, especially for important decisions. Similar to the other speakers explored in this paper, he and the other Ents use stories to lead others to action—though, compared to speakers like Saruman, the stories they tell actually represent the truth. The three days of communicating these facts finally “rouses” the Ents. As the Ents speak to one another, they offer an alternative to deceptive strategies of persuasion.

Treebeard later suggests that Ent persuasion also relates to the changing of hearts, though not for purposes of control. He notes that the feeling of impending doom “has long been growing in our hearts,” and so “it was not a hasty resolve” (486). Though the

decision to take action had been growing in the hearts of the Ents, the lengthy discourse of the Ents was needed in order for such a “resolve” to happen. The Ent council finally awakens its members to an emotional change—the Hobbits watch them come from the meeting, singing passionately (485)—and a change of will. Though the Ents had waited and watched for many years, this meeting encourages them to take physical action. As the Ents speak to one another, Treebeard suggests, they address feelings already shared—clearer through pronouns like “our”—rather than trying to create emotions of fear through the communication. When the Ents decide to awaken, this choice occurs jointly, not through the will of one speaker.

Finally, as related to another important component of speech in this thesis—what speakers suggest about a person’s *community*—the Ents show quite a different example of valuing others’ voices. While evil speakers like Saruman and Wormtongue try to isolate those who listen to them, the Ents make decisions together. Treebeard tells the hobbits, “I have managed to make a fair number promise to come” (478), and that conversation began once the “whole assembly,” each “as different from one another as trees from trees,” had arrived (480). These descriptions suggest that Treebeard values the insight and participation of as many Ents as possible, and that they did not wish to start until each one arrived. The variety and diversity of this group is also evident from the physical descriptions of the tree-people. Thus, as Treebeard seeks to inform and call the Ents to action, he adopts the complete opposite approach of evil rhetoricians. He wants, instead, to include multiple viewpoints and values the presence of those who arrive. Given the length of the conversation and the dispersal of voices, it is likely that many, if not all, of

the Ents receive their chance to ask questions and share information. Pippin hears a variety of Ents speaking: “First one joined and then another, until they were all chanting together in a long rising and falling rhythm, now louder on one side of the ring, now dying away there and rising to a great boom on the other side” (480). Pippin does not hear every detail of this conversation, but he recognizes the way that the Ent dialogue shifts around their circle. Here, the Ents show that decisions can be made through speaking together.

Sofia Parrlla suggests in “The Personhood of Nature” that Ent speeches confirm Tolkien’s desire to give a voice back to nature. As he found the “human maltreatment” of plants and animals “hard to bear” (*Letters* 220), Darilla writes, Tolkien wanted to bring these creatures to life in his work. Since the Ents represent a form of “defense and advocacy” for the forests in Middle Earth, they receive the power to speak in his work. Their ability to both physically defend the lands, as well as speak in defense of them, work together in the text. Thus, Darilla suggests, Tolkien’s characterization of the Ents as speaking creatures represents an important part of their role as tree-shepherds. Their ability to advocate for the trees means that the Ents desire to persuade their listeners as well; though, when looking at evil speakers, one sees that the Ents desire to restore through their voices, rather than twist and destroy.

The Ents show that persuasion is possible without the use of manipulation. As they address the hearts, minds, and wills of their community, they do so without control or distortion. In many ways, this model also points to the way that these tree-shepherds respect those who listen to them, giving others the opportunity to consider all that is said

before making a decision. Ents provide the time and space to consider accurate information, and they include many more voices. As their approach looks different from that of evil speakers, the Ents suggest an alternative to the types of persuasion shown throughout the rest of this paper.

Introduction to The Screwtape Letters

Throughout Part B of this chapter I note the ways that Screwtape's rhetorical manipulation, as related to encouraged pride, follows the goals and methods of other evil speakers. As mentioned in the Introductory Chapter of my thesis, along with Chapter 1, Screwtape's speech fills Lewis's novel through letter form. In order to examine the specific ways that Screwtape accomplishes the shared goal of evil rhetoricians in the texts I examine, I group this speaker's phrases by theme. This chapter, like others, first addresses the way that Screwtape encourages Wormwood to twist the "patient's" heart and mind, his sense of community, and his will. Chapter 1 addressed the ways that Screwtape accomplishes such distortions by encouraging fear, while this chapter focuses on the way that encouraged pride also serves as a method of manipulation across this three-fold goal. As the chapter investigates these methods, it also draws comparisons to the pride-focused speakers already described.

Heart and Mind

Maligning speech that induces pride in the listener appears across *The Screwtape Letters*, and the devilish speakers often plan to adopt this strategy. As related to distortion of the *heart*, Screwtape writes that sins like gluttony, for example, can be encouraged in a

listener with the installation of pride. He writes, “Males are best turned into gluttons with the help of their vanity. They ought to be made to think themselves very knowing about food, to pique themselves on having found the only restaurant in the town where steaks are really “properly” cooked. What begins as vanity can then be gradually turned into habit” (*SL* 36). In other words, when the devils “make” their listeners think highly of themselves and their food preferences, they are more likely to develop gluttonous habits. Screwtape implies the types of speech that promotes such pride: the devils might encourage thoughts of self-praise (“to pique” oneself) or the sense of superiority for finding the best restaurant. Compared to the reason for Saruman’s praise of Gandalf and Théoden—to gain support and power—this method by Screwtape sounds rather petty, but the goal remains the same. In both texts, evil speakers point out that their listener is “very knowing,” or superior, with the hopes that he/she might regard themselves in a vain manner, and most of all develop sinful “habits” because of this state of the heart.

This strategy to encourage pride also appears when Screwtape explains how to “misdirect” sexual preferences in a patient. In some times, he says, they “directed” male tastes to “the statuesque and aristocratic type of beauty, mixing men's vanity with their desires and encouraging the race to breed chiefly from the most arrogant and prodigal women” (41). Here, Screwtape reveals his goal, as an evil speaker, to twist the desires of the hearts of men. He and other devils “direct” such humans, through their suggestions and persuasions, not only to think highly of themselves, but also to seek the same trait in their respective partner. Though a younger devil, not the patient, technically represents Screwtape’s audience, one might imagine that the elder devil adopts diction like

“statuesque” and “aristocratic beauty” when seeking to entice his human listeners. Like other speakers who usually focus on methods of pride, Screwtape uses high-sounding vocabulary to emphasize the listener’s importance.

Screwtape’s letters reveal that he, as an evil speaker, also seeks to twist his patient’s heart through creating false hope. Screwtape suggests that if their person is aware of potential future troubles and prays for “virtues wherewith to meet them,” Wormwood ought to “try the word ‘complacency’ on him” (32). Such methods are useful, according to Screwtape, since “We want a whole race perpetually in pursuit of the rainbow’s end, never honest, nor kind, nor happy now, but always using as mere fuel wherewith to heap the altar of the future every real gift which is offered them in the Present” (32). In order to spur on their patient towards this description of those who pursue an ephemeral vision of the future, Screwtape suggests that Wormwood mock the patient’s supposed inaction through calling him “complacent.” Through such mocking, the devils show that they seek to diminish the activity of prayer and spur on the patient to other “pursuits.” Successful persuasions lead listeners to place their hope in the future, and to pursue this end through dishonesty, cruelty, and unhappiness. Such speeches by Screwtape thus reveal his shared goal with other manipulative speakers to twist the desires, and therefore the actions, of his listener.

Screwtape and Wormwood do not develop their own reliability as they seek to twist their patient’s mind, but like other evil speakers they still adopt a strategic vernacular to distort a listener’s sense of history, and of good and evil. [As mentioned in Chapter 1, Screwtape finds it more effective if humans forget the existence of devils or

think of them as mere caricatures (*SL* 15)]. Screwtape writes that “Jargon, not argument, is your best ally in keeping him from the Church. Don't waste time trying to make him think that materialism is true! Make him think it is strong, or stark, or courageous” (3). Here, Screwtape suggests that they mask the error of materialism with suggestions that it is a sign of strength or virtue, and through saying so, he shows his desire to twist the patient’s understanding of what is wrong and right. His phrase also resembles those of Saruman and other speakers who distort evils by calling them strengths.

Finally, this phrase represents an early example of the devils’ desire to isolate the man from the community of “the Church,” as evident from Screwtape’s intent to “keep him” from it. Through such words, the devils also seek to undermine the man’s perception of the institution; they see that encouraging a lofty understanding of a lifestyle like materialism might diminish the patient’s view of one devoted to obeying the church. In such a way, they hope that their speech will twist the mind of their patient, in terms of what he sees as “true” or good.

Screwtape returns to this point about churches when he encourages Wormwood to twist the patient’s understanding of the past. He explains that the latter devil should “persuade [the man] that ‘his religious phase’ is just going to die away like all his previous phases” (20). In order to convince the patient of this narrative, Screwtape suggests the following:

It is jargon, not reason, you must rely on. The mere word phase will very likely do the trick... You keep him well fed on hazy ideas of Progress and Development and the Historical Point of View, I trust, and give him lots of modern Biographies to read? The people in them are always emerging from Phases, aren't they? (20)

In this way, Screwtape shows that he desires to shift the listener's understanding of his own story: that his current faith represents only a 'phase' that he will later leave behind. Screwtape suggests that ideas about 'progress' be fed to the patient, and again emphasizes that 'jargon' and 'the mere word phrase' serve as their best tools for such persuasions. He even offers another tool of maligning speech, 'modern' writings, with the hope that the patient identifies with those who 'emerged from Phases,' which the texts describe. Through such methods, Screwtape shows his shared goal with other evil speakers in these novels to twist a listener's understanding of their own story. He seeks to confuse and twist the minds of humans by utilizing certain words and adopting twisted story-telling.

The devils also seek to twist human minds by distorting their view of Christ. Screwtape explains his earlier work, saying that they constructed the idea of a 'historical Jesus' to "distract men's minds from Who He is, and what He did. We first make Him solely a teacher, and then... we substitute a merely probable, remote, shadowy, and uncouth figure, one who spoke a strange language and died a long time ago" (47). The devils, as evidenced by this quotation, seek to distort their listeners' understanding of who Jesus actually is. They hope that their suggestions of him will lead these people to think of him as a historical 'teacher,' and then later see his existence as 'merely probable,' such that Christ's existence and importance is forgotten or never discovered. These distractions and substitutions in "mens' minds" thus serve as another example of the ways in which the devils seek to distort the minds of their listener.

Community

Screwtape seeks to diminish the patient's view of his church community—by convincing the patient that he is superior to them. Screwtape writes what Wormwood ought to say when the patient goes to church and sees the “neighbours whom he has hitherto avoided. You want to lean pretty heavily on those neighbours... Provided that any of those neighbours sing out of tune, or have boots that squeak, or double chins, or odd clothes, the patient will quite easily believe that their religion must therefore be somehow ridiculous” (*SL 5*).

Here, Screwtape relies on the previous habits and beliefs of the patient. In the past, the man “avoided” this community, and the devils hope he will do the same again. He and Wormwood plan to make the man's attention “lean” on the imperfections of the neighbors' singing or appearance, such that he see them as “ridiculous.” If their man sees these people as lesser, as they suggest to him, the devils know that he is less likely to spend time with them or to return to church at all. Later, too, he writes that if the patient learns about the moral failings of people at his church like “extortion,” then Wormwood's task is to have him believe that he shows “great humility and condescension in going to church with these “smug,” commonplace neighbours at all” (6). This strategy by Screwtape thereby resembles other evil speakers who emphasize the shame of enduring such ridiculous, unworthy companions. Saruman, readers might recall, describes King Théoden and Gandalf's companions as “lesser” and common. And in the upcoming chapter on *That Hideous Strength*, speakers suggest to Mark that some friendships won't help him advance “higher up” (110). In these cases, these evil speakers seek to tear down

the listener's view of their good community—one which fights against forces of evil, represented by Sauron, the devil, or the “N.I.C.E. institute”—such that these humans think more highly of themselves, and ultimately abandon the community. These similarities present one example of the ways in which evil speakers adopt similar strategies as they seek to distort relationships through speech.

Sharing the goal of other manipulative speakers to destroy loving community, Screwtape continues to advise Wormwood. He suggests a strategy of sowing hatred and division, telling Wormwood to point out the flaws of the patient's mother. He writes that the latter devil ought to “Bring fully into the consciousness of your patient that particular lift of his mother's eyebrows which he learned to dislike in the nursery, and let him think how much he dislikes it” (7). These facial expressions, Screwtape says, might induce “domestic hatred,” just as harmless words said in “such a voice, or at such a moment... are not far short of a blow in the face” (7). The goal of such interactions between the two is that each shares “the express purpose of offending and yet having a grievance when offence is taken” (8). These sort of methods by Screwtape suggest that he and Wormwood seek to instigate enmity between this patient and his mother. They encourage thoughts of “dislike” and “hatred” such that the patient might use his own speech to figuratively strike his mother. The use of more violent diction like ‘blow’ in this phrase by Screwtape also shows his desire to create strife between people.

Other examples of Screwtape's goal to separate the patient from his Christian community appear later. He shows his desire to distort the patient's view of belonging when he tells Wormwood to make the man think, “‘How different we Christians are’; and

by ‘we Christians’ he must really, but unknowingly, mean ‘my set’... The idea of belonging to an inner ring, of being in a secret, is very sweet to him. Play on that nerve” (50). In one sense this quote represents an alternative strategy. If Screwtape cannot make the patient leave the Christians behind, then he might make the man feel entitled to their community. This idea of the belonging to a secret circle is one that Lewis addresses in greater detail in *That Hideous Strength* and his essay, “The Inner Ring.”¹

Through such methods, the devils seek to skew the way that their patients think about the purpose of community. Rather than seeing one’s friends, or church, as “the people who, in their charity and humility, have accepted” them, those who listen to these devils might believe that belonging is characterized as the “people with whom I associate by right” (SL 50). In other words, these evil speakers want their listener to see self-worthiness as the prerequisite to relationships, not the “charitable” love of those who receive them. As long as these listeners believe such words, these evil speakers achieve their goal of instilling division between the person and community. Though they may technically be ‘within’ the group, such people surely cannot reciprocate the same kind of humility or trust while having this belief that they have ‘the right’ to the acceptance of these people. Through these words, the devils show that growing such pride and entitlement serves as the foundation for such community-related distortions.

¹ Lewis writes that the desire for an Inner Ring might result from an ambition for “power, money, liberty to break rules, avoidance of routine duties, evasion of discipline [or] the delicious sense of secret intimacy,” and how the “Inner Ring is most skilful in making a man who is not yet a very bad man do very bad things.” Lewis suggests through this essay that the Inner Ring is commonplace, and that its ends are often evil, offering greater insight into why their evil speakers spend so much time promoting exclusivity and inner groups.

In a later letter, Screwtape also expresses his dislike for the patient's new romance, and his reaction reveals a loss of speaking control. He describes the reasons why he is horrified at their relationship and how she "makes me vomit. She stinks and scalds through the very pages of the dossier. It drives me mad" (45). Compared to the instance above with the patient's mother, Screwtape loses his cool, as evident through his curses and physical reactions. Screwtape releases such anger upon Wormwood for this failure to keep the man from "woman's family and whole circle," and he writes that "In the heat of composition I find that I have inadvertently allowed myself to assume the form of a large centipede" (46). Screwtape's hatred of such communities and his frustration at Wormwood become so great that he loses physical control as well, taking the form of a "centipede." Such collapses in the facade of Screwtape's persuasive act show that neither he nor other evil speakers described in my thesis possess limitless power. Similar to Saruman in the beginning of this chapter, Screwtape's inability to combat the "circle" of the patient's friends causes his rhetorical strategy to break down.

Control

The evil speakers of *The Screwtape Letters* also show their plans to control their listeners. Sometimes their methods include persuading a human such that their will to act is diminished, but they also seek to conform a human's decision-making to their own as well. The devils' previous methods contribute to this goal, for as long as their patient succumbs to their speech, he or she serves the wishes of the devils. Still, this goal to control humans becomes especially clear through what Screwtape writes specifically

about the will. This upcoming quote relates less to the devils' speech, but it does show where they hope all their temptations, persuasions, and suggestions lead: attaining "permanent possession of a soul" (*SL* 17). In comparing his goals to his enemy, God, Screwtape writes the following:

To us a human is primarily good; our aim is the absorption of its will into ours, the increase of our own area of selfhood at its expense... We want cattle who can finally become food; He wants servants who can finally become sons. We want to suck in, He wants to give out. We are empty and would be filled; He is full and flows over. Our war aim is a world in which Our Father Below has drawn all other beings into himself. (17)

A few contrasts between devils control of others' wills and that of speakers in *The Lord of the Rings* and *That Hideous Strength* occur because, as described in the paper's introduction, they differ as speakers. These devils are, as C.S. Lewis quotes from Thomas Moore in his introductory pages, "prowde spirites" (1). As spiritual beings, these devils ultimately seek to "absorb" human wills; their "Father Below" intends to draw other "beings into himself." Physical speakers control others' actions, but they cannot, in Lewis's terms, consume the wills as "food."

Still, other than this difference of what *happens* to the wills under the power of these speakers, Screwtape makes it clear that enslaving the will is "the aim" of their methods. Screwtape describes the humans he seeks to control as "cattle," and "servants," and such adjectives suggest his desire to control and manipulate, alongside his view of the humans as lesser beings. Furthermore, the devils show that they want to absorb human wills, resulting in the "expense of selfhood." This phrase suggests that, once a soul falls into the possession of hell, it loses its individuality, its very person. By calling

this process “a war,” Screwtape shows that he fights for the stripping and absorbing of human wills.

Screwtape continues to describe his goal to control others, one shared by Hell, in later letters. Speaking of the devil, he writes, “Our Father hopes in the end to say “Mine” of all things on the more realistic and dynamic ground of conquest” (44). Diction throughout this sentence points to Screwtape’s goal of control. Along with his “Father” below, he intends to “conquer” and dominate others. Later, too, he says to his trainee, Wormwood, that “The justice of Hell is purely realistic, and concerned only with results. Bring us back food, or be food yourself” (61). Even those who work from the side of Hell cannot escape its goals, for everyone who serves its goals must either bring more slaves for “food,” or be consumed instead.

Screwtape and other devils often achieve this goal, enslaving a soul in hell, through first binding them to the world. He suggests to Wormwood that “Prosperity knits a man to the World. He feels that he is “finding his place in it”, while really it is finding its place in him. His increasing reputation, his widening circle of acquaintances, his sense of importance, the growing pressure of absorbing and agreeable work, build up in him a sense of being really at home in earth which is just what we want” (57). Words like “knits” and “absorbing” emphasize that the devils want their humans bound to the cares and successes of the earth. Even potentially good things like “agreeable work” and “reputation,” he suggests, can tie down such a person. Screwtape thereby reveals through this quote that he uses prosperity to distract souls from thinking about their eternal home—their destination after death—to control them to a love of the temporary one.

Screwtape and the other devils promote a love of “importance” and wealth to “build up” a sense of security and hope in something which will ultimately control them and direct them to Hell. Through such promises, such evil speakers show that they hope to conform the wills of their listeners to grim plans.

For this last section, readers can recall earlier speaking methods of the devils to consider how this goal to control occurs. Enslaving a soul to the world might look like Screwtape’s descriptions of how to twist a human’s desires in the earlier section of this chapter. Anything from the vain love of particular foods, aristocratic romance or friendship (41), ephemeral pursuits (32), materialism (3), or something else serve as tools which direct the heart and mind of a soul to serve personal, temporary interests—and thus the interests of the devils. If they succeed, they enslave a human to the cares of earth, and ultimately the appetite of an evil power. Altogether, this work by Lewis contributes detailed insight into the ways that evil speakers operate within the mind, and the next chapter returns to audible voices in the modern world.

CHAPTER 4

Rhetorical Manipulation of the Inner Ring

Introduction

This chapter focuses on Feverstone and Frost from C.S. Lewis's *That Hideous Strength*, who embody many of the speech strategies shown by other evil speakers in my thesis. This novel by Lewis includes several examples of rhetorical manipulation by those who come from "N.I.C.E., the National Institute of Co-ordinated Experiments." This name ironically depicts the complete opposite characterization, as a villainous organization that seeks to fuse "the state and the laboratory" (*THS* 23). *That Hideous Strength* follows Mark and Jane Studdock, a married couple in 'Edgestow' who encounter the devices of N.I.C.E. and Mark Studdock especially encounters speakers from this institute—so many that I do not address each one.

Other speakers who I do not examine include the characters Fairy, Wither, the Reverend Straik, and Filostrato. Though speeches of these characters, too, often follow the models that I have explored, the length of this paper requires a closer focus. In choosing which speakers to address, the methods of Feverstone and Frost more closely resemble those in *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Screwtape Letters*, as these speakers seek to distort Mark's mind and heart, isolate him from others, and control his will through their speeches. As Feverstone and Frost promote Mark's pride through these goals, they regularly entice him to join their inner ring.

An examination of Feverstone, Frost, and key scenes helps one better understand the speeches which appear in this chapter. Feverstone represents one of the few characters who appears in all three books of *The Space Trilogy*, though being called “Feverstone” is a change from the previous books. Mark hears that Lord Feverstone used to be known as “Dick Devine”; Feverstone himself tells Mark of his involvement in an “interplanetary problem,” a much abbreviated description of his attempt to take control of others planets and their resources (41). Deborah Klein writes that at this point of the trilogy, Feverstone “craves not merely wealth but raw power” (70). Perhaps Feverstone’s name change serves to emphasize a “feverish” desire for such power, which holds a contagious effect upon those who listen to him, especially Mark at the beginning of the text.

Feverstone is first introduced as the one who “got [Mark’s] fellowship” at Bracton college (*THS* 18), a fact which leaves Mark unsettled and unhappy that something besides “the excellence of his work” granted him the position. In this way, he immediately finds himself in a place of indebtedness to Feverstone. Mark and other characters first hear Feverstone’s voice at a meeting which decides the fate of Bragdon Wood, a historic area of Edgestow University, the primary setting of *That Hideous Strength*. Feverstone and a few of his companions appear as representatives of N.I.C.E., who arrive at the meeting intending to purchase the forest, and the dialogue shows the type of verbal strategies which Feverstone and Frost and other evil speakers adopt throughout the text. In later encounters, Feverstone tries to persuade Mark to become more involved with N.I.C.E., and these conversations are described throughout this chapter.

Frost, on the other hand, appears for the first time in this last novel of *The Space Trilogy*. Lewis portrays Frost as a psychoanalyst, not only through his highly scientific language, but also physically: the “description of his face, replete with neat, pointed beard and pince-nez glasses, is strongly evocative of that of Sigmund Freud” (Boenig 10). Frost, along with other N.I.C.E. representatives, spread their scientific dictions across Edgestow in order to promote “metaphysical naturalism,” a worldview which encourages the subjective understanding of oneself and others (Smalt 16). Lewis calls those who live this way, and who ignore the presence of the human soul, “men without chests” (*The Abolition of Man* 26), and through this story, Lewis shows the lack of morality that such men often possess and spread. Frost’s name, too, points to the way that he, like other N.I.C.E. members, withers and freezes “the mind and spirit of those with whom he communicates” (Smalt 82).

Frost’s appearances occur mostly in the second half of *That Hideous Strength*, around the same time that Feverstone’s involvement fades. Frost’s speeches, compared to Feverstone, sound “most aggressive” (Smalt 89). While Feverstone’s role seems tied to enticing Mark and others to join N.I.C.E., Frost seeks to initiate Mark into the institution, to create real loyalty and “heart changes” (*THS* 240). The main conversations that this chapter addresses, as related to Frost, include those that occur during Mark’s imprisonment; Mark had attempted to escape involvement with N.I.C.E, and their corrupt police department frames him for a murder. In the N.I.C.E. prison, Mark is subject to the maligning speeches of Frost, even as his awareness of N.I.C.E. propaganda—and distaste for it—has grown. Frost’s rhetorical strategies follow the goals of other evil speakers, but

his persuasions also venture into non-verbal strategies; I address these methods at the end of the chapter and explain why they do not diminish what Lewis suggests about the way that language can manipulate a person. As a whole, *That Hideous Strength* shows a series of manipulative speeches which resemble those already explored in *The Screwtape Letters* and Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*.

Mind and Heart

Feverstone and Frost seek to twist the minds and hearts of their listeners, a theme that appears throughout their speeches. For the first of these speakers, Feverstone is much more abrasive in his style than smooth rhetors like Saruman, but the goals of his speeches look similar. As Feverstone seeks to distort the *minds* of his listeners, starting with his audience at Bracton College over the matter of Bragdon Wood, Feverstone manipulates others by emphasizing monetary concerns. Though his audience knows that he intends to purchase the woods, at first Feverstone rather suggests that the wall around the wood “*was* in a very unsatisfactory condition” (24). To all those listening, it appeared that Feverstone was “*revolting*” against his own side, desiring to protect the wall, after all. But in truth, Feverstone adopted this position only as a way to “*inquire icily*” whether the College should seriously consider the expense of such a project, a figure that he brings forth (24).

Feverstone uses the response of the crowd to suggest that a partnership with N.I.C.E. represents the best scenario. In the uproar that follows, Feverstone and his companions gain an opening to suggest that the selling of Bragdon Wood would benefit

the college financially, rather than worsening its situation with “stipends” (26). In the opening of his speech, Feverstone thereby manages to silence his detractors—those who hoped to protect the woods—and maneuver N.I.C.E. into the position of a financial savior. In this way, Feverstone shifts the narrative from what is *also* at stake with the selling of the wood, such as the historical significance of the lands, to one surrounding money. Readers may remember that Saruman, too, claims the advantages of his friendship, and that Screwtape twists the minds of his listeners by recreating narratives. From his first speech, Feverstone encourages his audience to unite with the institute.

The types of words that Feverstone uses in this section also contribute to his persuasion. Above, Feverstone uses words like “unsatisfactory” to describe the appearance of the Bragdon Wood wall, which contributes to his goal of making the woods’ preservation an undesirable mental picture. Once he and his companions gain the support of the majority, however, they proceed by speaking of the woods in a much different manner. “It was not called, “the sale of Bragdon Wood, [but rather the] sale of the area coloured pink on the plan” (27). Such diction by Feverstone and N.I.C.E. surely serves to diminish the sense of physical loss. The loss of the land is reduced, through their words, to a two-dimensional piece of paper. In this way, they manipulate the way that their audience thinks about the meeting’s conclusion.

Frost, too, twists the minds of others, particularly Mark’s, through spinning lofty and false narratives, making scientists (and N.I.C.E.) the hero of humankind’s history. While he speaks to the imprisoned Mark, Frost suggests that thanks to the microscope, humans discovered “macrobes,” organisms which supersede man’s intelligence and carry

such importance that “all history will have to be re-written” for them (257). By co-operating with these macrobes, Frost tells him, N.I.C.E. could “preserve and extend” the human species by removing, as much as possible, the animal-like qualities of man: emotions, subjectivity (259). Again, Frost’s interpretation of the past, as an evolutionary period which prepares the way for human cooperation with macrobes, serves to shift Mark’s understanding of himself and the human race. Frost’s use of words like “preserve and extend” contributes to his claim that the human race needs cooperation with macrobes. These types of phrases serve to confuse Mark’s sense of what it means for the human race to develop. In the process, such a speech also encourages Mark to think highly of the institute and desire to join such a mission.

If Mark believed such a narrative, he might desire to join Frost’s plan, and his reaction to Frost’s speech shows this very effect upon his mind. Lewis writes that Mark was “fully occupied with the conflict between his resolution not to trust these men, never again to be lured by any bait into a real co-operation” (259). Through such thoughts, Mark shows that he recognizes Frost’s attempt to “lure” him with such words and to establish trust again. The fact that he must “fully” occupy his will to resist suggests the power of Frost’s speech and the weakness of Mark to overcome it. The way in which Frost explicitly states his desire to “re-write” history also points to the way that he, as a manipulative rhetor, desires to twist others’ understanding of the past.

Frost continues adopting unemotional language as he tries to twist Mark’s mind and heart. His approach looks different from those of other evil speakers as he does not merely redefine what is right and wrong, but actually encourages a new way of thinking

“objectively.” After Mark asks whether N.I.C.E. intends to kill him, Frost suggests that Mark “must observe these feelings in yourself in an objective manner. Do not let them distract your attention from the facts” (255). Though Mark rightly distrusts Frost, this speaker tries to “distract” him from the actual facts. The more that Mark ignores his emotions of fear, Frost seems to know, the more that he will trust the scientist’s message.

Frost also seeks to distort Mark’s heart by encouraging a love for vain knowledge and grand opportunity—particularly by joining the inner circle of the institute. From the very beginning of their interaction he suggests that Mark may be in “danger,” but that he is “also within reach of a great opportunity” (254). This statement sounds quite similar to the tactics of Saruman and Screwtape, who briefly point out the danger of the listener’s situation only so that the “great opportunity,” described afterwards, looks more appealing. Other examples of grandiose and lofty language appear especially as Frost describes “macrobes,” the “intellectual development of man,” and “Technocracy” (257). Scientific words like “macrobes” and “technocracy” appeal to the desire for knowledge, and the appeal for “development” encourages the desire for being part of a high, powerful plan.

Mark’s internal reaction to such a speech shows that Frost targets these same desires. He suggests that the words inspired “ravenous curiosity,” “delirious excitement” (256, 258). Mark’s emotional hunger for the intellect of such speeches, and a desire to take part in the plans, appear despite his efforts to stand strong against them. Though Frost denies the power of emotion to sway and alter human understanding, ironically, these feelings in Mark lead him closer to wanting the opportunities that N.I.C.E. presents.

As a verbal manipulator, Frost appeals to Mark's pride by enticing him with vainglorious descriptions of the institute's plans.

Returning to Feverstone, readers see that this speaker inspires similarly prideful emotions as he speaks to Mark directly. He invites Mark to join his institute after praising him for all the papers he wrote and emphasizes the importance of such "recruiting" from the college (40). Feverstone mocks the idea that either one of them would remain at Bracton College, telling Mark that "You... would be absolutely wasted as Warden" (40). In such phrases, Feverstone emphasizes Mark's abilities, to the extent that Mark's potential extends far beyond college leadership positions. The effects upon Mark, because of this speech by Feverstone, appear through his internal processing. He feels a "giddy sensation" in the idea of joining Feverstone's plans, and "thanked his stars" that he had not spoken seriously about a college that Feverstone saw as a "small idiots' school" (40). These thoughts reveal that Feverstone's speech instills emotions of excitement in Mark towards joining a lofty vision, and second, relief that Feverstone views him more highly than others. Speakers in *That Hideous Strength* take advantage of Mark's desire for status as they seek to distort his relationships.

Community

Frost and Feverstone first try to isolate Mark through their speeches from any voice other than that of N.I.C.E.'s agenda. Feverstone silences others from the beginning of *That Hideous Strength*, first during the dialogue about Bragden Wood. The only person who truly stands up to Feverstone in this dialogue is Canon Jewel, an elderly man who

stands, “blind and shaky and almost weeping,” hardly audible amidst the excited chatter (28). Feverstone notices and loudly suggests that “If Canon Jewel wishes us not to hear his views, I suggest that his end could be better attained by silence... [Jewel] spread out his hands with a gesture of helplessness, shrunk back, and began laboriously to resume his chair” (28). This speech by Feverstone, along with its intended effect, also point to his goals. He rudely commands the older man to silence and offers him no chance to speak. Clearly, Feverstone wants to prevent anyone from hearing Jewel’s “views,” and ends Jewel’s attempts. The man’s distress, first visible in his physical weakness and “shaking,” thereby concludes with his shrinking back into his chair. Readers of my thesis might recall the similarities of this situation with that of King Théoden, whose voice was also removed by another evil speaker, and whose physical diminishment serves as a visual effect of such disabling speeches. As related to Feverstone’s silencing of wiser companions, his rude speech prevents other viewpoints, besides his own, from being heard. Additionally, it shows his low view of those who are not young or powerful enough to promote themselves.

Later, Feverstone also persuades Mark to adopt isolating practices. Feverstone tells him to seek a ‘superior’ community: the inner ring of N.I.C.E. He tells Mark, “Take my advice and get into Wither’s good books again as soon as you can...I wouldn’t be too thick with the Fairy: it won’t do you any good higher up. There are wheels within wheels” (110). According to Feverstone, Mark might continue to rise up the ranks if Wither, the creepy, watery-eyed Deputy Director of N.I.C.E. (52), approves of him. Certain relationships, such as one with “Fairy” (another dubious N.I.C.E. member who

certainly represents no great influence, either), cannot benefit Mark's standing.

Feverstone, by using the metaphor of "wheels within wheels," emphasizes that Mark must use relationships to grow in importance and continue moving into the next ring. In this way, he appeals to Mark's desire, as mentioned earlier, for inclusion in secret plans and high-ranking groups. This kind of statement sounds similar to those by Saruman and Screwtape, for Feverstone also calls his listener to step higher, to seek the approval of those with more power—just as Saruman told Gandalf to join the power of Sauron and forsake his less-powerful companions, and just as Screwtape suggested that the patient seek rich and superficial friends (*SL* 21). As rhetorical manipulators, these characters intend to encourage the prideful search for self-importance within an exclusive community, too.

Frost also tries to distort Mark's view of community through his speech. While Mark sits in his cell, Frost suggests that Mark must first pass an "admission" before being accepted into N.I.C.E.'s inner circle (255). The inner circle, he suggests, is not bound by feelings of "mutual confidence," which are reproducible "by injections," but rather by objective "intercourse with the macrobes" (256-58). Becoming one community, in the words of Frost, is more of a biological process than one based on friendship and trust. His repeated mentioning of the institute's inner "circle" represents a continued temptation that Feverstone began. Frost continues to feed into Mark's desire for acceptance into such a group, one of the factors which led him to N.I.C.E. from the start. In this way, Frost redefines what it means to be unified with a community, and secondly encourages Mark's prideful desire to be in a place of importance and secrecy.

Mark's reaction to such words also suggests the effect that such a speech has upon him, in terms of the way that he sees others. At the end of Frost's speech Mark realizes that here, "(so his desire whispered to him) was the true inner circle of all, the circle whose centre was outside the human race — the ultimate secret, the supreme power, the last initiation... It came into his mind that Frost knew all about this excitement" (259). Despite all the horrors that Mark hears, including Frost's vision for a future of human heads, Mark still finds himself attracted to descriptions of this inner circle. This twisted community offers secrets and power, even beyond those offered by the "human race." Mark, in his effort to resist Frost, recognizes that the psychoanalyst *wants* him to feel excited by such a prospect. Like other evil speakers who promote pride in their listener, Frost thereby entices Mark through emphasizing the exclusiveness of N.I.C.E., and by redefining the purpose of community and friendship.

Control

This speech by Feverstone ties into his goals for domineering others, not only Mark, but also the whole human race. Feverstone encourages Mark to join him in his quest for the "domination of Man" during a lengthy dialogue. He tries to justify eugenics and the efficiency of the human race by suggesting that "Man has got to take charge of Man. That means, remember, that some men have got to take charge of the rest... You and I want to be the people who do the taking charge, not the ones who are taken charge of" (42). Compared to another community in *That Hideous Strength*, the household of Ransom, which relies upon and supports its members—seen, for example, in the scene

where the members prepare a meal together (166)—Feverstone’s proposal drastically differs. His speech suggests that “Man” must be domineered by other men, an unavoidable pattern.

In this way, Feverstone appeals to Mark’s pride by offering him the chance to wield power over others, and by suggesting that they must avoid being “taken charge of.” He again reveals his “feverish” desire to take control of a world, along with his intention to draw Mark’s own will into this plan. Through this speech, he again attempts to grow pride in his listener by encouraging Mark to imagine himself in a position of power, “taking charge.” Feverstone’s repeated use of words like “charge” emphasizes his appeal to power; much like Saruman, he suggests that the power can be shared by he *and* Mark. Luke Sheahan reaches a similar conclusion about the promotion of pride in this passage as he writes that Feverstone appeals to “Mark’s self-interest and to his pride. Not only will Mark be one of those who take charge, but he is one of those who *should* take charge” (20). Sheahan’s emphasis points out that Feverstone wants Mark to see himself as worthy of such a role, a position within the institute, even as he encourages Mark to overpower weaker people.

Ultimately, though, this speech by Feverstone serves as a tool to manipulate Mark and to use him as a pawn in the institute’s higher plans, which becomes more evident as he and Frost encourage Mark into a deceitful journalist role. Feverstone suggests that Mark must have a newspaper article written and ready to spread even *before* a staged riot occurs. Responding to Mark’s surprise, Feverstone laughs, saying, “You’ll never manage publicity [the usual] way... You surely don’t need to wait for a thing to happen before you

tell the story of it!” (130). Feverstone’s laughter at Mark’s reaction first mocks the morality of true journalism, which accurately portrays recent events—rather than engineering them for emotional effects in the audience. His words twist Mark’s sense of acting rightly, too, with superlatives like “never” and “surely” to emphasize his point that success requires deceptive practices.

Mark’s reaction to such a speech appears later, showing its effect upon his decision- making. The narrator of the passage writes, “The moment of [Mark’s] consent almost escaped his notice... it all slipped past in a chatter of laughter, of that intimate laughter between fellow professionals, which of all earthly powers is strongest to make men do very bad things” (130). The word ‘consent’ in this passage points to the way in which Feverstone directed Mark’s decision to join such an endeavor. The nature of this particular conversation relies less upon specific diction, as other evil speakers, but more upon the “laughter” that the two share, and the sense of intimacy that they share in the conversation. The quotation sounds nearly identical to what C.S. Lewis describes in “The Inner Ring,” which I described in Chapter 3 of this thesis, in terms of the way that inner circles make one who “is not yet a very bad man do very bad things” (4). The nature of this manipulation by Feverstone is therefore especially dangerous; those who enter “Inner Rings,” according to Lewis, begin to participate in “bad” behavior, for the sake of establishing one’s position there. Feverstone, too, manipulates Mark’s decision-making through this speech and its setting. Mark’s ‘intimacy’ with the inner ring of N.I.C.E. thereby makes him additionally vulnerable to the speeches he hears there.

Frost shows his desire to subject the human race to a kind of slavery during their interviews as well. In a rather horrifying description of a resurrected criminal, he mentions the head of a man named Alcasan, which serves as a “conductor” of speech between N.I.C.E. and the “macrobes,” viewed as higher organisms (*THS* 257). Frost suggests that in the end, the institute intends for the human race, the intelligent part at least, to become like Alcasan and to “cooperate” with the macrobes by becoming “all head,” a “Technocracy.” In terms of the will, Frost later suggests the following results:

When you have attained real objectivity you will recognize, not *some* motives, but *all* motives as merely animal, subjective epiphenomena. You will then have no motives and you will find that you do not need them. Their place will be supplied — by something else... Your action will become much more efficient. (296)

In his vision for the future of Mark and the rest of humanity, Frost suggests that decision-making factors like “motives” shall no longer exist, as humans themselves are stripped of all “animal, subjective” sensations. Like an “efficient” machine—a “Technocracy,” Frost calls it—each person’s capacity to act will instead be determined by macrobes. Frost’s dream, in other words, involves a world with no human freedom whatsoever. And since Frost’s goals for Mark include the training of “real objectivity,” he shows his intent to remove Mark’s will, throughout his imprisonment, too.

Non Verbal Strategies and Language Significance

Though Frost relies heavily on verbal tactics as he “trains” Mark into objectivity, he turns to other sensory tactics as well. Though they fail to work on Mark, the tactics still represent an alternative form of persuasion that are worth addressing here. In

summary, Frost first puts Mark into a room with “lopsided” proportions and patterns, paintings with a “predominance of scriptural themes” amidst distorted subjects (298). Having experienced these ugly distortions, Mark decides that “ritual performances of calculated obscenities” would surely follow, like “the eating of abominable food, the dabbling in dirt and blood... offering him the very same initiation” (299). Some rituals include menial tasks (310), but the most dramatic one appears later, when Frost instructs Mark to trample upon a crucifix (337). As Frost seeks to capture Mark’s allegiance, he relies upon these types of maligning sensory treatments. Whether by vision, food, or ritual performance, Frost seeks to remove “all specifically human reactions,” preparing Mark for the macrobes (299). This end goal of Frost, to dominate Mark and, in a sense, feed him to the macrobes, sounds much like the speakers in *The Screwtape Letters*. Screwtape, too, desires to shape his patients, that they may be devoured in hell (17). But compared to his usual methods, this strategy by Frost utilizes few words. The methods entail primarily sight, taste and smell, and the motion of the participant.

Technically, though, the visual and physical methods do not persuade Mark—if anything, they strengthen his resolve to resist Frost. Mark reacts to the visual cues by longing for the “Normal”: all his days with Jane and “sunlight” and nature (*THS* 299). He responds to menial rituals by looking forward to his conversations with a homeless man, a fellow prisoner with limited speech; his friendship with this man, a person of low status and simplicity, brings “warmth” and affection that the relationships within N.I.C.E. lacked (310). Finally, he responds to the crucifix initiation by completely refusing to participate, calling it “nonsense” (337). Such resistance by Mark seems to represent a

shift. He again desires things that N.I.C.E. speakers tried to extract from him, like contentment with the simplicity of life, respect for lowly human beings, and the will to reject the institute's commands.

Still, some critics attribute the failure of Frost's methods to Mark's individual characteristics. D.H. Stewart writes that "What saves Mark is his ordinariness... His very lack of imagination protects him from the gross abuses of imagination that we call modern art" (248-49). According to Stewart, Mark's lack of susceptibility to these "abuses" of art and spirituality occurs because he is not sensitive to them, though they might be effective upon someone like Jane, his prophetic wife (249). Stewart suggests that Lewis includes this scene to critique the "bad art" of modernism, and that *That Hideous Strength* "provides a model for comparison" as an art that should satisfy the reader (250). These scenes by Lewis might thereby show that not only speech but art is corrupted by modernist philosophies, and that its effect upon the population create similar damage.

Still, the progression of the novel as a whole and its end emphasize the significance of distorting speech for villainous forces. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, N.I.C.E.'s introduction, through the council involving Bragdon Wood, shows from the beginning that diction represents a valuable tool in gaining control of Edgestow. Mark's recruitment for journalism purposes reveals that the institute wants to control others through written word as well. Fairy, for one, tells Mark that "it's the educated reader who *can* be gulled" and the working class must be "reconditioned" through the papers as well (*THS* 99-100). Certainly, readers of Edgestow increasingly come under the

power of the press, thanks to Mark's work, as they agree to give control of the city to N.I.C.E.'s police force (169). The skewed stories fed to them by the institute, via Mark, again shows the tendency of evil rhetoricians to twist narratives. Next, the "Head" of N.I.C.E., the disembodied head of Alcasan, is merely a voice "obeyed" by its leaders (178). The macrobes, using Alcasan's "cortex and vocal organs" (256), seek to domineer an entire race.

Other critics further explain these last two methods of language by N.I.C.E. In "The Problem of Violence," David Leigh suggests that the institute, in fact, desires Mark primarily for his "use of language" (260). He quotes Richard Purtill, who speaks into the way that N.I.C.E. represents an "infernal parody of the unity of Christian love." The severed head of Alcasan, writes Purtill, is the vessel by which evil forces speak, and other N.I.C.E. members "use speech to confuse, to bewilder, to mislead" (100). Together these critics notice that speech directs the actions of N.I.C.E., and through it the institute "misleads" the public.

Finally, the destruction of N.I.C.E., as it corresponds with the distortion of the members' voices, could suggest that the removal of speech is necessary for victory over the institute. In one of the concluding chapters, "Banquet at Belbury," the speaking abilities of N.I.C.E. members are reduced to gibberish. At the banquet, speakers begin uttering unintelligible phrases like "Eh? Blotcher bulldoo" (*THS* 345), and Frost writes a message that reads, "Blunt frippers intantly to pointed bdeluroid. Purgent. Cost" (346). As N.I.C.E. members become increasingly frantic over this sudden loss of speech, they begin killing one another, or are killed by the sudden appearance of zoo animals like

“tigers,” summoned by Merlin (a magician who comes back to life earlier in the text). This scene, according to David Downing, evokes not only apocalyptic imagery, but also the Tower of Babel story in Genesis, as the members “who habitually abuse language have their powers of speech taken from them.” Just as a shared language allowed the humans in the Babel story to “marshal human resources,” N.I.C.E. seeks to create a shared human language of scientific vocabulary, and to harness spiritual power. Both groups eventually fall into chaos (61).

Altogether, rhetorical manipulation serves an important goal in the strategy of N.I.C.E.’s development, and its destruction plays a part in defeating the institute. Through this chapter’s investigation of two speakers in particular, Feverstone and Frost, one sees that the promises and lies spread by evil speech impact a person’s identity, will, and sense of others. Mark, their primary listener in the text, does not fully escape their influence until Merlin effectively silences and scatters these speakers. Their speech, which emphasized the inner ring and enticed Mark to join it, loses its power as the speakers of the inner ring are destroyed.

CHAPTER 5

Conclusion: Considering These Matters of Verbal Manipulation in the Present Day

Introduction

After reading through these chapters and seeing the significance of speeches in these books by Tolkien and Lewis, one may wonder what it all means for us in the present, real world. As such, this conclusion considers some implementations for what these two authors suggest together, and the unique insights that their books bring. Lewis and Tolkien show the desire of evil speakers to diminish and vitiate a person, and these authors suggest warnings for what we hear and our responses to such speeches.

First, what does it mean for us, seeing the ways that these evil speakers usually target the mind and heart, the will, and community? Perhaps these authors want to show how malleable each person is, under the influence of speech: a person's thoughts, emotions, actions, and relationship with others could all be shaped by words, if believed. Changes in King Théoden and Mark Studdock serve as examples of the ways that speech manipulates; the speeches directed towards Gandalf and "the patient" show that speakers know words *could* potentially change someone, even if they fail to persuade in the end. Or perhaps Tolkien and Lewis, through including these speech elements for each speaker, seek to show the deeply integrated nature of the mind and heart, the will, and community. Similar ideas might be drawn from more focused conclusions, and with them ideas for how to respond to these speeches.

Responding to the Rhetoric of Fear

First, I suggest applications from passages in *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Screwtape Letters* in which speech distorts a person through fear. From studying these examples of the rhetoric of fear, readers may better understand the following: who speaks to us and whether they should be trusted, how listening to others shapes our behavior, and how virtuous community combats fear-inducing speeches. For the first of these applications, through *The Screwtape Letters* we gain alertness towards the strategies of fear by spiritual forces in the mind. Since, as Lewis similarly suggests, we live in a world where “Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour,” biblical writers call us to “Be sober minded; be watchful” (1 Peter 5:8). The ways in which *SL* responds to this biblical passage appear as Screwtape describes his desire to “absorb” and feed upon human souls (17). Through such passages, Lewis and biblical passages emphasize that we look out for the forces of the adversary and recognize his desire to “devour.” An added awareness of these voices, and the types of things that they say, may prevent someone from blindly following temptations, lies, or doubts.

For the episode of Wormtongue with King Théoden, back in Chapter 1, we might think of how the words of others shape us. Théoden’s dwarfed and immobile condition visualizes the doubts he holds towards himself, and the same could be true of us, when we hold fast to insecurities or fears that others speak over us. The cliché adage that “sticks and stones may break your bones, but words will never hurt you” (idioms), probably proves wrong through the destructive power that words do, in fact, often have in

each person's life, and King Théoden serves as a narrative example. Tolkien shows that lies or installed fears, if they take root, can alter the course of an entire kingdom. His example suggests that one's sense of identity can be strongly shaped by such words, such as what it means to be human, to steward a position, and more. Many readers of this thesis may similarly remember examples for themselves of an insult, a joke, or a comment made that altered entire life patterns or created feelings of inadequacy or worthlessness. Furthermore, we might also consider the ways that our own speech builds up others, or whether it manipulates and tears down. With the view that our speech can, and often does sway others, we should not take lightly what we say.

Next, as we see from Théoden's example, it is possible to trust someone's advice wrongfully, as he believes Wormtongue's deceits for many years. Wormtongue encouraged him to trust and "welcome" no one else, which deepened the king's confidence in the speaker even more over time (*LOTR* 513). That being said, Tolkien shows the importance of a truth-speaking, caring community, with multiple viewpoints. This thesis alludes to such a community in the brief section explored with the Ents, who wanted an entire group's insight for important decisions. The importance of finding and relying upon such a community becomes clear through Théoden's failure to bring in other voices and what stems from the limited advice from Wormtongue. The example of Théoden seems to show that speakers who desire to isolate their listeners probably fall into the category of not trustworthy; and secondly, that listeners will trust such voices the longer the isolation lasts.

Whether the source of fear-inducing speech comes from spiritual forces or an audible voice, King Théoden's later response emphasizes the healing power that the presence of a virtuous community brings. Because Théoden allows Gandalf to speak, even reluctantly at first, he opens the floor for Gandalf to dispel the lies of Wormtongue (515). Secondly, he allows Gandalf to lead him, as he agrees to the wizard's invitation of "help" and "counsel" (514). Finally, the king allows previously imprisoned friends like Éomer to join his circle of influence once again (521). In each of these ways, Théoden's willingness to bring in others, to let them lead, and to consider other viewpoints slowly frees him from Wormtongue's control, and through this escape, from "blind" fear (522). By the end of the passage, the king is visibly restored as he stands straight, commands his men, and speaks boldly to Wormtongue (517). This response points again to the importance of truth-speaking, loving friends when one's mind is captive to voices of fear and doubt.

Responding to the Rhetoric of Pride

Lewis and Tolkien also offer warnings and possible responses for those who hear grandiose/twisted speeches. From studying these examples of the rhetoric of pride, readers gain a deeper understanding of the following: how the folly of pride leads us to overlook underlying messages, the sorts of traits which allow people to resist "inner rings," and what these authors suggest about the limitations of evil speech. For the first of these implementations, in *That Hideous Strength*, Lewis shows that the use of scientific and "smart-sounding" vocabulary might be used to make people think they are,

themselves becoming smarter by reading and agreeing with the policies described. Such speech becomes additionally compelling when offered by scientists or other authorities, such as Frost and Feverstone. Instead of trusting such speeches, whether in printed or audible forms, one might have to look at the actions of the speaker or group involved to determine whether grand visions to “preserve and extend” the human race (*THS* 259), actually follow present strategies. For example, though Feverstone claims to care about the human race and Mark’s future, he insults the elderly (28) and threatens Mark with death (111). Similarly, in *The Lord of the Rings*, though Saruman tells Théoden that he desires to be an ally, his present actions involve a war against Théoden’s kingdom (579). Therefore, no matter how wise and smart we think we are, these passages show that we cannot rely on the supposed qualifications or promises of those who speak to us. We must also look at how the speeches align with a person’s actions.

Similarly, these texts encourage us to be wary of speeches that stir up pride through praises, before a speaker asks for our participation. Saruman tries this strategy on Gandalf and Théoden before he enlists their alliance, calling them all sorts of lofty names and praising their abilities. Feverstone uses this strategy for Mark, too, as he praises his writing style and work in the college. As readers, we might learn from these examples that our innate desire for praise can be a target for those who want to manipulate us, but also that a greater awareness of a speaker’s character and actions might guard against such influence. Unfortunately for Mark, it takes maltreatment by N.I.C.E. for him to see their intent to use him as a pawn in their schemes.

Second, from the responses of Mark and Gandalf, one sees the kinds of character flaws or strengths which influence reactions to speeches related to the Inner Ring—and through these, the sort of attitude one ought to adopt to avoid being enticed. Gandalf responds similarly to Saruman in both of his encounters with the wizard who invites him both times to reclaim a position of a “high and ancient order” (*LOTR* 581). Gandalf suggests that in the past he heard such speeches that “deceive the ignorant” (283), and that he does not wish to “submit” to Saruman’s plans (284); later, he laughs at Saruman, remembering that the wizard jailed him in Isengard after their initial meeting.

These responses show a few things about Gandalf: characteristics that allow him to resist Saruman’s call to join an exclusive power. Gandalf first relies upon his memory of past “deceitful” speeches, both by Saruman and others. Next, he shows no desire for personal power—in the very beginning of *The Lord of the Rings* he tells Frodo that he fears the idea of possessing the one Ring (61)—and certainly no desire to share a false partnership with Saruman. Finally, Gandalf’s laughter shows that he does not take the speeches of Saruman very seriously. Not possessing the desire to share Saruman’s status and power, he sees the emptiness and ridiculousness of the promises made.

Mark’s initial failure to resist the lure of exclusive circles, however, reveals the kinds of character flaws that make one susceptible to these speeches. His “ravenous curiosity” (*THS* 256) and “delirious excitement” to share N.I.C.E.’s plan for a world-wide “technocracy” (258) suggest the ways in which Mark fails to control his appetite for knowledge and importance. Adjectives like “ravenous” and “delirious” in particular suggest the appetitive nature of Mark, when it comes to the promises of N.I.C.E. As he

becomes increasingly involved with the institute, he similarly slips into dishonest practices like inaccurate journalism, consenting so easily that such moments “almost escaped his notice” (130). In both situations, Mark shows little self-awareness in having these desires, and even less self control. Later in the text, Mark strains to resist the lure of N.I.C.E. speeches. Only when he “fully” occupies his willpower can Mark bring himself to remember the deeds of the institute and to properly fear their plans for him (259). This shift suggests that, similar to Gandalf’s encounters with Saruman, one must understand the true nature of evil speakers and intentionally resist them to escape such enticements.

As a final application, these examples and others suggest that evil speakers are not all powerful. In Tolkien’s work, Théoden is ultimately freed from Wormtongue’s influence (*LOTR* 514), and many characters, such as Théoden and Gandalf, resist Saruman’s enchanting speeches by exposing his actions (259, 580). Though evil words may do much harm before these moments, Tolkien shows that evil words are not necessarily conclusive. Sometimes good speeches, by characters like Gandalf, or the presence of a trustworthy community represent ways to combat and overcome these kinds of twisted speeches. Other times, knowledge and the exercise of the will help characters to combat these speakers, too. In *The Screwtape Letters*, the devils also recognize that Scripture offers important truths to their patient and his community that present a “danger” to evil speeches (33). This recognition by Screwtape thereby points to the power of God’s word over the lies of the devils.

A similar encouragement comes from both of Lewis’s texts. For all that evil speakers accomplish in *The Screwtape Letters*, *That Hideous Strength*, and our own

world, he suggests that they ultimately fail. Screwtape and Wormwood's patient believes in and enters the kingdom of God (*SL* 63), and Screwtape's frustrations cause him to lose control over his vocabulary and physical form (46). The speech of N.I.C.E. is confounded by spiritual forces of good, and in turn these villains begin to destroy one another (*THS* 345). Through such outcomes, Lewis promises the sovereignty of God's power and willingness to strengthen those he loves, until the end. His texts show God's ultimate victory over evil speech, and that the struggle to combat it can end in victory; reminders of what is true through community and scripture serve to free us from the strategies of evil speakers as well. Still, this thesis serves as a reminder of our need for God's grace and for virtuous friends in a fallen world where evil speakers operate.

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