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C. S. LEWIS AND ‘THE NYGREN DEBATE’

Jason Lepojärvi

Dr. Nygren

‘...as Dr. Nygren would say,’ wrote C. S. Lewis in *Surprised by Joy*.¹ He means Anders Nygren, who at the time was the Church of Sweden (Lutheran) Bishop of Lund. Nygren had become world-known for *Agape and Eros*, his historical and theological critique of a Roman Catholic theology of love.² Christian *agape*, he argued, had to be re-purged of the contaminations of Pagan *eros*. The German Thomist philosopher Josef Pieper noted that when Lewis, ‘the great lay theologian of the present day’, began writing his *The Four Loves* (1960), *eros* had already been defamed in Protestant theology.³ Indeed, Lewis’ initial idea had been to write an ode to *agape*.⁴ We know that he had read Nygren’s *Agape and Eros*, for he named it among the theological books that had influenced him.⁵ However, *The Four Loves* would eventually include an implicit and tactful criticism of the heart of Nygren’s entire project, the denigration of *eros* and its separation from *agape*.

In his aretological treatise on love, Pieper summons Lewis to the arena repeatedly to answer Nygren with his ‘metaphysical common sense’.⁶ As far as the Catholic Pieper is concerned, Lewis belongs to the same ‘orthodox tradition’⁷ as such giants as Augustine and Aquinas. Another Roman Catholic thinker who feels at home in Lewis’ theology of love is the English Jesuit Martin D’Arcy.⁸ That many Catholics have paid tribute to Lewis in general has been well noted—and the fact that they would do so for his theology of love in particular is worth noting. In this paper I seek to outline Lewis’ position in ‘the Nygren debate’. He disagrees with Nygren on many important points, perhaps because he does not share Nygren’s Lutheran convictions. Lewis’ theology of love, in particular in how *eros* and *agape* are connected, can be traced back to his broader theological foundations, ethics, anthropology, doctrine of sin, and nuanced view of the relationship of nature and grace. These go a long way in explaining where he stood in ‘the Nygren debate’. In addition, Lewis accepts a certain hierarchical ‘order of loves’ (*ordo caritatis*) in which a proper order of loves is the prerequisite

of happiness, or, in the Lewisian sense, 'Joy'. In fact, the 'eros' Nygren distrusted and the 'Sehnsucht' Lewis enjoyed have surprisingly much in common.

A Firestorm of Scholarly Debate

Nygren's project was ambitious. His stated aim was to bring out 'a difference in type, not a difference of value'⁹ between *agape* and *eros*, and perhaps more importantly, a difference 'not of degree but of kind'.¹⁰ He argued that in the Augustinian *caritas*-synthesis, the 'pure' biblical *agape* became mingled with self-seeking Pagan *eros*. The three main characteristics that define the *eros* motif, which Nygren considers Platonic in origin, are: '(1) Eros is the "love of desire", or acquisitive love; (2) Eros is man's way to the Divine; (3) Eros is egocentric love'.¹¹ An authentic Christian understanding of love, he claimed, has no place for the egocentrism of *eros*, and bestows worthiness on the object of love instead of demanding it beforehand.¹² After centuries of disorientation, 'Luther's Copernican revolution' finally recovered this original notion.¹³

As Eric Gregory (a former president of the Oxford C. S. Lewis Society) rightly notes, Nygren 'set off a firestorm of scholarly debate that preoccupied much of twentieth century Protestant and Roman Catholic thought'.¹⁴ D'Arcy reminds us that the question is not only 'an academic' one without relevance to everyday living, as if, for example, the relationship of selfless and self-seeking loves were settled in daily practice.¹⁵ Critical studies of Nygren are in no short supply. At the heart of most critiques is that Nygren's depiction, both historical and theological, is a caricature.

Risto Saarinen argues that Nygren misconstrues Platonic love: the *Symposium* paints a much more nuanced picture of Plato's understanding of love than Nygren supposes.¹⁶ He also notes an inherent contradiction: after devaluing *eros*, Nygren equips *agape* with very *eros*-like values. *Agape*, presumably 'indifferent to value', is celebrated as 'better' than *eros*.¹⁷ Nygren's own idea of a totally selfless *agape*, argues Miikka Ruokanen, is ironically more man-centred than Augustine's, because he presupposes a 'spontaneous surrender to the heart of God'.¹⁸ Gregory is critical of forcing *agapic* love to do too much work without 'other values (such as righteousness and even Christian *eros*)'.¹⁹ And Jean-Luc Marion, without naming the object of his criticism, is more straightforward: 'One must have a good deal of naïveté or blindness, or rather know nothing of the lover and of erotic logic, not to see that ἀγάπη possesses and consumes as much as ἔρως gives up and abandons'.²⁰ Another recent Catholic exposition is Pope Benedict's *Deus Caritas Est*, which explicitly analyses the relationship of *eros* and *agape* in the Nygrenian

sense of the words²¹—without explicitly mentioning Nygren himself, as is customary in Papal encyclicals when criticism is offered.

Lewis, too, never targets Nygren explicitly, but he often discusses these issues (sometimes in surprising locations) in such a way as to suggest an implicit dialogue with Nygren. For instance, Saarinen thinks that Lewis' 'happiness' in *The Four Loves* is so close to Nygren's *eudaimonism* that the engagement is conscious.²² In this and on the whole I tend to agree. Lewis indeed preoccupied himself with very Nygrenian themes. As we shall see, however, his own eros communicated a rather different meaning than Nygren's. Not only that. Lewis may have defended Nygren's three-fold *eros* motif as belonging, in a qualified fashion, to authentic Christian love. In order to move towards such an argument we first need to briefly consider Lewis' ethical and anthropological foundations.

Ethics before the *Summa*

Unlike most of Nygren's critics, Lewis is an unusual theological authority as he had no formal training in theology. He was, however, immensely well-read, even before his conversion. As his interest in the Christian faith developed, he took an increased interest in Augustine, developed a liking for Thomas à Kempis' *The Imitation of Christ* (to which we will return later), and was deeply influenced by Rudolf Otto's analysis of the *numinous*.²³ (The idea of holiness is relevant for Lewis' understanding of 'Joy'.)

Was Lewis a Thomist or a Platonist? His Platonism is unmistakable. Yet his insistence on reason, for example, has led many to believe he was essentially a Thomist²⁴: If his Platonism is unmistakable, so is the influence of Aristotle. This, according to Lewis himself, accounts for the appearance of a strong Thomist influence in his thought. Especially on ethics, he often followed Aristotle where Aquinas also followed him. 'Aquinas and I,' he said, 'were, in fact, at the same school—I don't say the same class! And I had read the *Ethics* long before I ever worked at the *Summa*'.²⁵ This aspect—his virtue ethics—is still largely an unmapped area in Lewis studies. Obviously it has implications for a theology of love as well, for love is properly a virtue.

Many Protestant thinkers feel uncomfortable with virtue ethics, given their strong doctrine of sin and strong doctrine of grace. The fear is justified, for too much trust in virtue has its downsides, but so does an 'allergic neglect of virtue language'.²⁶ Among other things, it can encourage Christians not to take responsibility for their moral development. This is certainly not the case for Lewis. His oeuvre is soaked in virtue language and in moral encouragement (which some label moralism). Virtues are not to be despised except when they

lead to self-congratulation.²⁷ Love both supports and requires the support of other virtues. ‘The necessity of practising these virtues first sets us, forces us, upon the attempt to turn—more strictly, to let God turn—our love into Charity’.²⁸

Was Lewis a Platonist or Thomist, I asked. There is a strong case for answering: both and neither. He is not dependent on any philosophical system, though he borrowed from various schools in interpreting the faith. My own reading of Lewis echoes that of Carnell, which ‘shows him to be Thomist, Aristotelian, Platonist ... only as something in each of the approaches serves him as a tool of thought’.²⁹ Truth may be one, but reality is nonetheless complex. Accordingly, Lewis cast his nets wide. It is only a slight exaggeration to say that he ‘ranged over the fenced enclosures of modern departmentalized knowledge with amazing accuracy and a powerful memory’.³⁰

Native Luminosity

In his famous treatment of love, the *Symposium* (189f), Plato has Aristophanes say: ‘No one understands anything about love who has not considered the nature of man and what has befallen it’. If, as Pieper says, ‘a conception of man must underlie any ideas about love’,³¹ so does a certain conception of what has befallen man. According to Lewis, man’s deprivation was deep, but not total.³²

In his Cosmic Trilogy, the nearest equivalent to ‘evil’ is the Augustinian ‘bent’ (*curvus*). Evil as nonbeing is not only an apologetic tool for denting evil’s attractiveness, but an expression of Lewis’ authentic convictions. Evil is parasitic on the good. The Green Lady in *Perelandra* finally grasps what ‘not-good’ would be when she says: ‘You could send your soul after the good you had expected, instead of turning it to the good you got. You could refuse the real good; you could make the real fruit taste insipid by thinking of the other’.³³ ‘Sending one’s soul after the good’ is almost a synonym for ‘Sehnsucht’, to which we return later; but we note here that it has meaning only within a certain kind of ontology. Indeed, Lewis retained his faith in reason—and *eros*—because he believed it compatible with Christian ontology. The first and last word in reality is good. Elshtain’s description of Augustine fits Lewis perfectly, I think: ‘Only someone caught up in a love affair with the world would describe so deliciously its many delectations and articulate so artfully its temptations’.³⁴

In Nygren’s account, the exercise of reason (*ratio*) is another mark of the presence of *eros*, since reason assesses the value of the potential object of love, and chooses only such an object as it considers worthy or useful. Part of his polemic is directed against rationalism, and he salutes Luther, the bitter opponent of reason,

for leading Christianity back to *agape*.³⁵ Lewis believed that, though unaided by grace, reason cannot know truth, truth cannot be known without reason.³⁶ Reason is God-given, a ‘miracle’ of a kind.³⁷ He thought that existentialism imperilled reason—and needlessly so for the Christian. Lewis never embraced Liberal Protestantism. This Carnell finds significant: ‘Because he did not, he did not find it necessary to react violently against rationalism to rediscover his faith’.³⁸ In fact, a recurring theme in Lewis’ apologetics is that arguing against reason requires reason. We are reminded of Saarinen’s comment that Nygren cannot argue for the supremacy of *agape* without using *eros*-like evaluations.

What about man as the *object* of love? Is the goodness of man a necessary prerequisite of love—perhaps even of *agape*? By ‘goodness’ I here mean not ‘worthiness’ or ‘uprightness’ (*probus*) in the face of God, but rather metaphysical or philosophical goodness simply as an object of creation. Nowhere, it seems, does C. S. Lewis say so explicitly, nor can we be sure he thought so explicitly either. But it nonetheless seems to be a logical conclusion of all he wrote about love and a theological presupposition for a proper understanding of love. It is true that the tone of Lewis’ texts sometimes seems to suggest the opposite: ‘No sooner do we believe that God loves us than there is an impulse to believe that He does so, not because He is Love, but because we are intrinsically lovable... Surely we must have a little—however little—native luminosity?’³⁹ (That Lewis finds *something* objectionable in this supposition is even more apparent in the mildly amused tone of the vintage audio recording of the passage.⁴⁰) But we must ask: Does Lewis here (1) *deny* the goodness of man? Or is his criticism directed against (2) the claim that our goodness is not *God-given*; against (3) the thought that God’s *motive* (‘because’) in love is our goodness; and/or against (4) our *want* to be loved based on our goodness?⁴¹ These are different things. Undoubtedly, as Olli-Pekka Vainio says, ‘Natural love [for Lewis], by itself, is directed only to those objects which it regards as lovable. Divine gift-love, on the other hand, enables people to love things which are not normally lovable: the sick, criminals, enemies, etc’.⁴² But although there are *degrees* of approbation, so to speak, can something *intrinsically evil* ever be loved?⁴³

The principle ‘Love the sinner, hate the sin’ is less applicable in our context than we might expect. Does it imply that in loving the sinner we are still loving something evil, or does it imply the opposite: the sinner we may love, but not evil (that is, the sinner is not pure evil)? For years Lewis thought it ‘a silly, straw-splitting distinction’: ‘how could you hate what a man did and not hate the man?’⁴⁴ Then he made the discovery that he had in fact loved one person all his life this way, namely, himself. However, ‘straw-splitting’ here probably does not refer to the ontological difficulty of distinguishing the person loved from the sin in his

life, but rather to the psychological difficulty of loving them despite their sinfulness. Lewis' subsequent distinction between 'forgiving' and 'condoning', however crucial and helpful in other respects, sheds little light on the ontological question.

Discomfort with *eros*, on the one hand, and the analysis above, on the other, may betray fundamentally different conceptions of man but also involve soteriological concerns about the relation of nature and grace.

'The Necessary Was Always Possible'

In Lewis' world the two realities, the natural and the supernatural, co-inhere. By virtue of creation there is no clear-cut separation between the two. His literary friend and fellow pilgrim Charles Williams preferred the term 'Arch-nature' over 'supernature' so as to avoid the latter's misleading implications.⁴⁵ Miracles, Lewis thought, are not simply a breaching of natural laws; rather, because God exists on a different level from all else, miracles are part of a higher uniformity of reality.⁴⁶ As said, man's rationality itself is a kind of miracle, for Naturalism, 'the doctrine that only Nature—the whole interlocked system—exists',⁴⁷ cannot account for it. The effects of such a worldview are twofold. On the one hand, the so-called extraordinary may seem ordinary; on the other hand, so-called ordinary phenomena obtain an extraordinary aura. Lewis would probably have agreed with Augustine that 'the wonders of the visible order of nature ... are greater than the least familiar and rarest of miracles'.⁴⁸ Creation itself is awe-inspiring.

Lewis made clear that he held no belief in 'a concept of Grace which simply abolishes nature'.⁴⁹ Even St. John of the Cross, Lewis remarked, was 'encouraged to remember that he loves asparagus'.⁵⁰ Commenting on this, Carnell notes that both Lewis and Williams believed 'man must endure the protest of Nature against Grace',⁵¹ not suppress nature. The immediate context is nature as 'the pleasures of the body' and not nature as 'man apart from Grace', but it is quite clear that Lewis' body-embracing outlook followed from a deeper, metaphysical maxim: *Gratia non tollit naturam sed perficit*. In his poem, 'Noon's Intensity', the poet wonders whether Sol, despite its aurification powers, might not in fact perfect the 'baser' metals (e.g. silver, copper, lead) instead of simply transmuting them into gold.⁵² Perfecting without annihilating is what Lewis calls 'transposition': the raising of a lower medium to a new significance by incorporation into a higher medium.⁵³ Human loves, too, follow this logic.

Another famous medieval maxim with which Lewis was surely familiar is: *virtus es ultimum potentiae*. There is a teleological connection between the desiring self and the highest good, a theme we return to later. In *Out of the Silent Planet*

Ransom joins a special hunt and is frightened, but the hunt ‘was necessary, and the necessary was always possible’.⁵⁴ His participation in the process bestows on him a ‘new-found manhood’, in fact, ‘he had grown up’.⁵⁵ Lewis thought that myth ‘arouses in us sensations we have never had before, never anticipated having, as though we had broken out of our normal mode of consciousness and “possessed joys not promised to our birth”’.⁵⁶ There is an element of ‘radical change’; progress is not simply undisturbed evolution. Yet the change ‘hits us at a level deeper than our thoughts or even our passions, troubles oldest certainties till all questions are re-opened, and in general shocks us more fully awake than we are for most of our lives’.⁵⁷ Hits *us at a deeper level*. Shocks *us more fully awake*. The new dimension is new, but it is not wholly ‘foreign’ and does no ontological violence to man. Commenting on Lewis’ poem ‘Scazons’, Ward concludes that ‘the poet’s love does not merely reflect back, like a moon; it reflects internally also, like (as Lewis puts it elsewhere) “a dewdrop”’.⁵⁸

Man can be subtracted from neither a mythical hunt, nor from love, nor, for that matter, from conversion. The initiative in his own conversion lay wholly with God, and faith was ultimately a gift from God, although it was Lewis’ reasoning which led him on. He recalls moments of decisiveness, of directing his will toward or against something.⁵⁹ Such synergism-approaching narrative is characteristic of Lewis, as is an interest in theosis.⁶⁰ God is ‘unspeakably immanent’⁶¹ and ‘nearer to us’ than any other being.⁶² O’Donovan, commenting on debates about love, thinks that ultimately ‘what is at issue is whether all movement in the universe is from the centre to the circumference or whether there is also this responsive movement’.⁶³ At least for Lewis, Christian love is a response to God’s initiative—man is not only a passive ‘conduit’ of love, as Nygren thought he was.⁶⁴ Creation relates to God in reciprocity, and man’s reciprocity stands by virtue of his creation as *imago Dei*.⁶⁵

We Do Not Disparage Silver

Built in the image of Love Himself, love is part of man’s inescapable existence. Sure, not all is well with this ontology: in a fallen world, our loves are in conflict and disordered. A central theme in many of Lewis’ books is not simply self-love or the lack of love, but the lack of an order of love, the rival claims of natural and supernatural loves.⁶⁶ In the last resort, Lewis writes, ‘we must turn down or disqualify our nearest and dearest when they come between us and our obedience to God. Heaven knows, it will seem to them sufficiently like hatred’.⁶⁷ Lewis draws a moral: ‘That is why it is of such importance to *order our loves* that it [an occasion for such “hatred”] is unlikely to arrive at all’.⁶⁸

This, the need for a correct order of loves, stands out in Lewis' thought.⁶⁹ By it he does not mean simply a need to 'control one's loves' but, quite literally, I believe, *to keep them in order*. From his hierarchical worldview follows a hierarchy of loves. Hierarchy and equality are not mutually exclusive. In fact only degree projects equality. Lewis writes: 'If you take "Degree" away "each thing meets in mere oppugnancy," "strength" will be lord, everything will "include itself in power"'. In other words, the modern idea that we can choose between Hierarchy and equality is ... mere moonshine'.⁷⁰ Besides, 'we do not disparage silver by distinguishing it from gold'.⁷¹

But 'the question whether we are loving God or the earthly Beloved "more" is not ... a question about the comparative intensity of two feelings. The real question is, which (when the alternative comes) do you serve, or choose, or put first?'.⁷² Lewis' essay 'First and Second Things' discusses the idea of equalities within hierarchy. If first things are put first, second things will naturally follow; but if second things are put first, the first things will be lost and so will, tragically, the second things.⁷³ As for human loves, they are 'saved' through *agape*. In *The Magician's Nephew*, Digory's love for his mother is 'saved' when put second to his love for Aslan.⁷⁴ And in 'Five Sonnets' Lewis writes:

Pitch your demands heaven-high and they'll be met.
Ask for the Morning Star and take (throw in)
Your earthly love.⁷⁵

By *eros*, Lewis, unlike Nygren, means simply 'that state which we call "being in love" ... or that kind of love which lovers are "in",'⁷⁶ a state which Sheldon Vanauken named 'inloveness'.⁷⁷ For our purposes here, an in-depth analysis of *this* kind of *eros* is not required. (Later we shall compare Lewis' spiritual longing to Nygren's *eros*.) Suffice it to say that *eros* highlights what has already been said about the need for ordinate love. What applies to *eros* applies to all natural loves. They are corrupted without a divine reference point, without charity that draws them into itself and thus transforms them. But of all the loves, *eros* is most like a god, and 'being in love' can most easily turn into a sort of religion. *Eros*, if 'honoured without reservation and obeyed unconditionally, becomes a demon'.⁷⁸

We stumble in all our natural loves. However, they are the base for the higher loves. One of Lewis' favourite maxims was Thomas à Kempis' 'the highest does not stand without the lowest',⁷⁹ which he quotes in the very introduction to *The Four Loves*.⁸⁰ Grace presupposes nature. In fact, it is 'dangerous to press upon a man the duty of getting beyond the earthly love when his real difficulty lies in getting so far'.⁸¹ In any case, 'Divine Love does not *substitute* itself for the natural—as if we had to throw away our silver to make room for the gold. The

natural loves are summoned to become modes of Charity while also remaining the natural loves they are'.⁸²

As said, Lewis' initial idea was to write an ode to *agape*. He distinguished between Gift-love and Need-love, and since the exemplar of Love is Himself obviously more Gift-love, he sought to write 'some fairly easy panegyrics on the first sort of love and disparagements of the second'.⁸³ But whenever he tried to deny the name *love* to Need-love, he ended up in puzzles and contradictions. Reality was more complicated than he had thought. If, for Augustine, man is a bundle of loves, for Lewis he is a bundle of 'need-loves'. In fact 'our whole being by its very nature is one vast need'.⁸⁴ As soon as we are born we need others physically, emotionally, intellectually. But we cannot conclude that Need-love is 'mere selfishness'. Lewis explains: 'No doubt Need-love, like all our impulses, can be selfishly indulged.... But in ordinary life no one calls a child selfish because it turns for comfort to its mother; nor an adult who turns to his fellow "for company". Those, whether children or adults, who do so least are not usually the most selfless'.⁸⁵ More importantly, our love for God must always be largely a Need-love. But neither is this love merely selfish. In fact the opposite is true: 'It would be a bold and silly creature that came before its Creator with the boast "I'm no beggar. I love you disinterestedly"'.⁸⁶

In all loves the *self* is present, but this in itself does not imply selfishness. Neither does the pleasure of love 'contaminate' love. To delight in goodness is not morally questionable or shameful. In *The Great Divorce* Lewis has his mentor, George MacDonald, say of the task of helping souls: 'Of course it is also joy to do so, but ye cannot blame us for that!'.⁸⁷ When Nygren took pleasure to be a sign of the infiltration of *eros*, he was following Kant's deontological mistake of presuming that all inclinations were 'tainted' by selfishness.⁸⁸ If the ontological premises of love allow (or determine) a certain pleasure in the act of goodness, accepting it is a sign of humility, not pride.

Till We Have Faces can also be read as a 'love story'. Orual's possessive love of her sister Psyche is progressively purified. Among the themes briefly described by Lewis in the foreword are: 'the mind of an ugly woman [Orual], dark idolatry and pale enlightenment at war with each other'.⁸⁹ In terms of love, dark idolatry and pale enlightenment suggest two opposite corruptions: on the one hand, a kind of blood-stained, Pagan worship, and on the other, a rationalistic, 'spiritual' love. As both are perversions, purification of love means the correction of what is amiss in both. Is it an overstatement to suggest a parallel with Nygren's *eros* and *agape* respectively?

At least Saarinen thinks that *Till We Have Faces* is directly relevant to 'the Nygren debate'.⁹⁰ In Orual's mind, need-love and dutiful altruism remain properly

separate. But Saarinen argues that Orual is wrong—in other words, that the author of Orual is right—for ‘true love does not arise from their separation, but from their fusion’.⁹¹ Given this, Nygren’s theological position resembles more the ‘Puritan-minded pagan perspective of Orual’ than Christianity.⁹² In this sense, *Till We Have Faces* is even more critical of Nygren than *The Four Loves*. Carnell, making no note of Nygren, agrees in general: the purification of Orual’s loves and longings is ‘the burden of the story’.⁹³ He confesses, as does Saarinen,⁹⁴ that it is a particularly difficult myth to interpret, for when the analysis is done, ‘there are aspects left over which do not fit in with any systematic approach’.⁹⁵ Although complex, it is filled with temperate judgments; in addition, it has one of the most convincing descriptions of *Sehnsucht*, what Lewis calls ‘Joy’.

The Inconsolable Wound

C. S. Lewis’ theory of *Sehnsucht* is also relevant to ‘the Nygren debate’. As said, the eros Nygren distrusted and the ‘Joy’ that fascinated Lewis all his life have surprisingly much in common. We will have to describe the phenomenon, explain it without explaining it away, and seek to identify its object and relate it to our subject. The task is not easy, for, as Carnell notes, ‘it is surrounded by a misty indefiniteness which seems essential to its very nature’.⁹⁶

The ‘Joy’ Lewis puns on in the title of his autobiography *Surprised by Joy* is a desire for joy beyond the offerings of this world. In the Romantic tradition, it was known by the German word *Sehnsucht*. It can be described as ecstatic wonder, causeless melancholy, and, in Scandinavian ballads since the Middle Ages, as the Blue Flower motif: *Längtans Blåa Blomma* (the Blue Flower of Longing). It is the pursuit of the unattainable appearing in the guise of the attainable: Lewis called it a ‘dialectic of desire’,⁹⁷ as each successive experience proves Joy to be ever-elusive.

In *That Hideous Strength*, we read of ‘the inconsolable wound with which man is born’, the aches and yearnings of which, enigmatically, are ‘the fore-runners of [a] goddess’.⁹⁸ *The Pilgrim’s Regress* speaks of ‘immortal longings’, paradoxical in nature: ‘though the sense of want is acute and even painful, yet the mere wanting is felt to be somehow a delight’.⁹⁹ *Dymer’s* theme also is ‘romantic longing—*Sehnsucht*’.¹⁰⁰ The first beauty Lewis ever knew was a toy garden his brother Warren had built. ‘As long as I live’, he wrote, ‘my imagination of Paradise will retain something of my brother’s toy garden’. This and other childhood aesthetic experiences taught him ‘longing—*Sehnsucht*’, and made him ‘for good or for ill ... a votary of the Blue Flower’.¹⁰¹ Later, a salient scene in *Siegfried and the Twilight of the Gods* awoke in him ‘the memory of Joy itself’ and all the stabs of Joy since

childhood ‘flowed together into a single, unendurable sense of desire and loss, which suddenly became one with the loss of the whole experience’.¹⁰²

A turning-point was reading George MacDonald’s *Phantastes* in his teens. ‘A few hours later I knew that I had crossed a great frontier. I had already been waist deep in Romanticism... Now *Phantastes* was romantic enough in all conscience; but there was a difference. Nothing was at that time further from my thoughts than Christianity and I therefore had no notion what this difference really was’.¹⁰³ What did he find in MacDonald? ‘I should have been shocked in my ‘teens if anyone had told me that what I learned to love in *Phantastes* was goodness’.¹⁰⁴ In *Surprised by Joy* Lewis calls it ‘Holiness’.¹⁰⁵ That this Joy related to Christianity Lewis did not know till much after his conversion.

The phenomenon could not be wholly accounted for on historical, social, or psychological grounds. It was simply ‘a given’ of experience, ‘an inconsolable wound’ inflicted at birth. Lewis accepted none of the popular explanations as complete. For instance, he felt ‘the stabs of Joy’ already before his mother’s death, so Joy is not simply a desire to reconnect with a lost beloved, although many believe that ‘all roads lead to Freud’.¹⁰⁶ The connection between the libido and *Sehnsucht*, he regarded as genuine but exaggerated. In ‘Psychoanalysis and Literary Criticism’, Lewis criticizes psychoanalysts for interpreting all aesthetical experiences as merely by-products of sex.¹⁰⁷ Even sex points beyond sex: ‘Those who think that if adolescents were all provided with suitable mistresses we should soon hear no more of “immortal longings” are certainly wrong’.¹⁰⁸ He knew they were wrong because he had, by ‘discreditable’ experience, made the mistake repeatedly.¹⁰⁹ He did not, however, ‘recoil from the erotic conclusion with chaste horror... My feelings could rather have been expressed in the words, “Quite. I see. But haven’t we wandered from the real point?” Joy is not a substitute for sex; sex is very often a substitute for Joy’.¹¹⁰

In ‘The Weight of Glory’, Lewis discusses the Morning Star as a scriptural image of heaven. We can enjoy the natural star on many a fine morning, he says; what more could we possibly want? ‘Ah, but we want so much more... We do not want merely to see beauty... We want something else which can hardly be put into words—to be united with the beauty we see, to pass into it, to receive it into ourselves, to bathe in it, to become part of it... That is why the poets tell us such lovely falsehoods’.¹¹¹ To summarize, we can say that Joy has close connections with many things in creation, but it cannot be found ‘in’ them, rather ‘through’ them. Lewis, ‘the untiring foe of Reductionism’,¹¹² knew that experience points forward as well as backward. What, then, did Joy point him towards?

In his understanding of Joy, Lewis is indebted to the medieval tradition, especially to Augustine.¹¹³ Certainly, it is improbable that Augustine’s famous

‘restless soul’ finding ‘rest in Thee’ would not have come to mind by now. Man is on an ontological quest stimulated by longing. Joy relates to objective reality; the object of longing ‘really exists and really draws us to itself.’¹¹⁴ Understood as a desire for God, Joy does support God’s existence, but only as an elaboration of the ontological argument, not as an airtight proof. In a letter to Vanauken, Lewis writes: ‘If you really are a product of a materialistic universe, how is it that you don’t feel at home here? Do fish complain of the sea for being wet? Or if they did, would that fact itself not strongly suggest that they had not always been, or wd. not always be, purely aquatic creatures?’¹¹⁵ Elsewhere he uses another analogy: Being hungry does not prove we will eat bread, but ‘surely a man’s hunger does prove that he comes of a race which repairs its body by eating and inhabits a world where eatable substances exist’.¹¹⁶ The aches and yearnings caused by ‘the inconsolable wound’ are ‘only the fore-runners of the goddess’. The goddess, Lewis tells us, is ‘Charity’. As for her presence, the heroes of *That Hideous Strength* ‘could not bear that it should continue. They could not bear that it should cease... whom men call Venus, came and was with them in the room’.¹¹⁷

Wondelone

The three main characteristics of the *eros* motif to which Nygren objected were: that *eros* as love (1) is upward evaluative striving, (2) amounts to a human endeavour towards God, and (3) is egocentric in nature. Based on our analysis of Lewis’ ontology, anthropology, and theory of Joy as an inborn, that is, God-given desire for participation in beauty, we may make some final conclusions.

Firstly, Lewis’ *eros* does not fit these criteria. In itself it is *not* egocentric in nature, if egocentrism implies mere selfishness. All loves have a proper dimension of Need-love, even the higher *agape*. Lewis was aware of the ambiguity of *Sehnsucht* as well.¹¹⁸ In the Cosmic Trilogy, there are two words for longing: *bluntheline*, a kind of ‘bent’ longing, and *wondelone*, proper and meaningful longing. In connection to the ‘great frontier’ he crossed via MacDonald, Lewis writes: ‘I had already been waist deep in Romanticism; and likely enough, at any moment, to flounder in its darker and more evil forms, slithering down the steep descent that leads from the love of strangeness to that of eccentricity and thence to that of perversity’.¹¹⁹ Precisely from such dangers MacDonald and a deeper understanding of Joy rescued Lewis.

Secondly, because *Sehnsucht*’s ultimate object is beauty, goodness, holiness, or simply God, it could tentatively be called upward evaluative striving; and, ‘in so far as it [is] also simultaneously a good, it [is] also a kind of love’.¹²⁰ In a qualified sense it is also a human endeavour towards God. Although the endeavour is very

human, it is not autonomous—and yet not an automaton or conduit either, unassisted by a decisive self.¹²¹

In all of Lewis' writings, only once, it seems, does he use *eros* and *agape* in the specifically Nygrenian sense. In *Surprised by Joy*, a few pages before his 'most dejected and reluctant'¹²² conversion, Lewis calls philosophical idealism 'quasi-religion': 'all a one-way street; all *eros* (as Dr. Nygren would say) steaming up, but no *agape* darting down'.¹²³ And yet, does not this passage, too, contain an implicit criticism of Nygren? Philosophical idealism fits this description, but not any particular branch of Christianity. Also, notice the passivity of *eros* steaming up, and the activity of *agape* darting down. Lewis found it wanting, not only because it lacked a personal God who, in love, dives and offers man his saving hand, but also because it lacked a longing man who, in responsive love, looks (not merely steams) up to grasp at this hand.

Notes

1. Lewis, *Surprised by Joy: The Shape of My Early Life* (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1955), p. 198.
2. Anders Nygren, *Agape and Eros* (New York: Harper, 1969). Trans. Philip Watson. The Swedish original, *Den kristna kärlekstanken genom tiderna: Eros och Agape*, was published in two parts in 1930 and 1936. The English translation was first published in three volumes in England by SPCK in 1932 (Part I), 1938 (Part II, Vol. I), and 1939 (Part II, Vol. II), and as a revised, in part retranslated, one volume edition in 1957.
3. Josef Pieper, *Faith, Hope, Love*, (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1997 [1986]), p. 209.
4. C. S. Lewis, *The Four Loves* (London: HarperCollins, 1998 [1960]), pp. 1–2.
5. This he relates to Corbin Carnell in a letter (dated 13 October 1958). See Carnell, *Bright Shadow of Reality: Spiritual Longing in C. S. Lewis* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999 [1974]), p. 69.
6. Pieper, *Love*, p. 258.
7. Pieper, *Love*, p. 208.
8. Martin D'Arcy (S.J.), *The Mind and Heart of Love: Lion and Unicorn. A Study in Eros and Agape* (New York: Henry Holt, 1947 [1945]). By this time, Lewis' *The Four Loves* (1960) had not been published, but D'Arcy calls the scholarly *The Allegory of Love* (1936) 'very important' (p. 12), 'magisterial' (p. 54), and in some historical analyses, 'definitive' (p. 28).
9. Nygren, *Agape*, p. 210; see also p. 39.
10. Nygren, *Agape*, p. 52.
11. Nygren, *Agape*, pp. 175–181 (here p. 175).
12. Nygren, *Agape*, pp. 77–79.
13. Nygren, *Agape*, p. 681ff.
14. Eric Gregory, *Politics and the Order of Love* (The University of Chicago Press, 2008), pp. 3–4. Gregory's encyclopedic study of Augustinian love is clearly mindful of 'the Nygren debate'.
15. D'Arcy, *Unicorn*, p. 308
16. Risto Saarinen, 'Eros, leikki ja normi: Rakkauden fundamentaaliteologiaa', *Teologinen aikakauskirja*

- (Finnish theological journal), vol. 2 (2006), p. 169.
17. Saarinen, 'Eros', pp. 168–169.
 18. Miikka Ruokanen, *Theology of Social Life in Augustine's De civitate Dei* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1992), p. 67. See Nygren, *Agape*, pp. 75–77, 93–94.
 19. Gregory, *Politics*, p. 110.
 20. Jean-Luc Marion, *The Erotic Phenomenon* (The University of Chicago Press, 2007), p. 221. Trans. Stephen Lewis. Marion is perhaps among the strictest advocates of a monistic theology of love. On the penultimate page he says: 'It is not a matter of two loves, but of two names selected among an infinity of others in order to think and to say the one love' (p. 221). Saarinen refers to Marion's concept of love as the 'perfect opposite' of Nygren's ('Eros', p. 175).
 21. For a brief yet insightful analysis of *Deus Caritas Est*, see Werner G. Jeanrond, *A Theology of Love* (London: T&T Clark), pp. 161–169.
 22. Saarinen, 'Eros', p. 172 n. 15. Nygren promulgated the idea that eros is by nature eudaimonistic, i.e. always seeks the happiness of the lover. Lewis objected to this, for 'it is the very mark of Eros ... that we had rather share unhappiness with the Beloved than be happy on any other terms' (*Four Loves*, p. 102).
 23. See Carnell, *Bright Shadow*, pp. 68–69.
 24. Carnell (*Bright Shadow*, p. 33) notes that this was especially the case before Chad Walsh's more nuanced study *C. S. Lewis: Apostle to the Skeptics* was published in 1949. Walsh had paid attention to an underappreciated aspect in Lewis' thought, his romantic longing.
 25. Letter to Carnell (dated Oct. 13, 1958), *Bright Shadow*, p. 71.
 26. Gregory's expression, in *Politics*, p. 69.
 27. Lewis, *Rehabilitations* (quoted in Carnell, *Bright Shadow*, p. 135).
 28. Lewis, *Four Loves*, p. 129. In addition to specific virtues, Lewis emphasizes the importance of character or habitual disposition in relation to virtues (and vices, for that matter). In his persuasive study of the planetary motifs in the *Narniad*, Michael Ward notes that the Planets themselves are 'neutral', but their effects—whether good or bad—depend on dispositions of the characters. As a Finn I wonder whether *Planet Narnia* will not become mandatory reading for all Lewis translators and call for revised translations of *The Chronicles* over the coming decades.
 29. Carnell, *Bright Shadow*, p. 71.
 30. Carnell, *Bright Shadow*, p. 31.
 31. Piper, *Love*, p. 234.
 32. See Lewis' comments on *Calvin's Institutio* in *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century, Excluding Drama* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1954), p. 43. Ward provides a short list of other relevant passages in *Planet Narnia*, p. 302 n. 43.
 33. Lewis, *Perelandra* (London: HarperCollins, 2005 [1943]), p. 80.
 34. Jean Bethke Elshtain, *Augustine and the Limit of Politics* (University of Notre Dame Press, 1999), p. 89.
 35. Nygren, *Agape*, pp. 702–705. See D'Arcy on this point, *Unicorn*, p. 59.
 36. This view is implicit in all of Lewis' theological works. See e.g. the five chapters of *Surprised by Joy*.
 37. See Ward's discussion of this in *Planet Narnia*, pp. 218–219.
 38. Carnell, *Bright Shadow*, p. 69.
 39. Lewis, *Four Loves*, pp. 124–125.
 40. See 'C. S. Lewis: The Four Loves' (W Publishing Group/The Episcopal Media Center, 2004).

41. Lewis might not even be arguing against the want to be loved, only the *disproportionate* want to be loved. He writes: ‘...if all we mean by love is a craving to be loved, we are in a very deplorable state’ (*Four Loves*, p. 2), italics mine. Pieper goes as far as to suggest that, properly understood, the ‘desire to be loved’ is a respectful, even glorious feeling and should not be disparaged (*Love*, pp. 184–186).
42. Olli-Pekka Vainio, ‘The aporia of using “love” as an argument: A meditation on C. S. Lewis’ *Four Loves*’, *The C.S. Lewis Chronicle*, vol. 4, no. 2 (2007), p. 26.
43. Nygren seems to be semi-mindful of this problem. He rightly emphasizes that God’s love for us ‘is the bestowal of a gift. Something really new is introduced, something new is taking place’ (*Agape*, p. 80). But this love and the sort of love that ‘overlooks the defects and imperfections and concentrates on the essence of the personality which wins His approbation’ (p. 79) are, in Nygren’s view, irreconcilable. We may argue, as Nygren seems to imply, that hence the gift bestowed must include the goodness that is loved. But this solution seems to beg the question. For *whom* is the gift given?
44. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (London: Collins, 1959 [1952]), pp. 102–103.
45. Lewis, too, uses ‘Arch-nature’ in *The Great Divorce* (London: HarperCollins, 2002 [1946]), p. 113.
46. Lewis, *Miracles: A Preliminary Study* (London: HarperCollins, 1998 [1947]) pp. 60–62. Lewis sought to show this in *That Hideous Strength* as well. See Carnell, *Bright Shadon*, pp. 101–103.
47. Lewis, *Miracles*, p. 11.
48. Augustine, *City of God*: 10.12.
49. Charles Williams, *Arthurian Torso*, with a Commentary by C. S. Lewis (London: Oxford University Press, 1948), p. 175.
50. Williams, *Torso*, p. 175.
51. Carnell, *Bright Shadon*, p. 130.
52. Lewis, ‘Noon’s Intensity’, in *Poems*, ed. Walter Hooper (New York: Harcourt, 1992), p. 114. Ward notes that the poem ends ambivalently without settling whether Sol will transmute or transpose (*Planet Narnia*, p. 105).
53. See Lewis, ‘Transposition’, in *C. S. Lewis: Essay Collection and Other Short Pieces*, ed. Lesley Walmsley (London: HarperCollins, 2000), pp. 267–278. This sermon was first preached in Mansfield College, Oxford, and later appeared in *They Asked for a Paper* (1962) and as an expanded version in *Scrwatpe Proposes a Toast and Other Pieces* (1998).
54. Lewis, *Out of the Silent Planet* (London: HarperCollins, 2005 [1938]), p. 96.
55. Lewis, *Silent Planet*, p. 100.
56. Lewis, *George MacDonaldd: An Anthology* (New York: Macmillan, 1948 [1946]) p. 16.
57. Lewis, *Anthology*, p. 17.
58. Ward, *Planet Narnia*, p. 106.
59. See Lewis, *Surprised*, especially the last five chapters.
60. See Ward (*Planet Narnia*, pp. 236–237) on this point.
61. Lewis, *English Literature*, p. 460.
62. Lewis, *The Problem of Pain* (London: HarperCollins, 1998 [1940]), p. 27.
63. Oliver O’Donovan, *The Problem of Self-Love in St. Augustine* (Yale University Press, 1980), p. 157.
64. Nygren, *Agape*, p. 94: ‘[Man’s love for God] flows from inescapable necessity’. See also p. 129: ‘In a life that is governed by Agape, the acting subject is not man himself. The Christian, according to Nygren, ‘can be likened to a tube... He is merely the tube, the channel, through which God’s

- love flows' (p. 735). Nygren's conception of love is almost predestinarian, as 'all choice on man's part is excluded. Man loves good ... because God's unmotivated love has overwhelmed him and taken control of him, so that he cannot do other than love God' (pp. 213–214).
65. In Lewis' Christology, too, love is a filial response to the love of the Father. As Christ surrenders himself back to the Father, '[f]rom the highest to the lowest, self exists to be abdicated and, by that abdication, becomes the more truly self, to be thereupon yet more abdicated, and so forever' (Lewis, *Pain*, p. 127).
 66. Ward (*Planet Narnia*, p. 189) suggests two biographical sources for the prominence of the rival loves theme: the loss of his mother at an early age, and his long relationship with Janie Moore, who, by all accounts, never reconciled to the loss of her son.
 67. Lewis, *Four Loves*, p. 118.
 68. Lewis, *Four Loves*, p. 119, italics added.
 69. According to Saarinen, Lewis is not an advocate of an Augustinian *caritas*-synthesis, because 'he seems to lack an *ordo caritatis*' and because 'the natural affinities between the loves are weaker than in Thomas' ('Eros', p. 171 n. 14). Saarinen's Lewis-analyses are usually accurate, but I do think Lewis accepts a certain order of loves.
 70. Lewis, *A Preface to Paradise Lost* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), p. 75. Lewis is here commenting on Shakespeare's *Troilus* speeches and says that for Ulysses it is moonshine. Ward, after quoting this passage (*Planet Narnia*, p. 139), adds a postscript: 'For Lewis, too'.
 71. Lewis, *Four Loves*, p. 61. In Lewis' opinion 'comparative evaluations of essentially different excellences are ... senseless' (referring to the maxim *heterogenea non comparari possunt*). See Lewis, *The Discarded Image. An Introduction to Medieval and Renaissance Literature* (Cambridge University Press, 2005 [1964]), p. 20.
 72. Lewis, *Four Loves*, p. 117.
 73. See Lewis, 'First and Second Things', in *Essay Collection*, pp. 653–656. First published in 1942, this essay was reproduced in *Undeceptions* (1971) and *First and Second Things* (1985), and is now in *Compelling Reason* (1998).
 74. Digory realizes that 'there might be things more terrible even than losing someone you love by death', *The Magician's Nephew* (London: HarperCollins, 2005 [1955]), p. 203 (chapter 12). Ward comments on this: '[T]hat is, he [Digory] acknowledges the possibility of denying his love for Aslan for the sake of clinging on to his Mother' (*Planet Narnia*, p. 189).
 75. Lewis, 'Five Sonnets', in *Poems*, pp. 126–127. To ask for the Morning Star is to ask for Christ.
 76. Lewis, *Four Loves*, p. 87.
 77. Sheldon Vanauken, *A Severe Mercy. With Eighteen Letters by C. S. Lewis* (New York: HarperCollins, 1980 [1977]), p. 29. See also Vanauken, *Under the Mercy* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1988 [1985]), pp. 141, 143, 149.
 78. Lewis, *Four Loves*, p. 105.
 79. *The Imitation of Christ* (Book 2, ch. 10).
 80. Lewis, *Four Loves*, p. 3.
 81. Lewis, *Four Loves*, p. 113.
 82. Lewis, *Four Loves*, p. 127.
 83. Lewis, *Four Loves*, p. 2.
 84. Lewis, *Four Loves*, p. 3.
 85. Lewis, *Four Loves*, p. 2.

86. Lewis, *Four Loves*, p. 3. See Gregory (*Politics*, p. 23): ‘The greatest failure of love is when love itself is not receptive to the reality of another lover; that is, when the lover is pridefully unwilling to be beloved’.
87. Lewis, *Divorce*, p. 74.
88. See Ruokanen’s discussion of this, *Theology*, pp. 68–69.
89. Lewis, *Till We Have Faces* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1966 [1956]), quoted in Carnell, *Bright Shadow*, p. 114. Unfortunately my copy of a later reprinting does not have this foreword.
90. In fact, Saarinen thinks *Till We Have Faces* is helpful in attempting to outline ‘a constructive Protestant alternative to Nygren’s *Agape and Eros*’. See Saarinen, ‘Eros and Protestantism: From Nygren to Milbank’ in *Gudstankens aktualitet. Bidrag om teologiens opgave og indhold og protestantismens indre spændinger*, ed. E. Wiberg Pedersen (Copenhagen: Anis, 2010), p. 344. Saarinen’s alternative is still in the making, but he thinks the real dichotomy is not *eros* vs. *agape* but rather *eros/agape* vs. death (the *thanatos* motif).
91. Saarinen, ‘Protestantism’, p. 346.
92. Saarinen, ‘Protestantism’, p. 346.
93. Carnell, *Bright Shadow*, p. 116.
94. Saarinen, ‘Eros’, p. 171.
95. Carnell, *Bright Shadow*, p. 116.
96. Carnell, *Bright Shadow*, p. 13. In describing the Joy motif I lean heavily on Carnell’s *Bright Shadow of Reality: Spiritual Longing in C. S. Lewis* (1974) which, over thirty-five years after its publication, remains probably the best available study of this theme. Carnell, however, does not mention ‘the Nygren debate’.
97. Lewis, *Surprised*, p. 207; also *The Pilgrim’s Regress* (London: HarperCollins, 1998 [1933]), p. xv.
98. Lewis, *That Hideous Strength* (London: HarperCollins, 2005 [1945]), p. 448.
99. Lewis, *Pilgrim*, p. xii. Carnell says Lewis’ use of allegory in this spiritual autobiography is ‘more than a sugar coating on the moral pill’ (*Bright Shadow*, p. 105).
100. Carnell finds four dominant images for Joy in Lewis’ literature: (1) distant hills, (2) exotic gardens, (3) remote islands, and (4) sweet music (*Bright Shadow*, p. 87). Carnell (p. 89) notes that sometimes simply an island will do, like in *Out of the Silent Planet*, where the hero Ransom sees an island on the planet Malacandra (Mars) that awakens a feeling of mingled awe and desire. Yet, we may ask, are not also *Martian* islands by definition remote? Notice the island theme resurface also in the sequel *Perelandra*, pp. 124–125.
101. Lewis, *Surprised*, p. 14.
102. Lewis, *Surprised*, pp. 74, 75.
103. Lewis, *MacDonald: An Anthology*, pp. 20.
104. Lewis, *MacDonald*, p. 21. Lewis sought to pass on this goodness in his own work, too. Carnell goes as far as to say: ‘To awaken a desire for love and goodness—this was Lewis’ purpose in almost everything he wrote’ (*Bright Shadow*, p. 161).
105. Lewis, *Surprised*, p. 169.
106. Carnell writes: ‘[If] those who believe that all roads lead to Freud would account for Lewis’ *Sehnsucht* as mere compensation for this unhappy outlook [early bred disposition to look upon life with pessimism], they can do so only by ignoring the nature of the complex of emotions and ideas to which Lewis has given this name’ (p. 37).
107. Lewis, ‘Psycho-analysis and Literary Criticism’, in *Selected Literary Essays*, ed. Walter Hooper

(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979 [1969]).

108. Lewis, *Surprised*, pp. 160–161.
109. Lewis, *Surprised*, p. 161; also *Pilgrim's*, pp. xiii, 14–18.
110. Lewis, *Surprised*, p. 161: He continues: 'I sometimes wonder whether all pleasures are not substitutes for Joy'.
111. Lewis, 'The Weight of Glory', in *Essay Collection*, pp. 96–106 [here p. 104]. Originally a sermon, it later appeared in *Transposition and Other Addresses* (1949), *They Asked for a Paper* (1962), and in *Screenplay Proposes a Toast* (1998).
112. Carnell's expression, in *Bright Shadow*, p. 137.
113. See Carnell on this point (*Bright Shadow*, p. 149).
114. Lewis, *English Literature*, pp. 356–357.
115. Vanauken, *Severe Mercy*, p. 93. See also Lewis, *Reflections on the Psalms* (London: HarperCollins, 1977 [1961]), pp. 114–115.
116. Lewis, 'Weight', p. 99.
117. Lewis, *Hideous Strength*, p. 448. The allusion is to the Holy Spirit, cf. Acts 2:1–4. Ward comments: 'Nothing on earth, no appetite of flesh and blood, could satisfy the longing for the beauty symbolized by Venus' (*Planet Narnia*, p. 168). See Ward's analysis of the Venus motif in Lewis' writings, especially in *That Hideous Strength* and *The Magician's Nephew* (*Planet Narnia*, pp. 164–189).
118. Austin Farrer commends Lewis: 'Is romantic yearning an appetite for heaven, or is it the ultimate refinement of covetousness? One cannot but respect his [Lewis'] sense of responsibility in voicing his doubt about what so deeply moved him'. 'The Christian Apologist', in *Light on C. S. Lewis*, ed. Jocelyn Gibb (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1965), p. 40.
119. Lewis, *MacDonald*, p. 20.
120. Lewis, *Surprised*, 208.
121. Carnell believes Lewis never clearly resolved *Sehnsucht's* importance theologically. Following Gunnar Urang, he asks the crucial question: Does this romantic experience mediate revelatory reality or merely reflect it? Carnell sketches an answer: 'He [Lewis] insists that longing, conscience, and myth contain divine revelation, yet they do not have the same *objective* value as the revelation in Christ, though especially for those who have not heard of Christ, they have *subjective* value... In cold prose Lewis seems to take a negative view, claiming that for *Sehnsucht* only a reflective function. But his fictional and poetic images give it a greater import than that, suggesting that there is indeed a revelatory reality in *Sehnsucht*' (*Bright Shadow*, p. 162).
122. Lewis, *Surprised*, p. 215.
123. Lewis, *Surprised*, p. 198.